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**Knowledge of God and
the Discovery of Man:
Crisis of Man and the Response of
God, Classical and Contemporary
Approaches**

Lectures in Wuhan, China

by
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Introduction

As modern secular ideologies fade away we enter a period which as yet can be designated only as "post-modern". Here exciting new dimensions of the human spirit reopen once again and the classical focus upon God, or more generally upon heaven or *tian*, begins to reemerge in new ways as the context and goal of the human quest.

Since 1986 The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) has held conferences with Peking and Fudan Universities, the National and the Shanghai Academies of Social Sciences, and more recently across the breadth of China to Xinjiang in the far west. These began on the classical Chinese topic of modernization, but with the transformation of the country gradually they took up the issues of the humanization of technology, economic ethics, civil society, etc., all in relation to Chinese culture. In sum, it was recognized that if China was to have a market it had to have a related morality and a civil society. This work goes a step further to recognize that if China is to develop its morality in relevant ways it will need to redevelop its religious roots. This is so precisely because both morality and religion join in providing the foundations and direction of creative human freedom.

In the Western press note has been made of two recent Chinese articles on the significance of religion for society. One from Shengzhen points out that the context of Marx's famous line about religion as the opium of the people was not about economics, but about religion as "the spirit of a spiritless system". It notes the importance of its function as including a sense of morality and encouraging charitable work in his time – like the present – when idealism had been lost sight of and utilitarianism was rampant.

The other article, "The Need for a New Understanding of the Religious Question in Our Morality," is from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. It notes that religion not only presents a system of beliefs, but also enables people to free themselves from their predicament and aspire to a spiritual level. Where the sciences treat the "how" of material existence, religion treats the question of its meaning, the "why". Hence, it can assist in such public concern as the building up of morality, the administration of society, cultural and educational work, and even foreign affairs.

Here we shall be concerned with religion not as an object for scientific study, a dead reality from the past, as a matter of scientific analysis of texts, or as a topic for historical analysis, but rather as a subject living and enlivening people. We will do this not in terms of revelation or of faith as a gift from above, but in terms of philosophy. Philosophy, however, has been restricted by modern rationalism. Here we shall attempt to broaden this by opening further dimensions, classical and contemporary, of the philosophy of God.

Part I is more classical and metaphysical; it focuses upon the being of God and man in the Graeco-Christian tradition of Thomas Aquinas. Chapter I begins from the existence of finite and multiple beings which it finds to be unexplicable in and by themselves: humans and other limited beings do exist, but cannot explain how this can be. This, in turn, directs the mind to the unique and unlimited Being whose very nature is to be (the "I am who am" of Moses's account). In this light the second chapter proceeds to discover more about the nature of beings as created by the Infinite Being who is One, True and Good (the *sat, cit, ananda* of the Upanishads). This tells one especially about the dignity of the human person and its explosive, even revolutionary, emergence in modern times.

Part II is more characteristic of our time. With Paul Tillich it looks into human subjectivity in terms of which one learns of God, after Nietzsche's Death of God, through human tragedy in history. Moving from death to resurrection chapters III and IV study the revelation of God through the struggles of human life.

The content of these four chapters was presented in a series of four lectures at Wuhan University in Central China. As the lectures summarize the content of the chapters in a more succinct and direct manner they are appended to the corresponding chapters where their more extended development and references are to be found.

George F. McLean

Part I

Reasoning from Man to God and Back: Thomas Aquinas' Classical Approach

1.

Systematic Christian Philosophy as a Way from Man to God

Classical systematic Christian philosophy evolved within the Platonic philosophy of *Magna Graecia* deepening this from the order of forms to that of being as existence.

This focus of Christian philosophy upon being as existence and hence as active, has profound implications for the understanding of the relation of the human person to God, and first of all for the sense of the divine itself. In Plato's more passive vision the divine was less than such highest ideas as the One or the Good, which were passive objects of contemplation. Taking being in a more active sense allowed Aristotle to appreciate the supreme Being as divine life, that is, as thinking and precisely as thinking on thinking itself, that is, as subsistent thought, openness or lucidity.

Iqbal and the Islamic tradition rightly feared that if this notion were a product of human reasoning it would still be essentially limited and limiting: this is his incisive and trenchant critique of the cosmological and other modes of reasoning to God.¹ Certainly reasoning in terms of limited and limiting forms and categories would be subject to this critique. But the process by which the subject of metaphysics, its internal principles and external causes are discovered is carried out not in terms of forms or of limited categories, but in terms of existence. This is affirmation without negation and hence without limitation.

Nevertheless, Iqbal makes a key contribution to any appropriate reading of a systematic Christian philosophy by reminding one that the notion of God is not a product of human reasoning. Rather, as can be seen through an archeology of human knowledge, the Absolute is there as the center of human life from its earliest totemic beginnings; it flowers as humankind achieves a mythic mode of thought; and it is the very beginning of metaphysics as founded by Parmenides. According to Augustine's dialectic of love, it is not we who first loved God, but He who first loved us: from him come life and light and love.

From this it appears that the classical "five ways" to God have been largely misunderstood. They are not "proofs" for the existence of God, much less ways of constructing the reality of God. Instead they are ways of binding all things back to God (*re-ligio*, as one of the etymologies of 'religion'), whether considered in terms of their origin, level of being, goal, purpose or meaning. Despite his critique of the cosmological arguments, Iqbal seems to intuit this when he writes that their true significance will appear only "if we are able to show that the human situation is not final."²

In this light, one need not fear that an affirmation of man, whether by personal freedom or technological means, will be detrimental to religion; rather human life becomes the proclamation of God's wisdom, power, love and providence. On this basis, Thomas proceeds systematically to shed the requirement not only of an external agent intellect, but even of a special divine illumination for each act of reason, as well the notion of seeds of possibility for all new realizations. All of these were ways by which earlier Christian-Platonism had attempted to preserve a role for God in human progress. Instead, humans are seen as the sacrament of God, His sign and symbol, His creative vice-regents and hence as artists in, and of, this world. Therefore, Thomas does not hesitate to affirm of human beings whatever is required in order that, properly according to their own nature and in their own name, they be able to fulfill these roles in this world. This is the proper autonomy of humans in God; it is a way that truly leads home to God.

The Structure of Religious Vision

The existential sense of being and its openness to the infinite has allowed more recently for a renewed appreciation of Thomas's structure of participation by which human autonomy is an affirmation, rather than a derogation, of God. In any limited being, its essence or nature constitutes by definition a limited and limiting capacity for existence: by this the being is capable of this much existence, but of no more. Such an essence must then be distinct from existence because, of itself, existence bespeaks only affirmation, not negation or limitation.

But a being whose nature or essence is not existence, but only a capacity for existence, could not of itself or by its own nature justify its possession and exercise of existence. The Parmenidean principle of noncontradiction will not countenance existence coming from non-existence, for then being would be reducible to non-being or nothing. Such beings, then, are dependent precisely for their existence, that is, precisely as beings or existents.

This dependence, however, cannot be upon another limited being similarly composed of a distinct essence and existence, for such a being would be equally dependent, in turn. The multiplication of such dependencies, even infinitely, would but multiply, rather than answer, the question of how composite beings with a limiting essence nevertheless have existence. Hence, limited beings composed of existence and essence must depend upon another being for their existence, that is, must participate in another. That "other" must ultimately be radically different, that is, it must be precisely incomposite being whose essence or nature, rather than being distinct from and limiting its existence, is identically existence. This is Being Itself — the total infinite to which Iqbal refers as making possible finite being and thinking.

The incomposite Being is simple, the One *par excellence*; it is participated in by all multiple and differentiated beings for their existence. The One, however, does not in turn participate; it is the unlimited, self-sufficient, eternal and unchanging Being which Parmenides had shown to be required for reality. "Limited and composite beings are by nature relative to, participate in, and are caused by the unique simple and incomposite being which is Absolute, unparticipated and uncaused."³

This sense of participation makes it possible to speak of the nonreciprocal relation of finite or composite being to infinite or incomposite being and to identify the essentially caused character of the former.⁴ This is a crucial step beyond the Platonic tradition which rightly can be criticized for failing to develop adequate tools for distinguishing humans from God. An existential metaphysics understands causality in terms of participation in the infinite. Hence, even while placing central emphasis upon union with the divine, its conceptual and ontological structures never lose sight of the distinction of the human from the divine. At the same time, through making this distinction it sees every aspect of the caused or created being as totally derivative from, and hence as expressing, the infinite. *Let man be man; indeed let all creatures be, for they glorify God, the Infinite and the All Mightily, the Munificent and the Merciful!*

For his sense of participation some early Church Fathers placed Plato among the prophets. The understanding of participation was clarified and enriched by Aristotle's sense of being as active, by the work of his great medieval Islamic commentators and by the Christian existential sense of being. The resulting metaphysics provides the systematic clarification needed by Iqbal's insights regarding religion for the increasingly complex structure of the physical and social environment in which we live. In the face of the dilemma of human *hubris* vs religious passivity in our days this provides indispensable help in responding to the needs of those devoted in faith. It can aid them to understand better the relation of their increasingly complex life to God and

thereby assist them in living their faith in our times. In a word, it is a way to come home, and to be at home, religiously in our times.

Thomas's Five Ways to God: Learning about God from Man

The Five Ways

Thomas Aquinas constructed his "five ways"⁵ on this insight regarding the participation of limited beings in the absolute and unparticipated being. They have remained the classic expression of *a posteriori* ways to the Absolute.

He notes five things about the beings which we observe by our intellect as it works with our senses: (1) they undergo change, (2) they cause change, (3) they begin and cease to be, (4) they realize their being or goodness to greater and lesser degrees, and (5) they are oriented to goals beyond themselves. Each of these five factors manifests that these beings are limited and hence that each is a composite of an essence or nature which is a capacity for a corresponding and proportionate existence or act. This internal composition or dynamism shows that they are not self-sufficient, for essence as potential or capacity for existence cannot provide the actual existence itself. Hence, such beings must depend for their existence upon the One which is not composite and which therefore, as noted by Parmenides, is unchanging, unique and unlimited. That is, the many beings we encounter are predicated upon Being Itself (*Ipsium Esse*) which is simple, and which alone is absolute or self-sufficient. As absolute it is distinct from all else, which in turn can exist only by being related to or participating in that which is absolute or self-sufficient. This is the central structure of the reasoning of the classical "five ways".

But our concern here is not to suppose the existence of God to be unknown. As seen in the above chapters, from the original totemic times God has always been central to human consciousness. What is taking place in this very first step in Thomas's *Summary of Theology* (or *Summa Theologica*), is rather relating all, including humankind, back to God. Here we shall not look at the five ways as answers to an unreal doubt about whether God exists. Thomas was responding to the first scientific question for an Aristotelian science, namely, whether the subject of the science exists. In existential terms this is to ask whether this issue has meaning for life or how it relates to the clarification of the source, the inner character and the goal of human life.

Plato had been able to analyze this only externally in terms of the relation of the many to the one and on the basis of formal causality. Combining Aristotle's insight regarding internal structures with the Christian understanding of being as existence, Thomas was able to carry out an internal analysis. He was able to identify the internal structure constituted by the existence and essence of multiple beings which in turn manifests them to be participations, that is, effects by active or efficient causality of the unparticipated One.

In these terms the first three are ways in which changing, contingent beings are seen to be from God, to depend upon and to manifest his creative power. First, as caused they emerge into being; second, as causes they reflect in their power the creative force of the creator; third, as contingent they manifest in every facet of their existence the triumph of being over nothingness.

The fourth way points out that each level of these realizations of being, with their proper level of dignity and truth, goodness and beauty, manifests and proclaims the absolute goodness and beauty of the divine. This is the most mystical of the ways because it bespeaks not merely that all is from the divine, but that all beings manifest God, live in the divine — and especially that God

lives in them. To perceive the beauty of a sunset is to see thereby something of the beauty of God. With this awareness, to see the face of another, whether in tears or in joy, is through them and indeed in them to see the face of God. This is the deep religious insight of a St. Francis in which all of nature is brother and sister because all bespeak the divine, or of Christ for whom to give a cup of water to the least of one's brethren is to give it to God.

The fifth way is especially dynamic in its awareness that life does not end in any finite reality, which is to say that there are no dead ends. Rather all things point ahead and relay our attention onward to God. We can love others and life itself fully and without limit, for all share in and lead toward the infinite, substantial love from which we derive and toward which we are directed in all that we are and do. The life we live from God, in God and toward God is act, meaning and love without limit.

By means of the above structured and dynamic understanding of participation, Thomas Aquinas was able to philosophize life in the systematic structure of participation in the transcendent as coming from God, lived in God and leading toward God. Indeed, in the view of Cornelio Fabro, L.B. Geiger, Arthur Little⁶ and others, this theme constituted the central discovery, the coordinating and fructifying principle of his entire systematic philosophy and theology. Here, we can identify but a few factors in order to illustrate the contribution of this *a priori* way to human awareness of God and to the sense of life with others in this world. We shall proceed according to the order of Thomas's five ways to God beginning from the first three as they build upon the origin of all finite beings from the infinite creator of all.

It will be noted that having carried out the *a posteriori* reasoning from effect to cause in order to relate all things to God enables one in turn to proceed in an *a priori* manner from cause to effect. Unfortunately, '*a priori*' has come to suggest arbitrariness, whereas etymologically it means proceeding on the basis of that which comes first and is most basic and hence most established, namely, proceeding from a cause to its effects. The importance of this second, *a priori*, phase for metaphysics cannot be over-emphasized, for only by understanding being on the basis of that which is Self-sufficient or Absolute and which transcends all else can we gain truly basic insight into being as such and hence into the limited, multiple, participating beings we are and among which we live. This was seen by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, all of whom developed works in metaphysics which proceeded from the absolute to the relative. Indeed they considered this synthetic procedure to be the proper method for metaphysics.

The realist character of Thomas's thought and his insistence upon the use of a scientific method for metaphysics led him to insist upon beginning this science *a posteriori* upon finite being as its subject. However, once the cause of that subject — the Incomposite or Unparticipated Being — was discovered all could be seen more deeply and more richly through the awareness of that Absolute on which all depends, and of all things precisely as dependent thereupon through the radical totality of the creative act. In this light the five ways open the way to a broad and deep range of *a priori* reflection and insight.

Implications of the First Three Ways to God

To begin with, note must be taken of the extent of the dependence of participated beings on unparticipated Being. A preliminary, but not provisional, instance of great importance for our theme is the dependent character of matter — which the Greeks had presupposed to be a given, unquestioned and, hence, unexplained. In this light action consisted in the transformation of matter, that is, in its successive shaping according to different forms. This process ultimately came full

cycle and would begin once again. In this perspective, the individual had no further purpose or meaning than to continue the cycle; nothing was radically new, unique or hence personal.

Above, we saw that early Christian thought directed attention to matter and to its origin from God. *A priori* reflection in the light of this transcendent source and cause of all can provide further understanding. As simple and not composed of a distinct limiting essence and existence, the Absolute Being Itself is unlimited. Hence, no other reality can be equally original with it, for to have two such beings would mean that being would be had only partially by each. In that case, each would in fact be limited and composite; there would be no Absolute. But then, the question concerning the origin of limited or composite beings would have no answer: not in themselves and not in a simple, absolute and transcendent cause. There would remain only Parmenides's "all impossible way", in which being is non-being, an abyss not of being but of nothingness.

Since nothing can be equally original with the Absolute, for their whole reality all else must participate in the Absolute fullness of perfection. Each, to the full extent of its being, must derive from, and hence image in a partial manner, the One. While different from every other limited being, each one constitutes with the others an ever unfolding manifestation of Being itself.

Though there are more beings, however, there could never and need never be more of being than the One Absolute unlimited plenitude. The checks one writes do not multiply the money one possesses; nor does one lose knowledge in sharing it, but rather multiplies its instances. Thus, no matter how many participate in the One, it remains ever the Plenitude of Being and is in no sense diminished. The simple, incomposite being does not depend upon composite beings; on the contrary, composite beings depend entirely upon the incomposite One. But participations are not competitors, nor do they draw down the capital on which they depend; rather, others are cooperators and together all are able better to manifest the divine in this world. Human society is then not a distraction from God, but a means of His presence.

This participated and caused character of being applies to all limited realities and to the components thereof; hence, it applies also to matter whose proper reality is that of a relation of potency to form as its act, without which it could have neither meaning nor reality. As a constituent principle of the essences of physical beings, matter, too, must share in their reality and to that degree in their creation. Just as there can be no matter existing independently of form, neither can there be matter which, with that form, does not constitute an essence and participate to the full extent of its reality in the Absolute.

The causal activity of the divine in participation is creation from nothing. By this is not meant, of course, that there is no cause, for actively considered participation is causing. What is meant is that it involves only (a) the act which is the Absolute or transcendent, and (b) the effect as depending upon it, and by which the transcendent is designated as cause or creator. What is excluded is any independence or equally original existence of the effect either in its totality or in any of its principles, e.g. matter.⁷ The full classical phrase is creation from nothing as regards the effect itself and any subject thereof (*creatio ex nihilo sui et subiecti*). Some, in China particularly, refer to the cause as outer transcendence.

In this total sense, then, the creative source transcends the created effect in every facet of its being. Conversely and correlatively, limited beings as participating all their being in the divine are constituted fully, with all their capacities for being and acting according to the full perfection of their nature. God's power is manifested not in making up for deficiencies in his creatures through causing their effects or supplementing their intellectual abilities as in, e.g., an Occasionalism, but through endowing his creatures with the ability to seek indissociably both their perfection and his glory to the full extent of their nature.

Recent phenomenological thought suggests new, less technical and perhaps more available, ways of thinking about how human life is, and must be, founded in the Transcendent. Maurice Nedoncelle⁸ notes that my identity and relatedness to others are not something which I construct, but are possessed by me from the beginning of my life. All my actions are mine; they pertain to my identity which I was given and did not make or create.

By reflection, then, it is possible to trace back the characteristics of my life to gain some sense of the nature of the giver of that life. First, my life must be not from another individual who is contrary to me as one thing to another, for this could give me not my identity, but only something distinct and alien to me. Hence, this source of my being must be not another being of a limited and contrary nature, but a unique and limitless source able to be the origin of all individuals. Similarly, as I examine my relationships to others, I find that the deepest and most humane among them — friendship and marriage, for example — are not limited and measured, but precisely open beyond place or time, health or economic condition. In contrast to legal agreements, I make promises to friends which are not conditioned by time; the commitment in marriage is specific only in its rejections of all limiting conditions: "for richer or poorer, in sickness or health, till death do us part." This proclaims that the context for life together transcends all particularities of place and time.

Further, as I survey my life I see that it is ever open to new and innovative responses to others in the most concrete and seemingly repetitive circumstances of our daily life. What I eat for breakfast and those with whom I eat it may be identical, but breakfast is never the same. Our life is not lived according to a scientific formula with everlasting sameness, but is endlessly new and unfolding as we explore together the many ways of being concerned and being sorrowful, being amazed and being delighted.

This manifests that human life is lived in terms not of the limitations of concrete things or of abstract formulae and laws, but of an infinity of Being which transcends us in life and enables us truly to be free and creative. Though the person is not God, the phenomenologists point out that the properly human characteristics of conscious life manifest that it is lived in an order which derives from, and is directed toward, the living God.

Implications of the Fourth Way to God

Reflection on the fourth of Thomas's five ways to God, but now from an *a priori* perspective, suggests how this outer transcendent and absolutely perfect reality should be conceived. Were it to stand in opposition to man, were its action to be an intrusion upon human life, were its prerogatives to be at the expense of human perfection, then it would disrupt the Confucian vision of harmony and subvert its philosophy. But is this the case?

What would be the conditions for such a disruptive relationship? It would need to be not that of the good as perfecting or realizing the human, but as opposed to a humanity whose very nature had been corrupted and become evil. This view obtained only in the Reformation or antithetic phase of Christian theology which saw humanity not only as fallen, but corrupted in its very nature. The Judeo-Christian view, however, is clearly that of man created in the image of God, sharing and manifesting — if in a limited way — the divine perfection: "And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good."⁹ To speak of man's nature as being corrupt can only be a theological metaphor reflecting the philosophical nominalism of the time, which in any case did not admit universal concepts or natures. In any proper philosophical sense a nature either contains all of its components or simply ceases to be that nature. A number three which loses one of its

component units is not a corrupt number three, but no three at all; instead it has become a number two. However weakened by the abuse of sinfulness, like all natures, human nature remains good as a limited way of participating in, and manifesting, the absolute perfection of God.

A disruptive relationship between outer and inner transcendence, between divine grace and self-perfection, might arise also not in human nature but in the process of its development if this were to be conceived as other than a single process of self-realization. But again, that would appear to be a philosophical impossibility, for how could some alien intrusion be called self-development. In the long Catholic tradition — the Christian thesis and synthesis — just as human nature is not corrupted but has its perfection as a manner of participation in divine perfection, so does its development and self-perfection. God acts throughout this process. Just as in creation his action does not substitute for human substance, but makes it to be, so in acting in the process of human perfection He does not substitute for human activity, but capacitates the human work of self-perfection and self-realization.

In brief, God does not subvert human reality as free and self-responsible; indeed, it would be a contradiction if human perfection were not its own self-perfection. Rather, as the unique and unchanging Absolute Being, God stands definitively against non-being and imperfection, creates humans, makes them to be, and enables them to undertake their magnificent process of self-realization. It is life in Him that enables one to be in one's own human way.

Our difficulties in seeing this come from our tendency to view God as a human being and, hence, to introduce two similar operative agents in our self-realization. It is important that we distinguish the two and let God be God. The causality of his infinite nature is the creative action of making me and my activities simply to be, while I, in my limitation, can shape them according to this or that character and relationship. All is from God as first cause or creator; all is also from humans as second causes or causes of change. The two are not incompatible, much less are they conflictual; neither substitutes for the other. The late President John F. Kennedy said it well in his inaugural address: "In this world, God's work is man's own."

In this way, the Christian vision sees only God as absolutely perfect and, hence, self-sufficient. Humans are complete, but are not abandoned in their created nature. Their nature is to seek their self-realization in a process that responds to the power of the divine. By an absolute and self-sufficient power they are made to stand in their own right. Thus, one must not be manipulated to lesser purposes by any person or group. The Transcendent Creator has made humans to be fully human, autonomous and hence equal; their dignity and rights are firmly founded in this divine origin, which, in turn, they reflect. Thereby, all human persons are precious beyond question, and it is the duty of people acting in consort as society to protect that dignity and promote those rights, both individually and socially.

Implications of the Fifth Way to God

The fifth of Thomas's five ways to God, when subsequently reflected upon in an *a priori* manner, opens in a special way to a dialogue among religions by taking up the question of the goal of life and founding the sense of harmony by love. This does not set man as the ultimate goal in relation to which God is merely the source and support; rather God is one's ultimate end or goal. Aristotle articulated part of this vision in his treatment of human happiness or fulfillment at the beginning and end of his ethics. Happiness, he said, consists in contemplation as the highest realization of the highest human power (intellect) with regard to the highest reality, namely, life

divine. This is not the abandonment, but the fulfillment of human life; it is the point at which the human person lives most fully.

To this, religion adds, beyond death, the goal of life with God that is no longer mediated through limited beings, but face to face. This does not negate the natural fulfillment of which Aristotle spoke, but carries it further by grace to an even more perfect realization in terms of the essence of divine life as an exchange of knowledge and love. Though this is made possible by a special divine grace, like life itself it cannot be given exteriorly, but must be lived as personal self-realization.¹⁰

In this context, one can see the true character of evil — or let evil be evil. It is not merely an unfortunate flaw in human perfection which a person comes to know and bear, but which is nobody else's business. If our life is lived in response to God's love and as a way toward reunion with our transcendent personal Source and Goal, to abandon goodness is to reject the divine gift and to refuse the divine rendezvous. It is a personal rejection whose significance goes beyond oneself to one's absolute Source and Goal. This is to extend the Confucian universe of the gentlemen, from what is fitting or ugly in relation to one's fellow humans, to that which is fitting vis a vis God as well. Further, this is not an affair between an individual alone and God for, as all are made in God's image, to do evil or refuse good to the least of our brothers is to do so to God himself. Hence, as the Chinese tradition always sensed, to disrupt the harmony of the community is to disrupt harmony with heaven.

Here, we find the source of the ultimate seriousness of human life: the depth of evil when committed; the urgency of response to need where we can help; and the sublime, indeed divine, beauty of the simplest life lived in harmony with nature, man and God. As above, this religious vision evolves and carries forward the realm of which Confucius spoke. It unpacks this, surrounds it with contextual principles, and opens it to its ultimate import in a sublime sense of the harmony he so richly valued.

A religious vision can provide as well a rich context for the sublime teaching of Confucius on love, to take the example of but one culture. It joins to the key principle of respect for one's father the commandment to love, honor and obey father and mother. It proposes a graded love with the strongest and most detailed obligations in relation to those to whom we are closest by consanguinity and community. It places upon this a divine seal by adding that one who claims to love God and yet does not love his neighbor is a liar,¹¹ that one who would bring offerings to the altar but is not reconciled with his brother must first become reconciled with his brother in order to be able to approach the altar of the Lord of Heaven.¹²

In some ways the religious message extends and intensifies the human vision. For it would speak not only of control, or of obedience of wife and children to husband and father, but would enjoin husbands to love their wives. It envisages these relations not merely as obligatory because they are imposed, but as imposed because they are freely and lovingly entered into. They are then not only obligations of justice, but implications of love. Finally, it does not leave all solely as the effect of the fallible will of a father, but puts this in the context of God as Father whose love and justice the human father is to imitate and to whom one has ultimate allegiance.

Indeed, this could imply even leaving father and mother in order to carry the love they first showed into a broader service of humankind. Such broadening of horizons relocates the issue of filial and unfilial behaviour in a richer and liberating context in which such aberrations as arbitrariness and self-centeredness on the part of parents can be transcended, and the essence of a child's love for them can more amply be fulfilled in family and in society at large.

This opens the possibility of advancing the humanist Confucian sense of harmony by not restricting it merely to the adhesion of all the individuals in a family or society to the will of their one father or governor, but by grounding this relation within a liberating and expanding relation to the Infinite One. Over time, the former, more restrictively human perspective seems to lend itself to an autocratic style. Historically this seems indeed to have taken place and could have many particular causes. For example, it seems well established that at times, for reasons of political stability, an autocratic sense of harmony was officially promoted — which, of course, at first blush seems an easier way to run a family or nation.

Indeed, some would argue that the original sense of Confucius was rather that of a dynamic cohesion and cooperation of multiple elements within an harmonious whole. This certainly should be revived, but to do so it is important to search for the principles which would found, maintain and protect such an integrative sense of harmony from reductivist tendencies. Here, the sense of participation can be particularly helpful. For, if all were to be conceived simply in terms of human beings without anything transcending the father or governor, it would fall simply to the will power of father or governor to establish order and all would veer toward autocracy. To avoid this and enable all to tend freely toward their perfection, both individually and as a social whole, it is important that they be able to conceive their life in relation to an open and unlimited Transcendent Good as Source and Goal of all. By this all are united, enlivened and cohesive in the exercise of their freedom. This is most significant for the transition to democratic modes of life and enables the sense of harmony to become the dynamic basis for civic responsibility and social cohesion.

Three Ways of Speaking about God

In view of this totality of the dependence of participating beings upon the Absolute, it is apparent that any insight concerning the nature of the absolute would contribute a radical elucidation regarding realities which participate therein. In order to make its contribution to this understanding a systematic philosophy must first prepare the language it will employ. In particular, any implication of limitation in human thought or expression must be removed from language concerning the Absolute.

We saw in the previous chapter that being as the subject of the science of metaphysics expressed only differentiated or limited beings. We saw also that differentiated and composite beings were participations in unlimited and incomposite Being. This has crucial implications for extending analogously the notion of being. As the subject of the science of metaphysics, being had analogously but properly been said of the entire range of finite beings. Metaphysics stated the existence of each being according to its limiting or defining essence or nature, i.e., each being is or exists according to (or to the extent of) its own essence or nature. This had the form of a four term analogy of proper proportionality, a proportion of proportions: "the existence of A : the essence of A :: the existence of B : the essence of B." On the basis of the participation of such composite subjects in their incomposite or unlimited cause the analogous range of being can now be extended from finite to infinite being. This adds to the four terms above the proportion ":: the existence of God : the essence of God."

The causal relatedness of participated or finite effect to incomposite or infinite cause makes three essential contributions to this extension of the analogy of being to God. (a) It justifies the affirmation of the third proportion in the analogy, namely, the existence of the Absolute to the essence of the Absolute, because the being and intelligibility of limited beings (the first and second proportions) cannot be grounded in nothingness (nothing does nothing, as Parmenides notes), but

only in Being Itself. (b) It constitutes the proportion of the first two proportions as limited beings to the infinite being expressed by the third proportion, for the effect as dependent on the cause must be similar thereto. (c) It finds the proportion in which Absolute Being is expressed (the existence of God to the essence of God) for it requires that the essence of the Absolute be identical with its existence rather than distinct from, and limiting, its existence. Thus, where being said of a finite being states existence according to its essence as a limited and hence unique instance of, e.g., human nature, being said of the Absolute in which it participates states the Unique Existence lived in its plenitude: the One God, Infinite, Eternal and Munificent.¹³

The above concerns the construction of analogy in a metaphysics whose subject is limited being, from which it moves to its infinite cause. Analogy is no less necessary as a metaphysics moves from the Absolute to the finite; otherwise, existence would be taken to mean only the Absolute and the Parmenidean rejection of differentiation would be its last, rather than its opening, word.

In both parts of metaphysics it must be remembered that thought is a human activity and its terminology a human creation. This does not mean that it is only about humans or other limited beings; in fact, it is characteristic of beings which know, as distinct from those which do not, that they can react on the basis of what things are in themselves or as object, rather than simply on the basis of their own subjective conditions. Nevertheless, the classic dictum that "whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver" applies also to knowledge. This is particularly significant when from our perspective as participated and related beings we speak of the Plenitude of Being that is Unparticipated and Absolute. For this reason along with the positive and analogous language mentioned above — the classical *via positiva* or *affirmativa* — there is a second or negative way of speaking — the classical *via negativa* — which denies of the Absolute that mode of expression which reflects the composite nature of humans who speak of God and the limitations of their cognitive capacities to know and to speak. In order to say that the Absolute or the Plenitude of being is good, or even simply that it is, we must use more than one term and unite these in a judgment. As composite, however, this cannot be the nature of that One, which the structure of participation showed to be precisely Incomposite. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to deny that the composite character of our speech applies to the One.

This is not an alternate, but a concomitant, to the positive way; both must be used in every statement of Incomposite Being. About this we must be clear. One cannot deny the existence or goodness of the Unparticipated without rejecting the Absolute. On the contrary, one must follow the positive way and affirm that the Absolute exists, which is to say that existence in its original state is realized absolutely. What is denied in the negative way is simply that the absolute exists according to the composite mode which inevitably characterizes all human expressions of the Absolute. Hence, the negative way does not mean that the Absolute does not exist, or even that it is not non-existent for that could reduce God to the minimal realization of existence. The negative way is not about the Absolute at all, but about the human mode of expressing it.

Going further, in the way of eminence — or *via eminentiae* — one combines the positive with the negative way to say that the Absolute realizes existence eminently, that is, in a mode which surpasses our ability to express. The function of the negative way is simply to keep open the vision of being. This initially was opened by "the negative judgment of separation" of being from any limitation; through this the subject of the science of metaphysics was obtained. This must be kept open for the eminent affirmation of Being Itself so that incomposite Being can manifest itself to the human mind despite the mind's restrictions. In turn, it enables humans to respond in positive terms which similarly are open and unfettered.¹⁴

Lecture I

Learning about God from Man

A pair of glasses provides a way of seeing and interpreting the world in which we live. Samuel P. Huntington in his work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of a New World Order*, identifies eight major civilizations. These constitute distinctive ways of seeing and hence of living. Moreover, he notes that each of these is predicated upon a great religion; conversely, each great religion has generated a great civilization based thereupon, e.g., the Confucian or Hindu vision and set of values. The exception is Buddhism for which he feels obliged to provide an explanation. Thus, to the characteristic sense of harmony in Eastern cultures there contrasts the primacy placed upon initiative in Western cultures; both shape pervasively the whole of life in these regions. In view of this, in order to understand one's own or another's culture and civilization there is need to understand its religious base.

In present global times it appears that many regions of the world are opening a market economy; in order to support their people they feel the need to engage and compete in all spheres of life vis a vis the West. Hence it promises to be helpful to look at the Christian philosophy which has provided the basis for Western culture and characterizes its mode of responding both to opportunity and to challenge.

There is a difficulty, of course, to the degree that each culture and civilization is a special set of values and glasses. Through one's own set of glasses one cannot see as do others, yet one cannot abandon one's glasses without blinding oneself. Nor can I simply imitate others, for in their way of life I would necessarily be awkward and inept. Hence, I need to rework my glasses in order to be able effectively to engage with others. Japan, it would seem, has been able to develop ways of competing effectively in industrial production by drawing notably on the West, yet without losing its own distinct culture. Indeed, its success in international commerce despite its lack of all but human resources and its particularly unhappy location, suggests that its advantage has consisted precisely in this ability to reshape without losing its cultural identity.

If so, in order to understand Western civilization it will be helpful to return to the roots of Western philosophy in order to see according to what formula its glasses were ground.

Greek Philosophy as the Root of Western Metaphysics

The purpose of a set of glasses, whether ordinary bifocals, a microscope or a telescope, is not to create the object, but to enable one to see deeply and exactly into what is there and how it exists. To see how the basic glasses of the West were ground and polished we should return to Parmenides in ancient Greece. Previously the thought of the so-called primitives – or better, the earliest and first human thinkers, had been totemic: all was understood in terms of the totem of the tribe. This was a bird or animal, some one visible part of nature in terms of which all was understood.

The ability to develop more complex understanding of more complex relationships was evolved subsequently in terms of the myth. Here the human thinking was controlled by the imagination and the ability to think in terms of the picture it could elaborate.

Parmenides took thinking in Greece and hence in the West to a new level. He began from the myth. In the *Proemium* to his famous *Poem* he pictures himself as slumbering or dreaming. The muses put him in a chariot which sets off along the mythic upward curving way that spans the

whole universe. In the process he moves from darkness or shadows into the light, coming finally to a gate guarded by the goddess Justice, patroness of right judgement, discernment or truth.

She opens the gates, invites him in and directs him to examine all things, now in the light. Moreover, she gives him a set of glasses or a principle with which to do this. In mathematics it is essential not to confuse plus with minus; otherwise $2 + 2$ or 4 would be the same as $2 - 2$ or 0. Similarly one must not confuse = with +; for otherwise to say "is 4" would be the same as saying "is not 4". "Is" and "is not" must be kept radically apart.

Now the infinitive of "is" is "to be" and its participial or active form is "being". Hence Parmenides formula: "being is; non being is not," while the opposite, "non being is; being is not," would mean that every proposition or statement would mean its opposite. Then " $2+2$ " would be the same as " $2-2$ " and "is 4" would be the same as "is not 4". In that case it would be impossible to think, to speak or to act. This, be said, was "an all impossible way."

With this principle in mind Parmenides poem pictures him proceeding along the great highway and coming to a fork in the road at which a signpost points to "change". Is this the true character of being? He reasons that it could not be so for change includes non being in its very notion. What changes is not what it used to be and is not yet what it will become; as soon as these conditions no longer obtain and it is already what it is to become change has ceased. But if change includes non being then this cannot be what being is for then being would in some way be non being. Being, he concludes, is essentially non changing.

Parmenides continues on along the highroad of being and the same situation obtains when he comes to a fork in the road and a sign pointing to "beginning". What begins must previously not have existed: non being is included in the way notion of beginning. Hence being as such cannot be "beginning" but must be eternal.

Thirdly, the same is true at the third fork where a sign points to "multiple" according to which one being is 'not' the other. But then 'non being' is included in the notion of multiple being as such. Hence, being cannot be multiple, but must be one.

Being as such and hence both the being of all things and Being itself is not changing but unchanging, not beginning but eternal, and not multiple but unique. Some would read this as meaning that Parmenides rejected the reality of multiple and changing being. This seems not have been so, however, for in the second longer part of his poem he speaks extensively of multiple and changing beings using the available pre-Socratic cosmology of his day.

We do not, however, have any record of his having theorized the relation between being as one that he so carefully elaborated, and the multiple. Whoever would accomplish this task would be the father of Western philosophy, a title which rightly belongs to Plato. (Alfred North Whitehead would call all of Western philosophy but a series of footnotes to Plato.) Plato's way of relating the many to the one was participation or *mimesis* according to which the instances of a particular kind or species, such as horses, all imaged the one form of that species, the idea "horse".

Plato's pupil, Aristotle, would take the truly dramatic step of breaking into the structure of changing being, an accomplishment perhaps greater than that of physics breaking with the atom during the 20th century. He developed Plato's theory of forms further by identifying matter along with form as its co-principle. The two were the constituent principles of multiple and changing beings.

Greek philosophy and culture was built on this structure. Plato worked out his theory of form through his various dialogues; Aristotle worked his insight into the internal structure of changing beings as key to the set of sciences he initiated.

Christian Philosophy of Existence

As noted above, Samuel P. Huntington points out that each civilization has been founded in a religion. Thus he identifies Western civilization not as Greek – though it certainly is that as well – but as "Christian". This suggests that the above has given us only part of the background needed in order to understand this civilization and that it is crucial to discover what Christianity enabled Western philosophy to see. And if we were correct to look to Parmenides in order to get the basic insight and principle for the development of metaphysics, then our question might be focused still more on the impact of Christianity upon the development of the notion of being in the West.

A clue is to be found on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City in Rome. There Michaelangelo painted the creation. On one side he depicted the figure of man perfect in form. However, he is stretched back semi inclining in a semi-slumber with his arm and finger weakly outstretched. Racing toward him with the greatest dynamism, eyes afire and beard trailing in the wind comes the figure of God with arm and finger thrust forward about to touch the finger of man and bring him dramatically to life. In philosophical terms what was being added to the Greek theory of forms and all that it could illumine was the Christian element of existence as the proper effect of creation by which all comes to be, which for living beings is to live. Finite, multiple, changing beings, by efficient and formal cause, would explain the particular form and interaction of beings in time. The proper effect of God, however, as one, eternal and unchanging is their "to be" or existence itself. How did this emerge in Western philosophy?

What had always been supposed by Greek philosophy was matter. Its attention was directed then to forms and to how these succeeded one another, thereby specifying the interaction between things. Like the sculpture going to his or her studio the clay or matter is presupposed: his or her mind is on the form or shape into which they will mold the clay. This supposition was brought to consciousness under the impact of the Judeo-Christian experience of God. For in recognizing God to have dominion over all they were able to see that this pertained to matter as well. The reality of matter as distinct from form was worked out by Aristotle, but the need to explain matter as well as form was contributed by the Christian Church Fathers. Very shortly thereafter Plotinus attempted the first philosophical explanation of the origin of matter.

Of itself, of course, matter is the least of all reality, not a being but only the potential principle in the least of beings, namely, changing beings. Nevertheless, the Christian insight here was explosive for philosophy, for it enabled philosophers to begin thinking not only in terms of form or kind, but of existence itself. It was that which Michaelangelo later would correctly depict as the most proper effect of the action of the Creator constituting each being as autonomous in its own right and electrifying it as act and active. Heidegger in recent terms would speak rightly of being erupting into time through human consciousness. That too suggests Cornelio Fabro was part of the Christian contribution to philosophy. For the Christian Kerygma was that Christ had died to save all persons, but that this had to be accepted by human freedom under divine grace. In this light human freedom as the proper mode in which as distinctively conscious and responsible, people live their being. Moreover, it is precisely through this freedom that they accept and hence receive the gift of life over death in sin. Existence, in other words, is responding to both creator and saviour as that in which, by which, and for which we exist.

Thus, Western culture though truly Greek in structure, is more deeply Christian in its basic inspiration: being and specifically the existence of all that begins and changes must be from Existence or Being itself.

This basic insight which was articulated by Plato in his theory of participation can be viewed from two directions: coming from the beings which are multiple and changing to the One as the fullness of being, its origin and goal, is called reasoning *a posteriori*, that is, from that which is posterior to that which is prior in level or perfection of being, for what is in the effect must in some way have been in the cause. The opposite, however, is also true, for knowing more of the cause can enable also a greater understanding of the effect in as much as it depends upon the cause.

Thomas Aquinas essentially created theology as a science by applying the scientific method of Aristotle to the rich content of the Christian tradition. Hence, he began his great summary of theology, *Summa Theologica*, by asking the first of Aristotle's scientific question, namely, whether the subject of this science, namely, God, exists. In so doing he was not suggesting that God might or might not exist, for any such being certainly would not be God. Rather he needed to clarify the access of the human mind to God. In the process he also worked out the bonds of man and all finite beings to God as their cause. This was the work of religion in its etymology as "re-ligatio" or binding back of all things to God as their source and goal. For this task he employed three causes: efficient causality for the first three ways, formal causality for the fourth way and final causality for the fifth way, together constituting what have come to be termed simply "the five ways" to God. Here for purposes of time I would like to consider only the first three ways in an *a posteriori* manner in order to learn of God from man. This will leave for the next lecture employment of formal and final causality, but in an *a priori* fashion in order to illumine human life from the viewpoint of the divine.

Essentially the first three *a posteriori* ways begin from things available to the senses. In the Aristotelian horizon where all knowledge is first in the senses and comes thereby to the intellect, what is obvious to the senses is the place to begin. Thus Thomas begins with beings which change.

Essentially, he follows the first metaphysical experience of Parmenides described above. Changing being must include not only being, but non being, for as changing it is no longer what it was and is not yet: what it is to become. But if that were all, their being would be at least in part not being; one would be on the all impossible way rather than in the complex world of change and interchange.

Aristotle had made a signal step in discovering that changing beings needed to be composed of form as act according to which it was of its present kind or nature and of matter as potency for this and other forms. Thus Thomas was able to argue more in terms of act and potency from changing being to the unchanging being that is act without potency.

The second way is similar to the first, but in terms of beings which cause, but are dependent in so causing. Here similar reasoning brings him to the uncaused cause. The third way is in terms of contingency. It begins as in the first two ways, but comes first to being which is without the potential principle of matter. From here it is noted that such a being is either self explanatory or not. If not it must depend ultimately on being which is simply, that is subsistent or absolute Being, or Existence itself. In sum, as changing, dependent in causing or contingently able to be or not be, they are not self explanatory; but nevertheless, they are. Consequently, they must depend on something not composed of form and matter, act and potency, or essence and existence. Instead, the nature of that being must be precisely to exist, and consequently infinite and eternal. Such being, notes Thomas, all call God (*S.T.* I, q2, a.3).

This provides us with a ladder with which our mind can soar from this world to God. For this shows that existence is the proper nature of God and the proper effect of his creative action upon man and nature. Then all that is and is true, all that there is of perfection, all that is good and beautiful in our world is a limited participation in, and hence expression of, the divine itself.

How surpassingly wonderful then is his being, and how great must be his ways!

Yet the likeness to a ladder may be deceptive and misleading in a number of ways. For a ladder supposes ground on which it is planted and a reach that is tenuous and hence precarious; philosophers discuss it endlessly. But the logic and metaphysics involved in the opening of human horizons in these "ways to God" is quite different. It focuses on the insubstantiality of the ground on which the ladder is planted, which it discovers from many points of view to be an unstable mix of being and nonbeing, totally unable of itself to explain, justify or even exercise its own existence. It is anything but firm ground. Rather the ways to God described above are demonstrations of the lack of firmness of their points of departure. Like a plant pot in the air between ceiling and floor, one is challenged to find either the cord which attaches it to the former or the structure by which it is held up from below.

Of course, as we shall see, once this is found there is no insubstantiality about such beings for they are assured in the all-powerful hand of God. This, in turn, tells us more of their being than they ever could themselves. What is wondrous is that despite our lack of self sufficiency we exist by the loving power of God. The next lecture will try to explore precisely this insight.

2.

A Religious Phenomenology of Unity, Truth and Goodness

These reflections upon language provide direction for reflection upon the nature of the Plenitude of Being and Life. Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* spoke of the categories or divisions of being as basically different ways of being. He distinguished ten categories, of which one was substance, the others accidents or attributes of substance. Each substance differed from every other substance; the same was true of the attributes or accidents which divided being between themselves and in relation to substance. Aristotle's concern was to codify what Hindu philosophy would call the differentiated world of names and forms, intending thereby to lead the mind to the supreme instance of being, through relation to which, by a *pros hen* ("to that") analogy, all could be most profoundly unified and comprehended. In this categorical or predicamental sense attributes are by nature limited and differentiated. By their realization in the substance the individual develops or becomes more perfect, that is, participates more of being. There is, of course, no question of such categories being applied to the undifferentiated or Absolute.

There is, however, another sense of attribute, one that is transcendental rather than predicamental or categorical. Such attributes apply to all beings; they are the attributes of being as such. They are not really distinct one from another or from being; they do not add reality to being. Neither are they distinct by what is technically termed a major distinction of the mind as are genera and species, because that would imply some other real composition in being. Rather, each state explicates or "unfolds" the very reality of being, making explicit what was actually but only implicitly stated by the term "being" as that which is. It must be emphasized that they are not additions to being. They are not attributes which are beings, but characteristics of the reality of being as such, stating simply what it means to be. These attributes include unity as stressed by Parmenides and later Plotinus, truth which is found in Aristotle and Augustine, and the good which was central to the main body of Plato's work. They are reflected in the classic Hindu trilogy: *sat, cit, ananda* (existence, consciousness, bliss).

To these as modes of being there are two types of approach. These are not the *a posteriori* and the *a priori* approaches noted above, by which one proceeds along the way to and from God as transcendent. Rather they relate to God as immanent in creation, especially in the human person as his image. Here the two approaches are rather those of theory and practice. The first looks to the nature of the supreme Being, "the life divine" of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and its attributes of unity, truth and goodness and learns thereby more of the character of finite beings in time. The other looks into the experience of these beings precisely as images of God, that is, as living their freedom in time and thereby constituting history. In this latter, more phenomenological approach one looks into the human consciousness to learn of the wonders of God and his manifestation. The former approach can be neatly structured and clear in its lines of reasoning, though, of course, inexhaustible in meaning. The latter is myriad in the diversity of human experience from which it derives. It calls for aesthetic unification in order to achieve a synthesis or unity, but it speaks immediately to our being and indeed to our personal and social life in time.

What follows will reflect this same order for each transcendental attribute, beginning with the systematic or theoretical approach for reasons of technical clarity and then following with more phenomenological notes in order to bring out the significance of the unity, truth and goodness of God for human life.

In order to develop a systematic list of such attributes, Thomas studied the different types of judgments of existence. If *absolute* or concerned with being itself a judgment can be affirmative: being is being; or negative: being is not shared with non-being, nor is it partially non-being, which, as Parmenides had noted, simply was not. This indivision of being is its unity or oneness: being as such is *one*.

The Characteristics of Being

In contrast, judgments of existence can also be *relative*, provided the relation be in terms of reality which is not in principle limited or limiting. For example, to define radio waves in terms of the limited reception of an AM radio would be to understate their extent. For this reason the relations of being must be stated in terms, not of limited physical life, but of the open and unlimited human consciousness or spirit: not of the potter, but of the poet. The relative judgments state the relation of being to spirit as open to all and every being, or to being as such. In relation to the intellect, being can be said to be, not concealed, but positively intelligible or *true*. Further, as the will is sensitive to the value of all being, in relation to will being is said to be desirable or *good*.¹⁵

As characteristics of being as such, unity, truth, and goodness state or unfold the reality of the incomposite, unparticipated or infinite Being in which they are found absolutely. To make progress in awareness of the absolutely One, True, and Good we may look phenomenologically into our experience of self-identity, knowing, and willing. In doing so, however, we must be sure to remove those elements of composition or potency which mark these spiritual acts as limited in their human realizations.

These notions are not strange to philosophy. As was seen above, Parmenides created metaphysics as a science in terms of Being as One. Aristotle's metaphysics not only culminated in divine life, but understood being entirely as a *pros hen* analogy or relation thereto.¹⁶ Hegel would see theology as a symbolic form of philosophical truths which culminated in unity, truth and the good.

Moreover, religion is a human virtue, a mode of human action which conceives, unfolds, lives and celebrates the sense of life and meaning. Kant's thought provides a place for this at the very center of human freedom and, hence, of human life.

But in a religious vision being is primarily and in principle

- not multiple, limited and changing, but One, unlimited and eternal;
- not material and potential, but spirit and fullness of Life;
- not obscure and obdurate, but Light and Truth; and
- not inert and subject to external movers, but creative Goodness, Freedom and Love.

This is the foundational Christian and indeed the general sense of being. The work of reason carried out by philosophy in such a culture would be sensitized to look for this — always by natural reason — in the human experience of being and to read human experience in this light. The human person is not, as in Aristotle, the servant of nature, but the image of God. Human life is understood then primarily not in terms of physical change, but of Divine light and love.

Divine light and love, however, are not distant and unreachable. Christ, like Confucius and others, laid down concrete patterns in which this has been lived and experienced by peoples through the centuries. They are classical instances of the traditions in which we are born and from which we receive our trove of self-understanding and our sensibility to others, our ability to

conceive our world and to communicate with others in love and concern. Thus, our experience of life lived in these terms as persons and communities provides insight into these three characteristics or properties of being and of God, which in turn enable us better to shape our lives.

This may add something to the Encyclical *Faith and Reason*. In n. 46 it spoke of the relation of revelation and reason as a circle. One begins from revelation and ends up in theology as the deeper and more scientific understanding of revelation. Between these two poles, however, there is philosophy, carried out by the light of reason which works out its principles and draws its conclusions, both of which are universal in import. What is said here does not disagree and would want to stress the autonomy of the human person and the work of human reason. But here we would stress also the impact of the culture, and hence of the religious context, upon the work of reason. For philosophy done in a humanist and individualist culture justice is the supreme value and social ethics and personal moral growth are interpreted in its terms. However, where a religious sense is present and the family and community rather than only the self is the focus, the virtue of love comes forward and becomes the form of all the virtues. This is reflected to some degree in the Encyclical's aversion to the list of essential issues which would not be taken up in philosophy except for its religious context. Chapter X below will attempt to thematize this role of culture in order that it not remain merely contextual to philosophy, but rather contribute importantly to the meaning of philosophy.

If then, philosophy in the Christian context looks not to the material order, but to the divine as its paradigm of reality, in order to unpack the effect of the Christian sense of transcendence upon philosophy we would do well to examine more closely the distinctive characteristics of its divine paradigm. This suggests examining serially the enrichment that the Christian notion of the Trinity brings to the philosophical sense of being, articulated according to its properties of one, true and good. For this the Christian mysteries refer to corresponding divine Persons as source and goal.

We have seen that for the Graeco-Christian philosophical tradition the inner properties of being as such are unity, truth and goodness; and that for Hindu philosophy, the characteristics of the Absolute are expressed in the corresponding, but explicitly living, terms of existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). For the Christian, these are not simply characteristics of the divine, but persons related as Father, Son (Word) and Holy Spirit. To gain insight, then, into the impact of the Christian sense of the Transcendent upon the root sense of Being and the metaphysics of freedom, we shall look first to the richness of the unity of being as this appears to human reason in the Christian cultural context of the Transcendent as Father, or in its Hindu correlative as Existence (*sat*). Next, we shall look for the meaning of truth when considered by natural reason in cultures marked by a sense of the Divine Word as Logos and of the Transcendent as consciousness (*cit*). Finally, we will look to the sense of goodness when seen in the context of the Spirit of love proceeding from the Father and Son or in Hindu thought simply as bliss (*ananda*).¹⁷

Our goal here will not be to define these as properties of being, or *a fortiori* to develop a theology of the Trinity. It will be rather to sample some of the ways in which the Christian cultural context has made possible an enrichment and deepening of the properly philosophical insight into the properties of being and, hence, into the meaning of being both in itself and as lived by God and man. Further, because this religious vision of the Transcendent has been at the center of a people's self-understanding as they have faced the problems of living together in society, it relates as well to social life and the modes of living together in freedom.

Unity

1. *The Nature of Unity.* With the mind thus opened for Absolute Being and a method for allowing its life to be explicated through reflection, it is now possible to sample the nature of the insights which serial systematic reflection of this type can contribute to awareness of the Absolute and of our participation therein.

The first of these explications of the Plenitude of perfection is that which Parmenides had stated so forcefully, namely, unity or oneness. As Existence (*sat*) being is undivided, that is, it is in no way non-being: it stands against or out of nothingness (the *ex-sto* of existence). This much must be said of being as such, and hence of any being or any aspect of being. Through an analysis of the participated character of differentiated and composite beings, however, it was possible to open the mind to that Unparticipated Being from which all else derives, and to know that it is not composite but absolutely simple in its internal constitution.¹⁸ As such it is unlimited in perfection and realizes the totality of the perfection of the act of to be; it is the All-perfect, the All-powerful. Further, it does this without division or differentiation, as metaphysics always has insisted. Boethius expressed this classically as perfect self-possession; in contrast to time, he defined eternity as "the perfect and simultaneous possession of limitless life."¹⁹

We have seen in totem and myth the unitive implications of this for one's relation to one's fellows and to nature. A systematic philosophy of participation develops this understanding by clarifying that the many participated beings are not simply divisions of place in what previously was undifferentiated, for that could mean a simple juxtaposition or contiguity of things. Nor is it merely the type of dependence that obtains between brothers in a family who remain ever related by consanguinity and origin. The formal effect of the participative, creative causality of Being Itself is the constitution of differentiated and participating beings. But this is not merely as individuals in a species, for then the concerns of the species would remain supreme and the individual person could be sacrificed thereto. Rather, the effect of participation as creation is the very being or existence which constitutes the human person indissociably as both unique in oneself and related to all others.

This creative causality continues to be exercised as long as the creatures continue to exist; this is called conservation. Thus, the unity of all participating beings is predicated, not upon a fact of the past, but upon their presently and actually participating in the existence or actuality of the life of the All-perfect. This is ever causally and creatively active in them to the full extent of their being. This is the deeper sense which occasionalism strives to appreciate, but, it would seem, without so adequate a sense of the autonomy of creatures and their proper causality.

2. *A Religious Phenomenology of Unity.* What was said above about matter being caused means that all reality whatsoever in, or of, being is the dynamic expression of that which in itself is simple. This is the "*discretio divina*" or divine dispersion of which Thomas speaks. It constitutes a plurality of participated beings related as contraries among themselves such that the being of one is not that of another. Hence, the two beings together express more of being than either one alone.

Nicholas of Cusa would take this as a principle and it is of the greatest import in our times not only of migration and dispersion of humankind, but of communication and immigration. This creates pluralist national and global societies in which diverse peoples must interact closely. Cusa would point out that their participated character does not constitute them as opposed to each other, but rather as mutually complimentary. If all are to be seen in terms of the whole, now referred to as a "global" perspective, then the "other" pertains to my meaning and intelligibility. Nevertheless,

the participants do not constitute more of being than the Absolute itself, but only more beings, more instances of being.

To get our footing here, let us turn again to Parmenides's vision of the One as absolute and infinite in which we live and breathe and have our being. From the very beginnings of Greek philosophy, as the first metaphysician he recognized this unity as a first characteristic of being. In his Poem, he reasoned that in order to stand against the nonbeing or negation implied in the notions of beginning, limitation or multiplicity, that is, in order simply to be rather than not be, being as such — and, hence, Being Itself — had to be one, eternal and unchanging. Practically all religions recognize these characteristics as belonging to the divine. With Parmenides, they recognize that what is problematic is not how God can be, for being does exist and in the final analysis must be self-sufficient: by definition there is no other reality or being upon which it could depend. What is problematic is rather how it is possible for finite or multiple beings to exist?²⁰

Since finite or limited beings do, in fact, exist, their reality must be a participation in the infinite, eternal and unchanging One, the "external" transcendent which they reflect in every facet of their being. It is as sharing in this absolute nature that limited beings are not mere functions of other realities, but subsist in their own right. In making them to be as participations in Himself, the creator makes them to stand in, though not by, themselves, to have a proper identity which is unique and irreducible. This is the foundation of Boethius's classical definition of the person as a *subject* of a rational nature. Inasmuch as they reflect the divine, such beings are unique and unable to be assumed by some larger entity — even by the divine. Because they reflect the Absolute and Transcendent, they exist in their own right.

At the same time, because all limited beings are made to be by the same unique Transcendent Being, the very fact of their participated and individual uniqueness, rather than alienating them, relates them one to another. If to be is to exist in myself as a creature of God, it is identically to be related both to Him and to all other manifestations of His being. In the light of the Transcendent, being means to be radically myself and irreducible to nonbeing — whether this reduction be in the form of my own being, of subjection to another, or of merger as a mere member of a group. By the very same participation in the One divine source and goal of all, to be myself is equally and indissociably to be related to others. One is not compromised, but enhanced by the other; I achieve my highest identity in loving service of others in need.

This, in turn, founds the harmony of nature. It is the reason also, why to live in harmony with nature and other persons is to live fully. Within this harmony it implies, as Jefferson wrote in the "Declaration of Independence": "all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The task of the social order is not to diminish this or even to grant it, but to recognize, protect and promote it.

Truth

1. *The Nature of Truth.* The second characteristic of being is truth, which in Eastern thought is reflected in the term *cit*. As a characteristic of being as such and hence of any being, it explicates being as open to consciousness or able to be known by intellect. In positive terms being is intelligible, in negative terms it is unconcealed. This much can be known by reflection upon the ability of the intellect to make Parmenides's all-encompassing judgment: being is, non-being is not. Inasmuch as the intellect can make this judgment about being, being as such must be open to intellect or be intelligible. This is not an adjunct to, but formally includes, the unity of being. What is open to intellect or is intelligible cannot be other than or alongside being in its identity or unity,

for then what would be known would not be being, but simply nothing. Truth is not another actuality than being in its unity or identity; it is expression and proclamation — the shout, as it were, of the triumph of being over nothingness.

Further, when this is reflected upon in terms of the participational structures identified above, it becomes evident that the Absolute, incomposite, simple act of existence in which all participate must in undifferentiated identity be at once: (a) agent or subject of intellection or consciousness, (b) power of consciousness, (c) act of consciousness, and (d) object of consciousness. This is but a further explicitation of what is meant by the unity which is the One; it constitutes a simple and subsistent act of knowledge or consciousness - it is Truth Itself.²¹ As with *cit* in Eastern thought, it is consciousness without object²² in the sense of anything distinct from it, on which it would depend and by which it would be determined. This means, not that it is without content or meaning, but that it is meaning itself.

Further, because it is totally self-conscious it perfectly comprehends the full range of the limited states of perfection or combinations of perfections according to which its essence can be imitated in participating beings. Socrates had intuited this pattern of ideas in his search for virtue and Plato recognized the prior ontological reality of ideas. Augustine located these in subsistent Truth. There, Thomas identified its character as exemplar cause after the pattern of which all things are created.²³ Interestingly, the most profound systematic comprehension of its constitution is had through the notion of measurement and the functions of being and non-being therein.²⁴ It would seem that this notion in some form entered the mind of the author of *Rg Veda*, X, 25, mantra 18, "Who with a cord has measured out the ends of the earth"; which some relate to the *Rg Veda* X 129, mantra 5, "A cord was extended across."²⁵

In any case, the Unparticipated as Truth or total lucidity in which all participate for their being is the foundation of the intelligibility of the universe. It is the basis of the conviction that the path of intelligibility is the path of reality and *vice versa*. In that light the discovery of sense or meaning is not a mere intellectual pastime of solitary minds, but the way to share with others more deeply in the real. If so then the rule of reason, especially in the broad sense of wisdom when enriched but not abrogated by love, is the sole rule that is truly humane both in personal and in public life.

2. *A Religious Phenomenology of Truth.* Truth unfolds the unity of being. Unfortunately, too often unity has been seen in terms that are static, reductionist and even commercial. Property, for example, has been looked upon as the right to withhold possessions. Rights have been seen as licenses to turn inward along the lines of an all-consuming egoism of freedom as choice and in terms of my exclusive interests. In that light, my being comes to be looked upon as a possession to be acquired and conserved or, worse still, to be bartered for something of equal quantity or quality.

Were the sense of reality essentially material, the paradigm would be that of blind and senseless atoms colliding randomly and chaotically one with another. Then, the laws of conservation of energy and commercial exchange would dictate that we guard what we have, share it only when we can get equal return and exploit others to the degree possible. In this case, Hobbes's descriptions of man as wolf to man and as short, brutish and mean would not be far from the mark.

In contrast, a culture marked by a sense of outer Transcendence is quite the opposite. The original and originating instance is being as pure knowledge or, better, Truth. As imminently one and simple, there is in us not so much division as unity between our capabilities and their actuation, between our minds and the ideals they generate. All is one: the infinite capacity is fully actual, the

infinite power to know is one with its ideas or insights, the infinite knower is identically the known, i.e., infinite being: in a word, subject and object, mental capacity and mental output are identically the one act of being.

Such a Transcendent is then not so much all-knowing as wisdom or knowledge itself, and, to the degree that knowledge implies a process of achievement or a grasp of something other, it would be more appropriate to speak not of infinite knowledge, but of truth that is all-perfect or Truth Itself. Being is Truth in its prime instance, and, hence, also in each of its participations to the degree that they participate in the One, which is to say, to the full extent of their being.

Being and life then are not dark and hidden, mysterious and foreboding; on the contrary, what light is to our eye, being is to our spirit. Being makes sense to the mind, and, where sufficiently in act, it inevitably "sees" or knows. Primarily, it is subsistent knowledge and truth; by extension it is our limited participations thereof.

Also, as the word is to our tongue, being declares, expresses and proclaims itself; it is Word or Logos and participations thereof. A Christian culture is especially sensitive to this, for in Christian teaching the Word of God is a person and personal, the Son of the God the Father. Through this Word, all things were created. Having become incarnate as Christ, Jesus would say "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father":²⁶ if you really know me, you know also my Father²⁷ who spoke me. John, the author of the fourth gospel, said it classically: "That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."²⁸

One cannot overstress the degree which philosophy, done in a religious context, is sensitized to the intelligibility or truth of being. It gives immediate and special resonance to Parmenides' opening statement upon initiating metaphysics: "Being is; nonbeing is not" and "It is the same thing to think and to be." All being is open, indeed is openness, to intellect; correlatively, what is radically closed to mind simply is not and cannot be.

In the context of the transcendent Truth itself, this resonates vibrantly. Philosophy moves confidently—if not always correctly—to overcome obscurity and fear; science races forward, confident that each step of insight constitutes solid progress in humankind's exploration of the universe; problems are not destructive dilemmas and permanent contradictions, but challenges to be solved, opportunities for new knowledge. The mind thrives in such a context; the creativity of the human genius is invigorated and moves forward.

Further, truth speaks itself as word; indeed it proclaims itself. To attempt to hide the truth would image Cronos in the ancient Greek myths who attempted to swallow his children rather than allow them to enter into the light. This is contrary to the nature of being and as violent as attempting to stop the ocean tide or to force a river to flow upstream; in the long run eventually it must be unsuccessful. Being is fundamentally truth and, hence, openness, manifestation and communication. This is the nature of reality itself and, hence, the key to the self-realization of both individuals and peoples.

In the image of the Son who as Word expresses all that the Father is, and like Logos as the first principle through whom all is created, being is open, expressive and creative. Just as a musician or poet unfolds the many potential meanings of a single theme, so being as truth unfolds its meaning and communicates itself to others. Here, the human intellect plays an essential role by conceiving new possibilities, planning new structures, and working out new paths for humankind in the pilgrimage of life with others. Justice, too, is implied in the sense of true judgments in the public forum about being. Such judgments must honor and express the sacredness of beings in their unity or self-identities and promote their mutual union one with another. This is the essence of the role of leadership in family, business and society.

It was the dark plot of Goebbels to harness the new 20th century technology of communication to a restrictive and hence false ideology in order to create the modern means for mind control. The philosopher's dream is rather that these means can be engaged by the free and enquiring mind in its fascination with truth, communication and cooperation. This is the key to the implementation of a modern democratic society.

Goodness

1. *The Nature of the Good.* The third characteristic of being is goodness, which in Eastern thought is reflected in the term *ananda*. This is a still more explicit affirmation of unity and truth, for what is and is able to be known can also be appreciated in its own perfection and as perfective of others. In this sense being relates to will as being desirable, that is, as good. More directly each being, in its unity as undivided with non-being, seeks and holds to its own being or perfection; in this sense being can be said to be love of its own perfection.

When the unparticipated Plenitude of Being, Unity, and Truth is considered in these terms it can be seen that this Absolute is Goodness Itself. As with Truth, it is the subsistent identity of (a) agent or subject, (b) power or will, (c) act, and (d) object of the act. Thus, the plenitude of perfection is subsistent Goodness or Love itself. This is not desire as would be the love of a perfection which is absent. Rather, it is a perfectly conscious identity with unlimited goodness;²⁹ hence, it is holiness. As the perfect possession of this goodness, it is also its enjoyment; that is, it is bliss or *ananda*.

In this explicitation of the unparticipated, incomposite Being there is also to be found the intelligibility of the creative or participative character of the Absolute. Note that what is sought is intelligibility, not necessity. From Plotinus through Spinoza to Hegel, philosophers sought for a necessary and hence necessitating understanding of the creative act itself. They succeeded only in generating a vision neither of human freedom nor of Absolute and Unconditioned being. For to attain such a goal they made the effect to be necessary rather than free, and the source to be dependent upon its effects for its perfection rather than self-sufficient. What should be sought is not a necessitating reason for the Absolute's creativity, but only intelligibility for actively participating or sharing its perfection.

We saw that Truth Itself comprehends the order of possible being, that is, all the ways in which the simple Plenitude of perfection can be imitated or shared by differentiated being. Subsistent Love, blissfully rejoicing in its goodness, perceives therein the idea of a possible universe, with all the ways it has of sharing in being, life and goodness. This provides the sufficient but non-compelling reason. "It is a gift that deserves to be given." Its causality is predicated, not upon a need, a lack, or a desire in the All-perfect, but upon "the gracious will to share, chosen in perfect freedom."³⁰

Participating beings are known and loved by the same act of Knowledge and Love by which the One knows and loves itself.³¹ They do not measure Absolute Truth, but are known as sharing therein; neither are they loved as ends in themselves, but as ordered to Goodness or Love Itself. In the orders of both final and efficient causality creatures come to be on account of the Absolute Goodness; they are "ordered or directed to this goodness as to be received or participated in."³² The life of each person is thus an echo of, or a participation in, Subsistent Love. If lived well each life should be in harmony with others and with nature, all of which are participations in that same Love. Even more, as an imitation of that Love by which one is loved, one can know that one's life is to be lived in terms of sharing with others, rather than of holding to oneself. This, rather than

merely the avoidance of the suffering which would inevitably follow any opposite course, is both the reason and the means for avoiding *karma* or grasping. Finally, a philosophy of participation can aid one to understand that life lived in imitation of creative Love will bring oneself and others into that same Love which, having been the Alpha, must be also the Omega of all.

2. *A Religious Phenomenology of the Good.* Such goodness as the third property of being corresponds in the Christian Trinity to the Holy Spirit as the love of Father and Son. It expresses the conjunction and fulfillment of unity and truth in celebration of the perfection of being or, where imperfect, in the search for that perfection or fulfillment. Holiness is precisely this devoted holding by being to its perfection or goodness where possessed or its search when not yet attained.

Further, as Being Itself is absolute and eternally self-sufficient, and hence has no need for other beings, it creates not out of need, but out of love freely given. This transforms the understanding of human life, which can now be seen to be not merely freedom to choose, to gather and accumulate; or statically to maintain, repeat or conserve; nor even as with Kant the ability to do as we ought. Rather, it is freedom of self-determination, whereby we can "change our own character creatively by deciding for ourselves what we shall do or should become."³³ This may be closer to Confucius's original sense of harmony as a dynamic interrelation of multiple and changing units. If so, it would be also the role of peacemaker in the image of the "Prince of Peace."

Yves Simon summarizes some implications of this for human freedom. He points out that it is based, not in the indeterminism of freedom as mere choice, for that would face the will with the impossible task of deriving something from nothing. Rather, human freedom is the result of a supradeterminism.³⁴ That is, because the human intellect and will are open to the infinite One, the original Truth and Good, the human person through thought and will can respond to any limited participated good whatsoever, yet without being necessitated thereby. In this lies the essence of freedom: as liberated from determining powers, whether internal or external, the will is autonomous; at the same time it is positively oriented toward the good and its realization in all circumstances and in limitless ways. This is the positive attraction of beauty and harmony; it is the vital source for the human creativity of which Confucius spoke and about which Kant wrote in his *Critique of the Aesthetic Judgement*.

Still more dynamically, the originating Transcendent Spirit implies that being is transforming, innovating and creative. Received as gift, our life must in turn be passed on by sharing it with others in love. Even death — whether analogously through suffering in the image of the cross or physically at the end of one's days — does not overwhelm, but becomes a way to new life. The Apostle Paul expressed well the combination of irreducible confidence and indomitable hope implied by this sense of life lived in the context of the Absolute and Transcendent:

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies (*II Cor.* 4:7-10).

A philosophy of the person as image of this transcendent divine principle, lived in a cultural context sensitized by the dynamic Trinitarian interrelations of persons, transforms the philosophical sense of the person in the world. One remains part of nature, but rather than being subject thereto as a mere producer or consumer, one is a creative and transforming center, responsible for the protection and promotion of nature. Similarly, one is by nature social and a part

of society; but rather than being subject thereto as an object, one is its creative center and must be an integral part of all decision making.

The movements of freedom in this half century reflect the emergence of new understanding of human dignity, equality, and participation in the socio-political process. This heightened sense of the dignity of the person and the search for adequate foundations for democracy naturally have generated new interest in religion. There, in the image of the Trinity, the three characteristics of being stand out in human life. First, self-affirmation is no longer simply a choice of one or another type of object or action as a means to an end, but a radical self-affirmation within Existence Itself. Second, self-consciousness is no longer simply self-directed after the manner of Aristotle's absolute "knowing on knowing"; rather, the Absolute Truth knows all that it creates as being a reflection of its own being, truth and goodness. The participating instances of self-awareness image this by transcending themselves in relation to others. Finally, this new human freedom is an affirmation of existence as sharing in Love Itself, that is, in the creative and ultimately attractive divine life — or in Indian terms, "bliss" (*ananda*).

This new sense of being and freedom in the context of a culture marked by the Christian mysteries reflects the meaning of the Transcendent for man and of man. This culture is based in Christ's death and Resurrection to new life; hence, Christian baptism is a death to the slavery of selfishness and a rebirth to a new life of service and celebration with others. Being is a gift or divine grace, but no less a radically free option for life on our part.

Philosophically, this new life of freedom means, of course, combating evil in whatever form: hatred, injustice and prejudice — all are privations of the good that should be. However, the focus of being, seen from our path to the Transcendent is not upon negations, but upon giving birth to the goodness of being and bringing this to a level of human life marked by an enriched harmony of beauty and love.

In summarizing his exposition of the cosmology of the *Rg Veda*, Radhakrishnan concludes: "We see clearly that there is no basis for any conception of the unreality of the world in the hymns of the *Rg Veda*. The world is not a purposeless phantasm, but is just the evolution of God."³⁵ Above we have seen the way in which a systematic philosophy can analyze and develop further this theme. It elaborates the distinction of the composite and differentiated being from the incomposite and undifferentiated being, but it avoids duality inasmuch as the very being or existing of the composite beings which constitute the differentiated universe is nothing other than the participation — the sharing and manifesting — of That One. Further, it enters into the Absolute in order to learn more of that Wisdom and Love which is the Plenitude of perfection, unsublatable and creative.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion to this study of a systematic Christian philosophy as a way to God it may serve to remark briefly upon the reality of the participants, the nature of the cause, and the task for a systematic philosophy.

1. Thomas studied the reality of the differentiated universe in his *Summa contra Gentiles* written for missionaries to Islam. One such school of theology, the *Mutakallim* had attempted to affirm the power of the Absolute by holding the unsubstantiality of creatures. They claimed that creatures could not themselves cause, but were mere occasions for the creative action of the Absolute, indeed, that creatures ceased to exist at each moment and had continually to be

recreated. Etienne Gilson points out that no point is argued by Thomas with more passion.³⁶ In the light of his participational insight the Absolute creator was not being affirmed, but denied, by the reduction or elimination of the reality or active power of its creatures. Thomas repeatedly returns to this theme in his chapters on "The True First Cause of the Distinction of Things" and "On the Opinion of Those Who Take Away Any Proper Actions from Natural Things."³⁷ It should be noted that in these chapters he is not arguing for the reality of multiplicity as a simple chaos of different and clashing beings. What he is asserting is the reality of an ordered unity, the sharing of the One in a graded and interactive order of individuals, species, and genera. In other words, he is carrying forward Aristotle's view of a universe of beings which, acting according to their proper natures, imitate, each in its own manner, the unity and perfection of "That One" which is the plenitude of perfection or perfection itself.

Because causing is a sharing, not a loss, of perfection — as can be seen best in the work of the poet — the effect is some degree of likeness to the cause. Due to the essentially limited character of any one composite being, the divine intention to share limitless perfection provides sufficient intelligibility for the creation not of one only, but of a great multitude of beings, each of a different form from the other. Further, it explains why these beings should be not inert, but active; and how by their interaction they form an intensive unity which the more munificently shares in, and proclaims, the perfection and power of its source. By not only being, but sharing its being, creation manifests the power of its source; by its complex order creation manifests the wisdom of its origin; by the good of its order, which contributes to the well-being of all, it manifests the Love that is its source.³⁸

2. This development of the systematic structure of the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas generally has used not the term "God," but the terms "Absolute," "That One," and the like to state the Plenitude of being and perfection in which all participate. This was done in order both to illustrate and to test the conviction that the real content of a so-called "theistic metaphysics" is not incompatible with, but dependent upon and indeed coterminous with, the One that is articulated in terms of the Absolute. The oft supposed opposition between the so-called God of the philosophers and the God of revelation and scripture would appear to be predicated upon an inadequate understanding of either one or both terms.

Unfortunately, the term 'God' and the theism predicated thereupon are subject to the continual recurrence of the destructive anthropomorphic tendencies which had overtaken the Greek myth in the days of Xenophanes. A.C. Bose gives a more recent list of such tendencies in the introduction to his *Call of the Vedas*. A monotheistic God must, he thinks, be masculine, a father, patriarch and king, who lives in a particular place and is locked in combat with an anti-God.³⁹ This is reflected in the notion of divine action after the pattern of a despot, against which Spinoza wrote in his *Ethics*. All such notions imply limitation, for they situate the divine within a set of contrary notions each of which, being distinct from its contrary, implies limitation. Such limitations require the correction which is expressed by the notion of the Absolute articulated in a philosophy of participation as the incomposite and subsistent Plenitude of Being.

Conversely, the term 'absolute' also has its vicissitudes. In order to protect this from limitation, affirmations of its positive perfection are at times denied, leaving in the final analysis an impersonal essence expressed in double negatives ungrounded in positive affirmation. A systematic metaphysics of participation concludes instead to the Absolute as supreme, indeed, subsistent being, the plenitude of perfection.

We saw the purification of the transcendental characteristics of being by removing from them all elements of limitation such as seeing their constitution as a composite of a limiting essence with their existence. When conjoined with reasoning from participating beings to the Plenitude in which they share, this manifested the Absolute to be Unity, Truth, and Goodness. If being in whatever degree is unique, knowing, and loving, then being which is subsistent Unity, Knowledge, and Love must be personal above all.

It was seen also that unity, truth, or goodness are explications of what is actually but only implicitly stated by being. Hence, they carry no implication of limitation or contrariety. The same must be said of identity, knowledge, or love which are the characteristics of the person. They are as open as is the meaning of existence itself, which each of these affirms in a progressively more explicit manner. Consequently, as such, "person" is not a closed or contrary notion, but is open as is truth and love. The more perfect the person, the more it is open and sharing; the more personal the communication the more it is able to be shared without diminution of its source. Again our paradigm is God, the subsistent Person (which theology would elaborate as triune) who, without loss, is the sharing of love, truth, and being itself.

Of such being, Absolute and personal, the term God is appropriately predicated. Jaeger says of the pre-Socratics, "The predicate God, or rather divine, is transferred from the traditional deities to the first principle of Being (at which they arrived by rational investigation), on the ground that the predicates usually attributed to the gods of Homer and Hesiod are inherent in that principle to a higher degree or can be assigned to it with greater certainty."⁴⁰ The same is true of the Absolute in the thought of Thomas at the juncture of the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Christian traditions.

This is not to say that humans have a comprehensive knowledge of God, or indeed of any existent; nor is it meant to imply that they can grasp the unique way in which God exists — the eminent and proper mode of deity. Neither of these is within human capabilities. But it does question the common assumption that there is an opposition, rather than a necessary identity, between the notion of the Absolute and that of the Personal God. In the systematic philosophy of Thomas they are identical and indispensable one to the other. Today, when our awareness of the meaning of person is subject equally to great threat and to development, this is perhaps the most creative element in the metaphysics of the religious traditions.

3. Taken together the two prior considerations generate a paradox for the human mind and suggest the importance of the work of philosophy. The first conclusion concerned the reality of the participated and differentiated universe, including humanity: both are from God as their origin and toward God as their goal. The second conclusion concerned the absolute character of God as the unparticipated, undifferentiated and incomposite. The conjunction of the two indicates that paradoxically both humans and their universe are directed toward that which definitively transcends them.

It is the task of a metaphysics of participation to resolve this paradox, not by eliminating the reality of either the composite or the incomposite, but by uniting them in their affirmation of being. Reality acts according to its nature and can share only what it is, for, as Parmenides notes, to derive being from non-being is an all impossible way.⁴¹ Thus, the effect of the causality of the incomposite being, whose essence or nature is precisely existence or to be, is the existence or act of being of its creatures. In other words, it is precisely because of the definitive transcendence of the divine as the unique, subsistent Being that God is present to us in his very essence, causing by his power our being. In this light, two conclusions follow. Because our essence is distinct from our existence, as is the case for all composite beings, it can truly be said that God is more present to

us than we are to ourselves. Further, because His immanence is in proportion, rather than in tension, with his transcendence, it is more proper to say, not that God is in us who participate in Him, but that we exist in God.

This vision has been the well-spring of the world's Scriptures. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures express the transcendence in terms of heaven. The *Vedas* point especially to that which is within. Both say that God is beyond all and that one must lose oneself in order to find Him. As lived, it has been the basis of the great schools of asceticism, of Sufism and of the Yoga developed in India and greatly admired by those engaged in the spiritual quest the world over.⁴²

This must stand also as a test for every philosopher, drawing one beyond the successes of one's system and urging one ever forward to more adequate awareness of the infinite correlation of Transcendence and Immanence. This is the eminently worthwhile task; it will ever challenge and elicit the combined efforts of mankind.

Dasgupta summarized the vision of the *Upanishads* as follows:

In spite of regarding Brahman as the highest reality, they could not ignore the claims of the exterior world and had to accord a reality to it. The inconsistency of this reality of the phenomenal world with the ultimate and only reality of Brahman was attempted to be reconciled by holding that this world is not beside him but it has come out of him, it is maintained in him and it will return back to him.⁴³

Every philosophical system must ask whether it or any other has succeeded in taking full account of, and giving definitive expression to, all the elements in that rich statement of the common patrimony of humankind. If the answer is "yes" then our philosophic work is completed. If not then in this age of science and technology, of rapid development of society and person, the philosophy department should be the most exciting place in the university. For it is there that one can reach most deeply into one's heritage to retrieve meaning long since forgotten. There also, and in concert with other metaphysical systems in the heritage of mankind, one is invited to evolve the more ample systematic vision of that participation in Plenitude required in our increasingly complex times for the communion of men in God.

Lecture II

Learning about Man from God

The first lecture took us from man to God in an *a posteriori* manner. That is, it looked at creation to find its grounding in the divine. If religion is a "binding back" of man to God, then this tie could not be stronger for it is the very purchase that man and other finite beings have on their existence.

In the Christian, as in most other creation narratives, this corresponds to the initial state of man which biblical literature describes as Paradise. There all is perfectly in accord with its nature as reflecting God as the source of all.

But philosophically, this would be to abstract in not one, but two directions: one from the gapping abyss of nothingness over which we carry on blithely in our confidence in the divine support, and the other from the ways in which we act in contradiction of this support in our daily choices and actions. The latter will be treated in greater detail in the last two lectures. Here we would focus rather on overcoming the first abstraction. What marvellous things might be seen if we supplant our forgetfulness of the divine source, support and goal of our life by awareness of the loving power of God from whose hands we have our being and by whom we are supported in every detail of our life.

To do this we face a great and pervasive difficulty. Among all of material creation man alone was created free with the power, not only to love his creator and to pass on His gift, but also to close in upon oneself. In the Christian narrative this is the Fall, that is, the selfishness that leads to the pride that places man as equal to or above God, whom it in turn subjects to man. In history this has generated crusades, colonialism and the attempt to build a new world order by force. Such *hubris*, like all fundamentalisms, is such a perversion of the Christian message as to be blasphemous. What is needed then is not more resources and technology, which will only be misapplied for evil ends, but the vision and notion to overcome *hubris* and engage with, rather than against, other peoples and religions.

Where is one to look for such vision and motivation? This is essentially a matter of culture and cultural tradition. As free each person and people responds to its challenge in its own circumstances and its own way. This constitutes a set of values or preferred way of responding to the challenges of life. Virtues are the corresponding capabilities we develop. These, in turn, constitute a culture as way of raising one's children, and, as this is passed on to subsequent generation, a tradition.

There are, however, difficulties specific to cultural traditions. One is the danger of becoming trapped in one's own tradition. This is due to hearing only the same stories as these are repeated in one's community. Like mining the same vein of a mineral this is liable to run thin or run out. The solution lies in alternative sources. It is not, however, as with minerals where operations in one vein are closed and opened in another. Cultures are matters of subjectivity and their religious roots are in infinite Being. Hence, contact with other culture act as stimuli whereby one is enabled to think afresh and delve more deeply into one's own cultural and religious tradition in order to draw out new meaning in response to the challenges of new times. One's tradition can be endlessly renewed.

The other difficulty, especially in globalizing times, lies in being trapped by another's tradition. The present world structures were developed in the West at the end of World War II. At the time only Westerners could be effectively present: Africa was still under colonial rule and Asia

was sorting itself out through internal revolution after the Japanese war. Hence it is not surprising that the new economic structures, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, reflected the West and that the political structure of the United Nations added only the Soviet Union and it was inevitable that the international order would be structured according to the Western values of power and competition. In these circumstances Yu Xintian, Director of The Shanghai Institute of International Relations, points out that proceeding according to these Western structures is not conducive to the success of Asian cultures, but neither is it necessary. Instead, China has the opportunity to improve international relations overall, and for all, by adding e.g., a sense of harmony and of concern for marginalized peoples. Moreover, it now possesses sufficient economic experience and weight to see that such improvement are realized. From this one can conclude that the process for effective global development is not one of substituting foreign elements for those which are native as was done in 1919 in China when Confucius was pushed aside in order to make room for Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy as alien elements from without. Instead, on meeting the other, one can be stimulated to draw from within one's own cultural resources further vision and motivation. How can this be done?

The need is to enter more deeply within my cultural heritage and its religious roots in order to find the potentiality, strength and ingenuity for appropriate new growth. Above we saw how in philosophy Parmenides opened new ways — or developed new glasses — for looking into Being as a whole through his principles regarding being and nonbeing. Religious revelations have done this as well in relation to the meaning and mode of life in order to make more clear the essential orientation for the life of humans as children of God. More recently these glasses have been further polished by the development of the methods of phenomenology for looking within in order to bring into the light dimensions of conscious life and hopes the internal dynamics of which constitute the vision and motivation of culture and its tradition.

Here we would like to look, not as above at the first three ways which proceeded by efficient cause, but at the 4th and 5th of Thomas's classical "ways to God". While he developed these as *a posterior* processes of reasoning, we would like to add us well the *a priori* implications which follow as soon as one comes to the divine through the paths of formal and final cause. This will attempt to integrate both *a posterior* and *a priori* methods along a phenomenological path.

The fifth way of Thomas proceeds in an *a posterior* manner on the basis of final causality or orientation toward a goal, end, or *telos* in Greek. This he observes in nature noting that each being and all together constitute a unity as ordered toward their full realization or perfection both singly and corporately. Yet most beings in nature do not possess the ability to know and hence to know the goal and to plan process thereto. Therefore, he reasons, they must depend on something that does have this capacity and ability in order to draw the massive order of Being into action. This, of course, includes the active power of efficient cause spoken of in the first three ways, but most properly this fifth way is a matter of teleology or of ordering by the attraction of the end or goal which draws others to it.

Phenomenology provides a way of applying this to man by applying the glasses, or principle, of Parmenides to the dimension of subjectivity or human consciousness. Thus, for example, my relationships of friendship or marriage are not limited to place and time as in a legal agreement, but are specifically opened beyond any such specification. The essence of the Christian marriage ceremony is the mutual commitment "for richer or poorer, in sickness or in health." In other words, one's commitment is made precisely beyond anything I can observe, foresee or even imagine. Similarly, life is not a repetition according to a set of scientific formula, but is ever new, exploring together in sorrow or celebration, amazement or concern.

Thus the properly human character of life shows that it is lived in an order derived from and directed toward a transcendent and infinite living truth and meaning, goodness and purpose.

An area of dispute regarding knowledge of God is whether this can be only *a posteriori* from effect to cause or whether God can be known to exist from His very nature and prior to such concerns. In any case, once the mind has achieved awareness of the divine as above it naturally sees finite beings and human life in these new terms. This is *a priori* knowledge, not of God, but of man.

Learning about the infinite source of being and truth we can know that it does not proceed according to a distinction of subject and object and then an act uniting the two, but that the one infinite being is both subject in act or knowing, and identically object in act as actually known. This is not so much knowledge as truth itself. The same is true of the good which is not the will, the willed and the union of the two, but the subsistent union of the two as goodness or love itself.

Consequently, we know that God created not out of a need which he sought to fulfil, but out of the fullness of his love overflowing. The sign under which we have life then is generosity and gift. We can know from this in an *a priori* manner, that is, from its cause, that to live fully is not to acquire but to give, not to dominate and control but to promote the efforts of free people to be and to become what they will to be and to become.

The fifth way of Thomas opens to human awareness this summons to life which not only is from God, but is God himself as love by which He holds to himself in perfect possession of goodness itself. That eternal bliss constitutes the magnetic power by which we are not only enlivened as by the efficient causality unveiled in the first three ways, but brought fully alive as conscious and free beings in pursuit of the fulfilment of the life we have received. This pervades and enlivens every choice, compels us by its attractiveness forcefully yet suavely. At the same time, it shows *a priori* in superabundant living form the goal and desirability of this freedom, love and promotion of others, rather than their compulsion and exploitation.

The insight of the fourth way of Thomas is of special immediacy, bringing into convergence the *a posteriori* and the *a priori* modes of reasoning because it proceeds in terms of formal causality. What is significant is that forms are one: the three of the three pens I have in my pocket is not different from the three of the three trees in my yard. Plato observed this in his development of the notion of participation in which all men participate in the one form "man" but not in "tree". Thus where there is no essential limitation built into the notion, for instance in unity, truth or goodness, these characterize all beings and manifest the absolute Being which as such is One, True and Good – or in the living vedic terms: Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Hence, Thomas notes, wherever there are grades of perfection, as e.g., between trees and men, there are grades of unity, truth and goodness. Each of these, however, is intelligible only in terms of unlimited Unity, Truth itself or Goodness itself. Moreover, as formal causality is based on identity if our minds and hearts are sufficiently open and sensitive we see immediately in and through whatever limited instance of being we encounter the absolute or divine Being Itself.

The first three ways referred the mind to the divine as the first efficient cause which is distinct from the effect which it cause. The fifth way likewise directs the mind to an ultimate cause or goal as sought, but not yet attained, that is, as other. The fourth way refers the mind rather to the divine truth or goodness as one with the multiple instances of truth or goodness we find in this world or are ourselves. It is distinct only inasmuch as it exceeds this truth or goodness by realizing it in its fullness and in an eminent manner. It is not less nor is it formally other. Hence, it is manifest in everything inasmuch as each realizes truth and goodness in its own degree and according to its own nature.

As eminent this might be considered hidden, but if that were all that is said it would grandly miss the mark, for the fourth way is the center piece of Thomas's effort at the beginning of his summary of the essence of theology. It not only directs our attention to the divine subject of that science, but binds back (re-ligatio) all things to that one as not only source and goal, but as that in which the nature of everything now shares. What it says is that life is not a mere matter of the violence, whether of a blind collision of atoms or of the survival of the fittest. Rather, it is the cohesive unity which manifests itself in all and attracts all things suavely by its goodness. Job in his suffering echoes this divine as does the hungry person to feed whom is to feed Christ. St. Francis could see this in animals and in all of nature, all of which was his brother or sister inasmuch as all bore the figure of Christ. John XXIII would refer to this in describing the task of Vatican II as restoring the visage of Christ on the face of humanity at large.

Thus the five ways of Thomas not only open the pathway to the divine, but enable us to read our inner life of consciousness, as well as our entire life of interchange with others in the social and physical environment, as it most fundamentally and truly is. That is, as a creative manifestation of God's glory, a struggle to overcome evil in the footsteps of the Saviour, and the glory of the resurrection in which being emerges triumphant over evil and all things are restored to the harmony of the celestial music.

Part II

Through the Human Crisis to Resurrection in God: Paul Tillich's Contemporary Approach

3.

A Religious Phenomenology of the Sacred in Man

The full opening of the Western mind to being came when it surpassed the horizon of change (physics) and the resulting preoccupation with the different types of things, to focus upon the meaning of being or of life itself. To take this as a mere technical adjustment of one's mind set would grandly miss the mark. For a new degree of sensibility to being unfolds vast new meaning for human life, which in turn could be expected to have strong reverberations in history.

But might not the converse also be true; namely, could vast historical collisions or repressions enable the mind to open to new dimensions of being and meaning? This is what we will take up here, shifting from the close reasoning work of classical metaphysics regarding the notion of being, finite and infinite, to the broad flow of human history as a screen on which the dynamics of being can be read, or more properly as a struggle in which the dynamic of being is lived in suffering and triumph.

To do so is also to draw out a new implication regarding cultural tradition. That is, if taken not as dead repetition but as a dynamic process, tradition is not only a context for philosophy but its dynamic process of discovery and implementation. In this light, the philosopher and sage move from remote hermitages in the solitude of nature to the bustling crossroads of the arts and sciences, university and town, nation and world, and, indeed, of this world and the next.

The great challenge to which every philosopher is called to rise is that of relating the seemingly irreconcilable, of healing the ruptures in human life, of opening the present to the future. This task is never accomplished once and for all: if it were, life would no longer be a quest; in our conditions it would be bereft of interest. But the task does change, along with the struggles and the history of the people. For a variety of reasons, some periods are times of great stability or at least of little change. At such times, the role and spirit, if not the horizon, of the philosopher often is restricted to interpreting and explaining social structures and related decisions; discovery and innovation are in danger of being supplanted by ideology; attention shifts from ethics and metaphysics to logic and history.

Long periods of stagnation can so distort human understanding that the trouble they generate creates dynamic tension, which in turn imposes a new and radically pervasive search for meaning from which new insight can emerge. The greater the contraction, the more penetrating and creative the search which follows; the more troubled the times, the more propitious they are for philosophy. Indeed, it is for such times that philosophy is destined, for the very process by which a people emerges from long hibernation requires that they break through artificial external thought boundaries and achieve the vision which can generate new life for their people.

If this be true, then along with contemplating the good, it may be not only practically imperative to acknowledge and adjust to evil, but essential for metaphysics, particularly if metaphysics is not merely a process of constructing theory but the deeply conscious level of life lived with all its vicissitudes and corresponding richness.

In this lecture we will suggest that, rightly understood, even the acknowledgment of evil in human life, rather than diminishing human meaning, enables man to gauge the true dimensions of the struggle in which he is engaged, the frightening emptiness of the abyss which opens beyond him, and the heroism and triumph of the life well lived.

Paul Tillich: Life and Times

The thought of Paul Tillich can help us to see this, for he lived through the period of the two world wars, confronted the depths of evil opened by Hitler's Naziism in his own country and was central to articulating the vision of resurrection and renewal in the period of reconstruction that followed.

While preparing for his doctorate in philosophy (1911) and his licentiate in theology (1912), he drew less upon the continuing body of traditional Protestant thought in the Calvinistic and Lutheran tradition than upon a philosophical combination of ethical humanism and dialectical idealism.

The ethical humanism was that of Ritschl and Troeltsch who had accepted Kant's location of the religious question in the realm of the will and practical reason, rather than in that of the intellect and pure reason. On this basis, religious issues were to be understood according to the religious and ethical personality considered ideal according to the culture of the time.

The dialectical idealism was especially that of F.W. Schelling, whose collected works Tillich early read in their entirety and wrote upon for his philosophy and theology degrees. In their light, he deepened his appreciation of the divine presence in all things in history, which, in turn, the structures of the dialectic enable one to see as the dynamic expression of the divine. This appreciation of the progressive and developing manifestation of the divine in and through culture stood at the center of Tillich's teaching in the philosophy of religion and culture and theology at the Universities of Berlin, Marburg, and Frankfurt during the 1920's.

This was, as well, the root of his adherence to religious socialism, according to which the defeat of Germany at the conclusion of the First World War had cleared away all that was opposed to, or substituted for, God. This prepared the *Kairos* or moment of time when the divine would be manifested once again, not now in church, but in the people or proletariat. The weakness of this view lay in its repetition of a well known phenomenon extending back to the Fall of the Angels, namely, the creature's refusal to recognize any source of life beyond itself. Its implicit premise was that man, not God, must save man; a little beyond this lay the definitive temptation, namely, to think that man must become God.

Of course, with such a god, man's life soon sinks to an ever more inhuman condition. Thus, all the high hopes were shattered in the early 1930's as the socialist ideal was concretized in the National Socialism of the Nazi party. Where the nation, the race, the people were put in the place of God, what had been looked to as a new manifestation of the divine became its ultimate denial. In this was echoed the experience repeated through history, namely, that man cannot save man. Inevitably, reductive humanisms, man-made utopias, projects to control human history in terms however scientific enclose and then repress the dynamic openness of human freedom: life turns into death.

As this situation became clear, Paul Tillich could not but strongly reject it in his many public speeches throughout Germany, with the result that he was dismissed from the University of Frankfurt when Hitler came to power. Looking back to that time, Tillich sees the developments which bound together the two World Wars as more than merely personal or even national. They spelled the end of ethical humanism. "Neo-Protestantism is dead in Europe. All groups, whether Lutheran, Reformed, or Barthian, consider the last 200 years of Protestant Theology essentially erroneous. The year 1933 finished the period of theological liberalism stemming from Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Troeltsch."⁴⁴

In personal terms, this disillusionment led him to consider becoming a Catholic as the only alternative to "national heathenism." Instead, he came under the influence of Karl Barth's neo-orthodoxy because of its affirmation of God as transcendent. For Tillich, however, this did not mean that culture and history were not significant. The devastating history of the first third of this century confirmed for Tillich the acid existential criticism of meaning developed by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marx. But whereas his historical dialectic had seen God as manifested positively through history, now, when history comes to appear as meaningless, the contemporary religious problem becomes how God is manifested through and in the very meaninglessness of history itself.

It is a measure of the penetrating character of this reading by Tillich of the religious problem of this century that it proved relevant not only to harsh totalitarianisms of Europe, but to the liberal context of North America as well, where, upon his arrival in 1933, he found an analogous crisis. During the deceptive prosperity of the 1920s, there had been a certain religious parallel to the German situation as the search for God was substituted gradually by the impression that the natural progress of the era itself was God or his definitive manifestation. This was especially marked in the Social Gospel Movement which, under the influence of the pragmatism of the John Dewey, had become a relativistic ethical humanism. It reduced the task of theology to generating convictions which need not be Christian or even concerned with God, as long as they were pragmatically efficient and apologetically defensible.⁴⁵ The economic depression in 1929 gave the lie to this direction of religious thought.

It was no longer possible to identify God as the next stage of progress. Rather, God had to be found in the negation of values emanating in ever widening circles from the initial economic collapse. To this, the religious perspective which Tillich had begun to elaborate for Europe proved particularly relevant. The Neo-Naturalists had already begun to recall men from mere humanism to a theocentric philosophy of religion. But, unsatisfied with a God understood as a process wholly immanent in the universe, the evolution which Tillich's thought had recently undergone in Europe allowed him to stress the transcendent character of the divine and the essential implications of this for the reformation and redemption of culture.

A Phenomenological Approach to Religion

Paul Tillich laid the groundwork for this by recognizing some basic dualities which open the field of discussion. If we are not trapped in a complete solipsism, then, on the level of thought, we must distinguish subject and object, the one who thinks and what is thought about, and, on the level of being, we must distinguish self and world. Neither idealism nor materialism have been successful in reducing one to the other; both subject and object must be recognized and the success of a philosophy of life lies in its ability to reconcile the two. The self is indivisible in itself and distinct from all else; it is unique, unrepeatable, irreplaceable and unexchangeable. But if, on the one hand, the self is considered without its polar element of world with which to situate the individual and orient his life, then all becomes isolated and arbitrary; there can be no meaningful participation of knower and known, and actions become random and willful. If, on the other hand, the social unity is taken as an end in itself without regard for the individual, its goals are eviscerated and it itself becomes vicious. Reconciling both self and world is the key to human success or failure.

The life of philosophy, as of man himself, is the work of identifying these polar elements (thesis), seeing how, by their falling apart, life becomes destructive (antithesis), and how they can be reconciled (synthesis). In religious terms, the thesis is the paradise of basic natures, the

antithesis is the Fall into sin and death, the synthesis is resurrection and new life. In terms of metaphysics, the three are successively the stage of essence or nature, of existence, and of their reconciliation in a dynamic harmony of being.

In these terms, Paul Tillich was able to analyze the crisis through which he had passed in Germany and into which he entered in America, and to draw out the characteristics which must pertain to any body of contemporary religious thought. As religious, it would have to understand the presence of God in all things and their relation to Him. In contrast to the naturalists and humanists, his strong appreciation of the need for a transcendent dimension which inspires and empowers man excludes philosophy being an adequate statement of religious thought. If, however, the transcendent be considered an answer, it is the answer to a question constituted by the crisis which is the present existential situation. The analysis of this crisis and the identification of this question of the ultimate is the proper task of philosophy. Theology cannot become imperial, for it exists in a situation of co-relation with philosophy and as the answer to philosophy's most profound questions of being and meaning.⁴⁶

This reflects Tillich's own experience, which was archetypal for that of the 20th century. West and East, people have experienced significant disillusionment with their earlier efforts to create a human paradise. Previous hopes and commitments have been shattered by the course of events; the critiques of Solzhenitsyn strike home both in societies where abundance has generated a hedonism which atrophies the spirit and in societies where inability to produce bespeaks long distortion and suppression of this same spirit. As with Tillich's experience of National Socialism, we face a situation in which the previous contexts of meaning have crumbled. Certainly, this is not the time to attempt to construct a new ideology. Instead, the example of Tillich suggests that we can learn from disillusionment itself as the major experience of the present. By asking what is thereby made manifest to human awareness, we may be able to open to the foundations upon which social life can be reconstructed.

This can be seen also as a matter of transcending the previous human horizons of subject and object. As noted by Kant in his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, such objective patterns of cause and effect allow for scientific precision and technical manipulation, but once established as a total horizon they become reductionist and repressive of the human spirit. More recent theory shows that, unless this horizon is transcended, any critique merely rearranges the dilemma in a cognitive loop which has no exit. Liberation inevitably becomes oppression once again and man has neither hope nor salvation. What is required is a way of transcending this horizon to a meta-critique which opens a new, deeper and more true way to view life. Tillich's reworking of the dialectic suggests how this can occur and opens a new and liberating insight concerning the ground of being present to our consciousness as our ultimate concern. His dialectic shows how this relates to the experience of meaninglessness and thereby plays a truly redemptive role, enabling mankind once again to be creative in facing the problems of its actual historical circumstances.

Paul Tillich was much concerned with the relation between subject and object both in its contemporary modality and in its fundamental nature. There has been a general consensus that the great tragedy of recent times has been the subjection of man to the objects he produces, reducing him to the state of an impersonal object.⁴⁷ Below, we will be able to follow more closely the analysis of this contemporary situation. Tillich sees this as the basic ontological structure of the self-world relation because it is the presupposition of ontological investigation, without itself being able to be deduced from any prior unity. Idealism has been no more successful in deriving the object from the subject than earlier naturalisms had been in reducing the subject to the state of a

physical object. The polarity of the self-world or subject-object structure, then, "cannot be derived. It must be accepted."⁴⁸

The polar relation of these elements assumes varied nuances according to the nature of the reality under consideration. This provides a very sensitive norm for evaluating any system of thought, for the strength and weaknesses of a philosophy will appear clearly from the degree of its success in conciliating the twin poles of subject and object in its own area. Tillich applies this norm in the form of the polar notions of individualization and participation to various types of religious thought.⁴⁹ Following his evaluation will provide us with insight into the requirements for authentic religion and reveal the way in which he transforms the elements of classical Christian thought in the constructions of his own contemporary religious philosophy.

While neither polar notion can be fully realized without the other, individualization will be analyzed first. This element is implied in the constitution of every being as a self and points to the fact that it is particular and indivisible. As particular, the self maintains an identity separate from all else and opposite to anything to which it might be related. As indivisible it maintains its identity by retaining the integrity of its own self center, much as a mathematical point resists partition.⁵⁰ One can hear the traditional definition of the person in these notions, which Tillich does not fail to extend to the temporal order, making self-affirmation something unique, unrepeatable and irreplaceable. The infinite value of every human person is a consequence of this "ontological self-affirmation as an indivisible, unexchangeable self."⁵¹

While this individuality is an indispensable element in reality, it is a grave error to consider it without its polar element of participation. An exclusive insistence on the particular and unrepeatable brings with it the nominalistic breakdown in the philosophy of essence.⁵² This breakdown, in turn, becomes the source of a number of philosophical positions which have greatly influenced religious ideas. Some of the more important nominalist consequences are that "only the individual has ontological reality,"⁵³ that the divine will is random and that finite beings are radically contingent.

For lack of any natural order, the epistemological expression of this nominalistic ontology is referred to by Max Scheler as controlling knowledge, by which the object must be transformed into a completely conditioned and calculable "thing" to be studied with detached analysis by empirical methods. The determination of ethical ends is outside the competency of this knowledge which restricts itself to the consideration of means and receives its ends from such nonrational sources as positive tradition or arbitrary decision. Such nominalistic results derive from the development of individuation without its polar element of participation.

The insufficiency of this thought is realized by Tillich. He considers pure nominalism to be untenable because its radical individualism renders impossible the mutual participation of the knower and the known.⁵⁴ Thus, the various forms of liberalism which have emphasized individualization almost exclusively have tended by that very fact to cut themselves off from all meaningful contact with the divine. A mitigated, but none the less dangerous, form of this is to make of God an object for us as subjects. Though logical predication cannot avoid doing this, it is necessary to reject its implied ontological negation of God's holiness and his reduction to simply an object beside oneself as subject, merely one being among others.⁵⁵

At no time, however, has the exaggerated stress on individualization appeared to be as problematic as in the context of modern meaninglessness after neo-Protestantism. Built upon biblical criticism and the Ritschlian theological synthesis of modern naturalism and historicism, it was shattered in its social foundations by Marx, in its moral grounds by Nietzsche and in its

religious basis by Kierkegaard.⁵⁶ Social crises of this century shattered even the structures with which man had attempted to reconstruct these foundations.

More than ever, the question became no longer which values are true, but "the whole system of values and meanings in which one lived."⁵⁷ The traditional issues of individual sin and forgiveness lost their meaning because the question had become the very possibility of meaning itself. The challenge facing mankind became that of finding the divine through nonbeing in its most radical form, namely, the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness.

Despite this history of its exaggerations, however, individualization remains indispensable in providing the terms of the relation of man to God. But, in order for this relationship to be positive, the corresponding element of participation must also be present. Participation points to "an element of identity in that which is different or of a togetherness of that which is separated, whether it is the identity of the same enterprise, or the identity of the same universal or of the same whole of which one is a part, in each case participation implies identity."⁵⁸

The task of participation is twofold. First, it gives meaning and content to the individual, keeping it from being an empty form. Further, it is an essential perfection, and, hence, proportionate to the being and its act. Thus, when the individual has the character of a person, participation achieves the perfect form of communion. Second, participation provides the real basis for unity with God by expressing the presence of the divine. No religion can be without this without ceasing to be a religion and being reduced to a secular movement of political, educational or scientific activism,⁵⁹ for it is the very relationship to the divine which is expressed by the notion of participation.

Tragically, however, this factor of participation turns into oppression—and this is the burden of the second phase or antithesis in his dialectic—when it is understood entirely in terms of relations between self-centered and limited persons as things. Then the unity between persons can be the product only of the imposition by one person upon another or of some even less personal group or structure. In the personal experience of Tillich, it was precisely National Socialism which had to be transcended, but other forms of forced and unilateral emphasis upon social participation have also marked the 20th century.

The grounds for this tragic polarization of individualization and participation is laid in Tillich's thesis; its tragic mode appears as the antithesis; his synthesis of the two points the way to reconstruction as true resurrection.

The Thesis: Paradise

The original and varied elements which Paul Tillich intends to integrate in his philosophy stand in his thought as does the state of paradise in the biblical creation story. This is taken, however, in a new sense, for "the doctrine of creation is not the story of an event which took place 'once upon a time,' but the basic description of the relation between God and the world."⁶⁰ This includes what can be known of God, the production of His finite effects *ex nihilo*, and the response of man from this situation of meaninglessness. Tillich expresses the dynamic interrelationship of these in terms of an existential dialectic which considers the problems and contradictions of present day existence at a depth at which the ontological principles of essence and existence and the epistemological principles of subject and object can be correlated.

A complete discussion of the relation of essence to existence is identical with the entire theological system. The distinction between essence and existence, which, religiously speaking, is the

distinction between the created and the actual world, is the backbone of the whole body of theological thought. It must be elaborated in every part of the theological system.⁶¹

It was observed at the beginning that Tillich insists on the polarity of subject and object as the point of departure for his analysis of reality because both are presupposed for the ontological question. But, if they provide his point of departure in a first approach to the reality of essence or essence of reality, he leaves no doubt that he shares the modern concern to proceed to a point of identity where the alienation of subject and object is overcome. This is the result of the observation that man has been reduced to the status of a thing by allowing himself to be subjected to the objects he produces.⁶² The strongest statement of this situation was made by Nietzsche, but the best may be Marx's description of the reduction of the worker to a commodity. Reality must not be simply identified with objective being, for man must participate in some deeper principle or lose his value and individuality. To identify reality with subjective being or consciousness, however, would be equally insufficient, for the subject is determined by its contrast with object. Consequently, what is sought is a level of reality which is beyond this dichotomy of subject and object, grounding and unifying the value of both.

The need for a point of identity and its function is better appreciated as one proceeds beyond the subject-object relationship to the investigation of either knowledge or being. "This point of procedure in every analysis of experience and every concept of a system of reality must be the point where subject and object are at one and the same place."⁶³ Thus, the analysis of experience directs one's attention to the logos which is the element of form, of meaning and of structure. In the knowing subject or self, the logos is called subjective reason and makes self a centered structure. Correspondingly, in the known object or world, it is called objective reason and makes world a structured whole.

Though there is nothing beyond the logos structure of being,⁶⁴ it is possible to conceive the relation between the rational structures of mind and reality in a number of ways. Four of these possibilities are represented by realism, idealism, pluralism and monism, but what is most striking is that all philosophers have held an identity or at least an analogy between the logos of the mind and that of the world.⁶⁵ Successful scientific planning and prediction provide continual pragmatic proof of this identity.

The philosophical mind, however, is not satisfied with the mere affirmation, or even the confirmation of the fact. There arises the problem of why there should be this correspondence of the logos in the subject with that of reality as a whole. This can be solved only if the logos is primarily the structure of the one principle of all, that is, of divine life, as well as the principle of its self-manifestation. Then it is the medium of creation, bridging "between the silent abyss of being and the fullness of concrete individualized, self-related beings."⁶⁶ The identity or analogy of the rational structures of mind and of reality will follow from the fact that both have been mediated through the same identical divine logos.

In this way, "reason in both its objective and subjective structures points to something which appears in these structures but which transcends them in power and meaning."⁶⁷ Logos becomes the point of identity between God, self and world. Of these three, the logos of God is central and is participated in by self and world as they acquire their being. Thus, the logos of reason gives us a first introduction to the concept Tillich has of God overcoming the separation of subject and object to provide a deeper synthesis of the reality of both.

This conclusion of the analysis of experience has definite implications for an analysis of being, because the identity is not merely an external similarity of two things to a third without a basis in

the things themselves. The point of identification of subject and object is the divine, which is found within beings. The term "Being itself"⁶⁸ is the only nonsymbolic expression of the divine (though in relation to our consciousness this is termed the ultimate concern). God is within beings as their power of being—as an analytic dimension in the structure of reality.⁶⁹ As such, he is the "substance", appearing in every rational structure; the creative "ground" in every rational creation; the "abyss", unable to be exhausted by any creation or totality of creations; the "infinite potentiality of being and meaning", pouring himself into the rational structures of mind and reality to actualize and transform them.⁷⁰ God is, then, the ground not only of truth, but of being as well; indeed, the divine is able to be the ground of truth precisely inasmuch as it is the ground of being.

These ideas have a long history in the mind of man. In the distant past the *Upanishads* viewed the Brahman-atman both cosmically as the all-inclusive, unconditioned ground of the universe from which conditioned beings emanate, and, acosmically, as the reality of which the universe is but an appearance. The absolute is the "not this, not this" (*neti*), "the Real of the real" (*stiyasya satyam*).⁷¹ A similar line of thought can be traced through Plato and Augustine to the medieval Franciscans and Nicholas of Cusa. Tillich is fond of relating his thought to these classical sources.

The proximate referent of his thought in positing this ontological principle of identity beyond subject and object is Schelling. At the very first, Schelling agreed with Fichte in making the "Absolute Ego" of consciousness the ultimate principle and reality. It is this consciousness which dialectically "becomes" the world of nature. But, on further consideration, Schelling failed to see the particular connection between the infinite Ego and the finite object. For this reason, he moved the "Absolute Ego" from the conscious side of the dichotomy to a central, neutral position between and prior to both objectivity and subjectivity. Thus, the Absolute is called not "Ego" but "the Unconditional" and "Identity"⁷², and the idealism no longer subjective, but ontological. Tillich readily accepted this insight of the early Schelling and, therefore, traced the line of his thought in between, but distinct from both the subjective idealism of Fichte and the objective realism of Hobbes. What is important is that neither side of the polarity be eliminated, both must be maintained. For this, there is required an Unconditional, as the ground equally of subject and object.⁷³

Two important specifications must be added to this notion of a divine depth dimension beyond subject and object. One regards the incapacity of limited beings to exhaust or even adequately to represent the divine: this implies the radical uniqueness of the divine. The other concerns the way God is manifested in the essence of finite beings: this points to the way they participate in the divine.

The first of these specifications, which Tillich is careful to make concerning this point of identity of subject and object, is that it cannot be grasped exhaustively by mind nor replicated completely by things, that is, that it is gnostically incomprehensible and ontologically inexhaustible, the former reflecting the latter. "This power of being is the *prius* which precedes all special contents logically and ontologically."⁷⁴ It is not even identified with the totality of things. For this reason, the divine is termed the "abyss", because it cannot be exhausted in any creation or totality of creations.⁷⁵

Human intuition of the divine always has distinguished between the abyss of the divine (the element of power) and the fullness of its content (the element of meaning), between the divine depth and the divine *logos*. The first principle is the basis of Godhead, that which makes God. It is the root of his majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being, the inexhaustible ground of

being in which everything has its origin. It is the power of being infinitely resisting nonbeing, giving the power of being to everything that is.⁷⁶

This position of the divine as the inexhaustible depth dimension of reality is the basis of the distinction and individualization of God in relation to creatures. As infinite being and truth, the divine is beyond the separation of subject and object, self and world, and makes possible, in principle, a deeper realization of both. In the realm of being, it implies what Tillich calls the Protestant principle, namely, the protest against any thing being raised to the position of the divine. In his own experience, it extended particularly to the state, for he had to extricate himself from the terrible power of national socialism's claim to a totalism which by definition left no room for human freedom. This protest extends as well to any creation of the church, including the biblical writings which must not be identified with the divine ground in any way.⁷⁷ No bearer of the holy may be permitted to claim absolute status for itself.

In the order of knowledge, the inexhaustible character of the divine implies that, if man is to proceed beyond finite realities to an awareness of what is truly divine, he must leave behind the rational categories of technical reason, for such categories limit the infinite. They make God an object, "a" being among others, rather than Being Itself. For this reason, God cannot be conceptualized.⁷⁸ To say that God is the depth of reason is to refuse to make him another field of reason. In fact, he precedes the structures of reason and gives them their inexhaustible quality precisely because he can never be adequately contained in them. Schelling has termed the divine the *Unvordenkliche*, because it is "that before which thinking cannot penetrate."⁷⁹ It was the error of idealism to think that this could ever be completely reduced to rational forms.

Tillich is protected from this error by his basic ontological image of the various levels of reality. "There are levels of reality of great difference, and . . . these different levels demand different approaches and different languages."⁸⁰ The divine is the deepest of these levels and consequently must be known and expressed in a manner quite different from that of ordinary knowledge and discourse. It is to this same fact that Tillich is referring when he introduces the dialectical relationship between these levels and speaks of the divine as the *prius*. This suggests that it will be necessary to proceed beyond conceptualization to an intuitive, personal awareness of the divine. This will be described below, but one thing is already clear. Since the categories are the basis for the objective element in knowledge and the means by which it is made equally available to the many minds, intuitive awareness will have to be subjective and individual.

The other specification made by Tillich concerning the depth dimension regards its manifestation in the essences of finite beings. The notion of essence is found in some form in practically all philosophers, but classically in Plato and Aristotle. Plato attempted to solve the problem of unity and separation in knowledge by the myth of the original union of the soul with the essences or ideas. Recollection and reunion take place later and in varying degrees. Tillich stresses that, in Plato, the unity of soul and ideas is never completely destroyed. Although the particular object is strange as such, it contains essential structures "with which the cognitive subject is essentially united and which it can remember."⁸¹

Aristotle retains the notion of essence as providing the power of being: essence is the quality and structure in which being participates. But this is still potential, whereas the real is actual. Tillich accepts the Aristotelian position in these general terms and then uses it in order to develop his conception of creation. The divine was described above as the inexhaustible; in order for this to be creative an element of meaning and structure must be added. This is the second divine principle, the *logos*, which makes the divine distinguishable, definite and finite. The third principle

is the Spirit "in whom God 'goes out from' himself; the Spirit proceeds from the divine ground. He gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground. . . . The finite is posited as finite within the process of the divine life, but it is reunited with the infinite within the same process."⁸²

A second approach to the thesis of Tillich's dialectic is phenomenological. This approach notes that we are never indifferent to things, simply recording the situation as does a light or sound meter. Rather, we judge the situation and react according as it reflects or falls away from what it should be. This fact makes manifest essence or logos in its normative sense. It is the way things should be, the norm of their perfection. Our response to essence is the heart of our efforts to protect and promote life; it is in this that we are basically and passionately engaged. Hence, by looking into our hearts and identifying their basic interests and concerns—our ultimate concern—we discover the most basic reality at this stage of the dialectic.

In these terms, Tillich expresses the positive side of the dialectical relationship of the essences of finite beings to the divine. He shows how these essences can contain, without exhausting, the power of being, for God remains this power. As exclusively positive, these might be said to express only the first elements of creation, that they remain, as it were, in a state of dreaming innocence within the divine life from which they must awaken to actualize and realize themselves.⁸³ Creation is fulfilled in the self-realization by which the limited beings leave the ground of being to "stand upon" it. Whatever we shall say in the negative section about this moment of separation, the element of essence is never completely lost, for "if it were lost, mind as well as reality would have been destroyed in the very moment of their coming into existence."⁸⁴ It is the retention of this positive element of essence that provides the radical foundation for participation by limited beings in the divine and their capacity for pointing to the infinite power of being and depth of reason. As mentioned in the first section, such participation in the divine being and some awareness thereof is an absolute prerequisite for any religion.

In this first or positive stage in Dr. Tillich's dialectic, by placing the divine as the point of identity beyond both subject and object, he has introduced both elements according to which he evaluated previous religious philosophies. The element of participation so necessary for any religion has appeared and, along with it, the element of individuation. We must now look at Tillich's attempt in the second or negative stage of his dialectic to see both of these in existential dissolution through a unilateral process of individualization. It will remain for the third phase of the dialectic, the synthesis, to develop a contemporary understanding of the restoration of person and society as free participations in the divine.

Lecture III

Human History as Manifestation of God

Chapters and lectures I and II above proceeded in terms of the priority in every order of being over non-being. For this it followed the lead of Parmenides who initiated the science of metaphysics in the Greek tradition. In the light of that principle – with those glasses – it was possible to appreciate the significance of creation as causing being to be not merely of this or that kind or form – creatures do that all the time – but of causing existence itself. Further, it was possible to appreciate *a posteriori*, or proceeding for the effect, the cause or source of *esse* – that is, the creator – to be existence (*sat*) or one, truth or consciousness (*cit*) and good or bliss (*ananda*), and hence beauty itself. Finally, once found this cause can be looked upon in an *a priori* manner to uncover what, as cause, this can tell us about its effect. For as the formal effect of creative causality as the cause of being as such is existence, the existence of every creature must bear the mark of divine unity, truth and goodness. In this light all is transformed as man and nature take on their sacred character and, becoming theonomous, manifesting the divine.

Samuel P. Huntington notes that each civilization is based on a religion while each religion has generated its own proper civilization (with the exception of Buddhism which he attempts to explain). Consequently, it can be concluded that without having a sense of their religious vision and commitment one cannot know how and why a people act or react. One should begin then by first getting as firm a sense of the positive character of the divine as possible, opening wide the mind and heart to their most sensitive degree. Then one applies rigorous philosophical reasoning, which must be authentic and autonomous for otherwise it cannot make its proper contribution to religion. Thirdly, one should return to the sources of one's awareness of the divine, whether in scripture, ritual or the wonders of nature, and apply the tools of philosophy in order to work out as rich a theology as possible in one's own time and culture and even more in these global and ecumenical

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The Human Crisis and the Revelation of the Divine

The Antithesis: The Fall

Tillich turns to the second phase of his dialectic in order to analyze the basic infinite-finite structure by a form of individualization. Its contemporary nature lies in its particular relation to nonbeing. Nonbeing is had in God, where it dialectically drives being out of its seclusion to make God living. But in God it is dialectically overcome, thus placing being itself beyond the polarity of the finite and the infinite negation of the finite.⁸⁵ In beings less than God this nonbeing is not overcome. The classical statement, *creatio ex nihilo* means that the creature "must take over what might be called 'the heritage of nonbeing'," ⁸⁶ which has, along with its participation in being, its "heritage of Being." "Everything which" participates in the power of being is 'mixed' with nonbeing. It is being in the process of coming from and going toward nonbeing."⁸⁷ This is finite being.

The radical realism of this view contrasts starkly with all social utopias. Not only are these man-made and, hence, subject to objectifying the subject, but they fail adequately to recognize the essential character of non-being in human life. This cannot be encountered and overcome unless it is first recognized, and it is characteristic of the dialectic of Tillich, in contrast to that of Hegel and the utopic goal of Marx, that nonbeing pertains to the human condition, and even to the divine. To deny it is to be subject to it; whereas to recognize it first and then reconcile it is the path of liberation. The second stage of Tillich's dialectic, the antithesis, is this recognition.

It is interesting that when Descartes wished to drive home his highly intellectual analysis of the self he followed up with the imaginative example of the ball of wax. Tillich draws on the biblical myth of the Fall to do the same for his notion of nonbeing, thereby enabling one to see its concrete meaning in the struggle to realize human freedom. He shuns the Hegelian understanding of the antithesis as nonbeing dialectically expressing being, for then existence would be simply a step in the expression of essence. In contrast, profound observation of the modern world, especially of the cataclysm of the First World War, forced home the point that reality is also the contradiction of essence. Some such distinction of essence and existence is presupposed by any philosophy which considers the ideal as against the real, truth against error or good against evil.⁸⁸

This has been expressed by the concept of estrangement taken from Hegel's earlier philosophy and applied to the individual by Kierkegaard, to society by Marx, and to life, as such, by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In fact, since the later period of Schelling, it has been commonplace for a whole series of philosophers and artists to describe the world as one of fragments, a disrupted unity. This implies that individualization has become excessive and led to a loneliness of man before his fellow men and before God. This, in turn, drives one into inner experience where one is still further isolated from one's world.⁸⁹ The presupposition of this tragic nature of man is his transcendent Fall.⁹⁰

How is this Fall with its existential estrangement to be understood? First, its possibility is traced to man's finite freedom. In this state in which finite man is excluded from the infinity to which he belongs freedom gives him the capacity to contradict himself and his essential nature. Furthermore, the fact that he is aware of this finitude, of the threat from nonbeing, adds the note of anxiety to freedom, producing a drive toward the transition into existence. Rooted in his finitude

and expressed in his anxiety, once this freedom is aroused, man experiences the threat either of not actualizing his potencies and thus not fulfilling himself, or of actualizing them, knowing that he will not choose according to the norms and values in which his essential nature expresses itself.⁹¹ In either case he is bound to lose himself and his freedom.

The finite nature of man's freedom implies an opposite pole, called destiny, which applies even to the freedom of self-contradiction. Freedom "is possible only within the context of the universal transition from essence to existence" and every isolated act is embedded in the universal destiny of existence.⁹² This means that the estrangement of man from his essential nature has two characteristics, the one tragic coming from destiny, the other moral (guilt) coming from freedom. Of itself, destiny connotes universality, for the Fall is the presupposition of existence and there is no existence before or without it.⁹³ Hence, everything that exists participates in the Fall with its twin character of tragedy and guilt. This applies to every man, every act of man, and every part of nature as well.

The conciliation of the absolute universality of the Fall with the freedom it presupposes is one of those problems which are never really solved because it is part of the human condition which it enlightens. The extension of guilt to nature seems reinforced by evolutionary theories and depth psychology, but how the inevitability and the freedom of estrangement are to be reconciled remains an enigma. In one statement, Tillich affirms the necessity of something in finite freedom for which we are responsible and which makes the Fall unavoidable. In another work, he considers estrangement to be an original fact with "the character of a leap and not of structural necessity."⁹⁴ Despite these difficulties, in explaining how man's estrangement is free, Tillich clearly presents it as the ontological realization of the Fall of mankind.

This negative phase in the dialectic is mediated to the level of consciousness by the general, and presently acute, phenomenon of anxiety which arises from the nonbeing in finite reality. "The first statement about the nature of anxiety is this: anxiety is the state in which a being is aware of its possible nonbeing."⁹⁵ It is, in fact, the expression of finitude from the inside. As such, it is not a mere psychological quality but an ontological one, present wherever finitude and its threat of nonbeing are found. Anxiety is then simply inescapable for finite beings. Were it a particular object, it might be feared directly, attacked and overcome. But as

nothingness is not an 'object' there is no way for the finite to overcome nonbeing. Thus anxiety lies within man at all times. This omnipresent ontological anxiety can be aroused at any time even without a situation of fear, for the emotional element is but an indication of the perverse manner in which finite being is penetrated by the threat of absolute separation from its positive element of infinity, that is, with the threat of annihilating nothingness.⁹⁶

The nonbeing of finitude and estrangement is present on each level of being and in three ways: ontic, spiritual and moral. This produces three corresponding types or characteristics of anxiety. Ontic anxiety is the awareness that our basic self-affirmation as beings is threatened proximately by fate, the decided contingency of our position, and ultimately by death. Spiritual anxiety is the awareness of the emptiness of the concrete content of our particular beliefs and, even more, the awareness of the loss of a spiritual center of meaning resulting in ultimate meaninglessness in which "not even the meaningfulness of a serious question of meaning is left for him."⁹⁷ Moral anxiety is the awareness that in virtue of that very freedom by which one is human he continually chooses against the fulfillment of his destiny and the actualization of his essential nature, thus adding the element of guilt.⁹⁸

All three elements of anxiety—death, meaninglessness and guilt—combine to produce despair, the ultimate or "boundary" situation. One element or another may stand out more clearly for various people or in various situations, but all three are inescapably present. It is guilt that seals Sartre's *No Exit*, for if there were but the nonbeing of death and meaninglessness, man could affirm both his ontic and his spiritual meaning by his own act of voluntary death. But guilt makes all this impossible. "Guilt and condemnation are qualitatively, not quantitatively, infinite."⁹⁹ They point to the dimension of the ultimate and the unconditional from which we have become estranged through our own responsible actions. In this way, Tillich's contemporary understanding of the situation of loneliness and despair is ultimately pervaded by a sense of guilt.

Nonbeing extends beyond being to knowledge. After recognizing that existence is both the appearance and the contradiction of essence, he adds that "our thinking is a part of our existence and shares the fate that human existence contradicts its true nature."¹⁰⁰ Reason is effected by the nonbeing of finitude and estrangement. Under the conditions of existence, it is torn by internal conflicts and estranged from its depth and ground.

Another note of the existential situation of knowledge is its inclusion of actualized freedom. This not only separates thought and being, but holds them apart. There results a special kind of truth, one which is attained, not in an absolute standpoint at the end of history, but in the situation of the knower: subjectivity becomes the hallmark of truth. Its contemporary tragic character is due to the fact that it results from separation and despair. "Truth is just that subjectivity which does not disregard its despair, its exclusion from the objective world of essence, but which holds to it passionately."¹⁰¹

Throughout this negative stage of the dialectic, there remains the original positive element, the bond to the divine. "Man is never cut off from the ground of being, not even in the state of condemnation,"¹⁰² for really to lose the foundation of one's being would be utter annihilation. This essential insight of Hegel regarding sublation¹⁰³ would appear to have been tragically omitted by Marx who, in his concern for social transformation, understood all in terms of technical reason focused upon negation. But, if what is negated is the power of being upon which a human life and a people's culture have been based, then the possibilities of reconstruction are radically undermined and left without foundation. With no source of meaning, life not only loses meaning but is condemned to remain thus. Neither negation nor negation of negation will suffice. The tragedy which Tillich brings to light is that, despite the presence of the power of being, in this state of existence man does not actualize, but contradicts the essential manifestation of his divine ground.

This is more than individualization; it is the tragically guilty estrangement of being and knowing from the divine, and from ourselves as images of the divine. Thus, Tillich's systematic analysis of the predicament of modern man manifests the true dimensions of the exaggeration of individualization experienced as a sense of loneliness and expressed theologically as the Fall of man. It does this in the contemporary context of meaninglessness by questioning not only the supports of the previous generations, but the very meaning of support. If this questioning be sufficiently radical, it may open the way to a rediscovery of the basis not only for a reordering or restructuring, but for radical reconstruction.

The Synthesis: Resurrection

The first stage of Tillich's existential dialectic had presented the essential or potential state of finite reality in union with the divine. The second or negative moment of this dialectic placed

individualization in its present context of meaninglessness. This is a powerful and profound expression of the difficulty in actualizing human dignity, which is identically the element of union or participation in the divine which is the essence of religion. Let us see how the third stage attempts to provide this element in a contemporary fashion.

Since existential separation and disruption leaves man opaque to the divine, Tillich will not allow the divine to be derived from an analysis of human experience: man cannot save himself.¹⁰⁴ If God is to be the answer to the existential question of man, he must come "to human existence from beyond it"¹⁰⁵; the divine depth must break through in particular things and particular circumstances. This is the phenomenon of revelation in which the essential power of natural objects is delivered from the bondage of its existential contradiction, so that the finite thing or situation participates in the power of the ultimate.

In this way, revelation provides more than a mere representation of the divine; it opens levels of mind and of reality hidden till now and produces the experience of the divine which is the most profound of these levels. The appearance of the divine varies according to the particular situation. Experienced in correlation with the threat of nonbeing, God has the form of the "infinite power of being resisting nonbeing," that is, he is Being Itself. As the answer to the question in the form of anxiety, God is "the ground of courage."¹⁰⁶ Each is a form of the particular participation in the divine which takes place in this situation. As this same participation is the basis for symbols of the divine, these differ in mode and duration depending upon the situation.

For a better understanding of the contemporary nature of Tillich's religious philosophy, it is necessary to investigate further his development of the situation of revelation in the context of meaninglessness. As cognitive, this encounter includes two elements. One is objective and termed a miracle or sign-event; the other is subjective and named ecstasy and inspiration. The objective and the subjective are so strictly correlated that one cannot be had without the other: revelation is the truth only for the one who is grasped by the divine presence.¹⁰⁷

Miracle does not mean a supernatural interference with the natural structure of events. To make this clear Tillich prefers the term 'sign-event', as signifying that which produces numinous astonishment in Rudolph Otto's sense of that which is connected with the presence of the divine. Such a sign-event can be realized in the context of meaninglessness because it presupposes the stigma of nonbeing, the disruptive tensions driving toward man's complete annihilation. In particular situations, this stigma becomes evident and manifests the negative side of the mystery of God, the abyss. However, such situations also imply the positive side of the mystery of God, for their very reality manifests the divine ground and power of being over which nonbeing is not completely victorious.

This explains the characteristics which Tillich attributes to a miracle. He speaks of a miracle as "an event which is astonishing, unusual, shaking, without contradicting the rational structure of reality; . . . an event which points to the mystery of being, expressing its relation to us in a definite way; . . . an occurrence which is received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience."¹⁰⁸ The subjective element pertains to the very nature of a miracle. Thus, even a person who later learns about the sign-event must share in the ecstasy if he is to have more than a report about the belief of another. An objective miracle would be a contradiction in terms.

This subjective element of ecstasy, or "standing outside one's self", is the very etymology of the term itself. It indicates a state in which the mind transcends its ordinary situation, its subject-object structure. Miracle was seen to be negatively dependent on the stigma of nonbeing. In the mind, what corresponded to this stigma was the shock of nonbeing, the anxiety of death, meaninglessness and guilt. These tend to disrupt the normal balance of the mind, to shake it in its

structure and to force it to its boundaries where it openly faces nonbeing. There it is thrown back upon itself.

This might be useful in the interpretation of the history of the last century. For in facing the structural contradictions of his time, Marx took just this route. Seeing them as a call to man to save himself, he turned against all else as an opiate, and thereby opened the way for a new radicalization of the conflict of subject and object. Once objectified in his work, now man would be totally objectified by society; family bonds would be intentionally subverted; and the sense of personal dignity would be annihilated before the state which wished to be all. Tillich's dialectic points to the fact that, when forced to its extreme situation, to the very limit of human possibilities, the mind experiences an all pervading "no." There, face to face with the meaninglessness and despair which one must recognize if one is serious about anything at all, one is grasped by mystery. To acknowledge meaninglessness even in an act of despair is itself a meaningful act, for it could be done only on the power of the being it negates.¹⁰⁹ In this way, the reality of a transcending power is manifested within man.

In a radically contemporary mode, this is the expression within human consciousness of the classical theme of the non-ultimacy of that which is limited and contingent. Anything perceived as object opposed to subject must be limited and not all-sufficient; but this very perception bespeaks as its basis that which is self-sufficient and absolute.

This is not natural revelation whereby reason grasps God whenever it wills. Tillich takes an extra step, noting that the object-subject dichotomy which characterized the human mind enables it to recognize its contradictions, but not to resolve them. Natural knowledge of self and world can lead to the question of the ground of being and reason, but, as estranged in the state of existence, it cannot answer the question. For this God must grasp man,¹¹⁰ which is revelation. The power of being is present in the affirmation of meaninglessness and in the affirmation of ourselves as facing meaninglessness; it affirms itself in one in spite of nonbeing.¹¹¹

In true ecstasy, one receives ultimate power by the presence of the ultimate which breaks through the contradictions of existence where and when it will. It is God who determines the circumstances and the degree in which he will be participated. The effect of this work and its sign is love, for, when the contradictions of the state of existence are overcome so that they are no longer the ultimate horizon, reunion and social healing, cooperation and creativity become possible.

Dr. Tillich calls the cognitive aspect of ecstasy inspiration. In what concerns the divine, he replaces the word knowledge by awareness. This is not concerned with new objects, which would invade reason with a strange body of knowledge that could not be assimilated, and, hence, would destroy its rational structure. Rather, that which is opened to man is a new dimension of being participated in by all while still retaining its transcendence.

It matters little that the contemporary situation of skepticism and meaninglessness has removed all possibility of content for this act. What is important is that we have been grasped by that which answers the ultimate question of our very being, our unconditional and ultimate concern. This indeed, is Tillich's phenomenological description of God. "Only certain is the ultimacy as ultimacy."¹¹² The ultimate concern provides the place at which the faith by which there is belief (*fides qua creditur*) and the faith that is believed (*fides quae creditur*) are identified.

It is here that the difference between subject and object disappears. The source of our faith is present as both subject and object in a way that is beyond both of them. The absence of this dichotomy is the reason why Tillich refuses to speak of knowledge here and uses instead the term 'awareness'. He compares it to the mystic's notion of the knowledge God has of Himself, the truth

itself of St. Augustine.¹¹³ It is absolutely certain, but the identity of subject and object means that it is also absolutely personal. Consequently, this experience of the ultimate cannot be directly received from others:¹¹⁴ revelation is something which we ourselves must live.

In this experience, it is necessary to distinguish the point of immediate awareness from its breadth of content. The point of awareness is expressed in what Tillich refers to as the ontological principle: "Man is immediately aware of something unconditional which is the *prius* of the interaction and separation of both subject and object, both theoretically and practically."¹¹⁵ He has no doubt about the certainty of this point, although nonsymbolically he can say only that this is being itself. However, in revelation he has experienced not only its reality but its relation to him.¹¹⁶ He expresses the combination of these in the metaphorical terms of ground and abyss of being, power of being, ultimate and unconditional concern.

Generally, this point is experienced in a special situation and in a special form; the ultimate concern is made concrete in some one thing. It may, for instance, be the nation, a god or the God of the Bible. This concrete content of our act of belief differs from ultimacy as ultimacy in that it is not immediately evident. Since it remains within the subject-object dichotomy, its acceptance as ultimate requires an act of courage and venturing faith. The certainty we have about the breadth of concrete content is then only conditional.¹¹⁷ Should time reveal this content to be finite, our faith will still have been an authentic contact with the unconditional itself, only the concrete expression will have been deficient.¹¹⁸

This implies two correlated elements in man's act of faith. One is that of certainty concerning one's own being as related to something ultimate and unconditional. The other is that of risk, of surrendering to a concern which is not really ultimate and may be destructive if taken as if it were. The risk arises necessarily in the state of existence where both reason and objects are not only finite, but separated from their ground. This places an element of doubt in faith which is neither of the methodological variety found in the scientist, nor of the transitory type often had by the skeptic. Rather, the doubt of faith is existential, an awareness of the lasting element of insecurity. Nevertheless, this doubt can be accepted and overcome in spite of itself by an act of courage which affirms the reality of God. Faith remains the one state of ultimate concern, but, as such, it subsumes certainty concerning both the unconditional and existential doubt.¹¹⁹

Can a system with such uncertainty concerning concrete realities still be called a realism? Tillich believes that it can, but only if it is specified as a belief-ful or self-transcending realism. In this, the really real—the ground and power of everything real—is grasped in and through a concrete historical situation. Hence, the value of the present moment which has become transparent for its ground is, paradoxically, both all and nothing. In itself, it is not infinite and "the more it is seen in the light of the ultimate power, the more it appears as questionable and void of lasting significance."¹²⁰ The appearance of self-subsistence gradually melts away. But, by this very fact, the ground and power of the present reality becomes evident. The concrete situation becomes *theonomous* and the infinite depth and eternal significance of the present is revealed in *anecstatic* experience.

It would be a mistake, however, to think of this as something other-worldly, strange or uncomfortable. It is *ec-static* in the sense of going beyond the usual surface observations and calculations of our initial impressions and scientific calculations, but what it reveals is the profundity of our unity with colleagues, neighbors and, indeed, with all mankind. Rather, then, than generating a sense of estrangement, its sign is the way in which it enables one to see others as friends and to live comfortably with them. As ethnic and cultural difference emerge, along with

the freedom of each people to be themselves, this work of the Spirit which is characteristic of Tillich's dialectic comes to be seen in its radical importance for social life.

Theological Implications

Up to this point, the positive exposition of Tillich's thought could have been developed without special relation to Christianity. However, he sees in his system the need for a central manifestation of God both to serve as a point of over-all unity and to conquer definitively the contradictions of existence. It is here that Tillich introduces Christ as the final revelation. We shall present this aspect of his system briefly in order to indicate the direction taken by his thought as it enters the properly theological realm.

Since reason remains finite and retains its state of existence even after receiving revelation, new difficulties continue to arise. The human tendency to oppose subject and object and to reduce subjects to objects with all its corrosive, repressive and dehumanizing effects was broken in its final power and the conflicts of reason were replaced by reconciliation once man's total structure was grasped by its ultimate concern and opened to the ground of being. Still, as old habits die hard their corruptive effects, though conquered, are not removed.¹²¹ Hence, they are able to rise again and attack even the elements of revelation. The bearers of revelation can become mistaken for the ultimate itself, thereby making even faith idolatrous. Furthermore, the emergence of the subject-object horizon to dominance can lead to a loss of the ecstatic, transcending power of reason. In this case, reason forgets that it is but an instrument for awareness of the ultimate and tends itself to become an ultimate.

Fortunately, these distortions of faith and reason can be definitively conquered; the means of this victory is called final revelation. It has various criteria, but all are bound up with the qualities which a revelation must have if it is to be the ultimate solution to the conflicts of our finitude in the state of estrangement. The criterion on the part of the miracle is the power of final revelation for "negating itself without losing itself."¹²² Definitive revelation must overcome the danger of substituting itself for the ultimate by sacrificing itself. This is Christ on the cross, perfectly united with God, who in the surrender of all the finite perfection by which he could be a bearer of revelation becomes completely transparent to the mystery he reveals. Thus, he becomes a bearer which merely points and can never be raised to ultimacy. This is the perfect fulfillment of the very essence of the sign-event concept. In turn, Christianity receives an unconditional and universal claim from that to which it witnesses, without Christianity as such being either final or universal. On the part of reason, another criterion of this special revelation is its capacity to overcome the conflicts in reason between autonomy and heteronomy, absolutism and relativism, emotionalism and formalism. The success of Christ in solving these conflicts provides a continuous pragmatic manifestation of Christ as the final revelation.¹²³

The need for a definitive and incorruptible manifestation of the ground of being is responded to by final revelation which, as such, it is not only the criterion, but the fulfillment of other revelations.¹²⁴ This becomes the "center, aim and origin of the revelatory events" which preceded and surrounded it. The preparatory revelations mediated through nature, men and events are called universal revelation, though they occur only in special, concrete circumstances. They have the function of preparing both the question and the symbols without which the answer provided by final revelation could neither be received nor understood.¹²⁵ But, with the advent of final revelation, preparatory revelation ceases, and the period of receiving revelation begins. The people (*ecclesia* or Church) become the bearer of the original fact of Christ; they continue the process of

reception, interpretation and actualization. This combines the certainty of its basis in the ultimate with the risk of faith, for its belief that it cannot be surpassed by a new original revelation is the other side of its belief that revelation has the power of reformation within itself.¹²⁶

Taking this risk with courage, final revelation is the definitive point where the estrangement of essential and existential being is overcome, where finitude is reunited with infinity, man with God, anxiety with courage and mortality with eternity. This is the eschatological reunion of essence and existence, foreshadowed and momentarily grasped in universal preparatory relations. It is definitively established by this final revelation in which Christ becomes the "new being" and God becomes incarnate.¹²⁷ This is "realized eschatology," but it has happened only in principle, that is, in power and as a beginning. "Those who participate in him participate in the 'new being,' though under the condition of man's existential predicament and, therefore, only fragmentarily and by anticipation."¹²⁸

In this context, morality cannot remain the empty or arbitrary self-affirmation of a spiritual being. Its ultimate impulse and final aim is the expression of the transcendent ground of being, but its particular contents, being received from the culture, remain preliminary and relative. In this way, man's actions, like his being, should be provisional manifestations of the divine depth dimension.

In its expression of the fragmentary nature of reality, this view includes the objectivity of positivism without its refusal to penetrate into the nature of existence. In expanding one's horizons beyond the physical, it integrates also the subjectivity of idealism without remaining trapped in a realm of essences.¹²⁹ Both insights are synthesized and transcended in a new ontological mysticism. This is not the classical mysticism which disregarded the cosmos for a direct union with a transcendent absolute. Instead, it points by faith to the unfathomable character of the ground of being and to the depth of life as prior to, and condition of, both subject and object. By restoring the element of participation in the divine, this goes to the heart of religion.

Tillich sees two reasons for considering this mysticism to be post-reformation. One is its refusal to elevate anything finite to the position of the divine. The other is its search for the essence of objectivity in the depth of subjectivity, approaching God through the soul.¹³⁰ Since this approach is made in the context of total meaninglessness which has characterized the dark side of this century, it is not only contemporary but opens to new hope for the 21st century.

In this study, we have examined the historical context of the thought of Paul Tillich, the philosophical problem this generated, the resulting elaboration of the dialectic, and its theological implications. The great popularity of his work during the period of reconstruction following World War II suggests that his experience and philosophical development might be helpful for many today in analogous circumstances of nation building and rebuilding.

One instance might be illustrative. Martin Luther King wrote his doctoral dissertation on the dialectic of Tillich. When doing so, he saw love as the foundational transforming power at work in the heart, but considered it only a personal pilgrimage of the individual soul. Later, he wrote that he did not consider this to be a matter of social import until on visiting India he came to see with the eyes of Gandhi that the Christian doctrine of love was indeed "one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom." Nevertheless, until he faced the struggle for racial dignity in Montgomery this insight remained only at the intellectual level of understanding and appreciation; it was in the actual borderline circumstances of the struggle for freedom, when he was forced to the limits of meaning by the threat of nonbeing, that his intellectual insight was transformed into a commitment to a way of life.¹³¹

This is suggestive for philosophers in our times. Aristotle spoke of philosophy as being undertaken at a time of leisure, after one has taken care of the necessities of life. The example of Tillich and King suggests that Marx was correct in saying that in our times philosophy can, and, indeed, often must, be done on another more realistic and historical basis. It was in facing the destructive power of the modern totalitarian state that Tillich found the need to transcend technical reason and to go beneath structures to the very ground of being. Through experiencing directly the negativity of an exploitive system in the form of bombings, fire hoses and vicious dogs, Martin Luther King was able to uncover and give voice to the power to overcome it, and thereby lead his people to new dignity and freedom.

An old Indian proverb has it that when the pupil is ready the teacher will arrive. The example of Tillich and M.L. King suggest that the condition for receiving the power to be may be the very quandaries and dilemmas of change when old structures by their inadequacies contradict life. If so, Tillich's dialectic points out how the more disastrous those structures are manifested to be—that is, through their very negativity—a new level of being can be received, life can be transformed and the human spirit can experience resurrection and new life.

Lecture IV

The Dialectic of Creation, Death and Resurrection

From Schelling, Tillich drew his dialectical structure. This consisted of thesis, antithesis and synthesis which will first be sketched here briefly and then considered in greater detail. The key to this is the relation between polar elements.

The two elements of subject and object appear in all acts of knowledge; all schools of philosophy understand knowledge as some mode of relationship between these two. On the one hand, there is subject, self or individual. Left to itself this would be isolated, wilful and arbitrary. Hence, it must stand in relation to its alternate pole: the object, world or society. Left to itself, however, this would suppress the individual, lose its social purposes and become vicious. Consequently the two, subject and object, need each other and hence constitute the basic poles of the structure of reality. As the basic components of reality they constitute its fundamental nature.

That, however, is but the thesis. In history the two do not remain in cooperation or mutual reinforcement; each struggles for hegemony and hence against its partner. The result is an antithesis in which reality loses both meaning and value. The synthesis, in turn, consists of the restoration of the harmony of the two polar elements and their mutual reinforcement.

In this process philosophy can analyze the problems and formulate the question, but it cannot restore the unity for the polarity is endemic to created reality and will inevitably – though freely – become disrupted. Hence, God as transcendent must enter human history to bring as the answer the reconciliation of the two poles. The analysis of this process is theology. Hence while philosophy can articulate the questions, it remains for theology to consider the answers as these constitute in reality the revelation of the divine.

Thesis: Creation

Let us look now in greater detail at these three steps of the dialectic, beginning from its thesis.

Tillich notes that the Biblical narratives recount creation in terms not of scientific fact or historical event, but of myth as a basic description of the relation between God and humanity. This includes a philosophy of the fundamental character of this relation. The same can be said of almost all peoples, each of which has its own creation story.

Philosophically, Tillich makes note of the basic polarity of being and mind or of world and self. In their analysis of the reality of knowledge all the classical schools of philosophy speak of some form of correspondence between the two. But such a correspondence, in turn, supposes some common point of origin of subject and object.

This common point is unique. It transcends all subjects and objects and hence is unable to be known or conceptualised in their terms. It is the "not this, not that" the *neti neti* of Vedic philosophy. Rather, it stands as the inexhaustible depth dimension which, as unfathomable, can be related to by an intuitive personal awareness. This is where rationalism, which proceeds by clear and distinct concepts, can be only reductionist in nature.

In these circumstances Tillich goes beyond the subject-object dichotomy to call upon the phenomenology which was then emerging in Europe. It was a step not dissimilar to the history of physics in the 20th century. Whitehead reported that at the first of that century it was thought that the work of physics was essentially completed. Instead, science managed to break into the atom and delineate its components and their dynamics. Similarly in philosophy, where for three

centuries philosophy had been restricted to the study of object, there was an analogous break through into the subject, its structures and dynamics. This took place in both the British and the continental tradition. Ludwig Wittgenstein in his earlier *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* conceived knowledge as a point to point mapping process by the senses reproducing in the mind an exact copy of the terrain before it. What could not be their depicted, namely the intentional power to make these relations, was pushed to the margins as unutterable. By the time of his *magnum opus, Philosophical Investigations*, the intentionality, which previously had been unutterable, was now recognized as central to the process.

In an analogous development in Germany Edmund Husserl undertook to establish the foundations of mathematics only to find indispensable the inner element of intentionality on the part of the subject. This first step in the phenomenological tradition harboured the danger of an idealism, however, because consciousness alone could mean consciousness of consciousness, leaving the person trapped in a hall of mirrors. Hence, Martin Heidegger took the next step of grounding this in being so that the human person stood as a *dasein* thrown into being from Being beyond time.

Earlier in *Being and Time* man questioned being and, as it were, forced it to yield up its secrets. Later, however, he shifted his focus to the Being which is hidden and whose unveiling is the process of truth. In this latter perspective man waits upon Being and shepherds beings in time.

Beyond this Hans-Georg Gadamer would add the importance of community and tradition for the process of unveiling being, which constitutes in its own right a hermeneutic process of unveiling or interpreting being. This structure, as developed by Karl Rahner, in his work, *Spirit in the World*, served the Second Vatican Council as a rich horizon for its work of reinterpreting the life and work of the Church, which it expressed in its document: *Church in the World*.

Applying this phenomenological approach, Tillich notes that we are never indifferent, as is a thermometer or camera. Rather we judge the situation as to whether it is as it should be, that is, according to its essence or nature. This is normative. On this basis we react accordingly and indeed passionately as our desperate effort "to be" rather than "not be" or non being.

This is not a matter of looking only into our mind for that would abstract from existing being and remain in the ideal order, abstract, conceptual and distant. Rather, looking into not only mind but our hearts, we discover the most basic reality in terms of our concerns. Thus Tillich comes to the term "ultimate concern" as his phenomenological expression of the divine as this is reflected in human consciousness. Like a giant telecommunication dish or a tuning fork, our heart resonates to being.

In this one should note the difference between mind and heart. The former works cognitively to bring the object within it and, in a sense, under its control. As regards the infinite or absolute the limited human mind is destined to be inadequate and to fail. The dynamism of the heart, however, is different. Its success is not in terms of its ability to include the other within itself, but in terms of its ability to reach out to the other and to let it be. Thus in love or benevolence one supports the other person and promotes his or her freedom to be. "Ultimate concern" is marked then not by the limitations of human knowledge, but by the greatness of the divine.

Antithesis: Fall

In the second phase of Tillich's dialectic the focus shifts from being to non being. This is found in God as well as in man; but it is in God as overcome. Hence God does not correspond to

man in his finitude but is definitively beyond both the finite and the infinite; he is in Barth's term "totally other."

In man, however, non being is not reconciled and transcended. In biblical terms this is the reality of the Fall which takes place when, going beyond essence, man freely exercises his existence. Theoretically, this introduces non being as a component of finite being, the negative as well as the positive. Note that this is not merely the Hegelian antithesis, which was merely a statement of something not yet made explicit in the thesis. Rather it is antithesis in the stronger sense of a real contradiction of essence reflecting the disastrous experience of World War I. It implied the real distinction of existence and essence. Those relationships Tillich considered to be the heart of theology articulated in each of its facets.

How does this break occur? He sees this as taking place through pride leading to an excessive individualization. This results in a disruption of unity and a loneliness of man from both God and one's fellows. Freedom gives one the capacity even to contradict one's essential nature, yet doing so is universal and hence human destiny. How to combine and reconcile freedom with the universality of the fall is one of the conundra off human existence. In any case, one faces the dilemma of either exercising one's freedom knowing that this act will not be according to one's essence, or of not exercising one's freedom and not fulfilling one's being. In either case, one loses oneself and one's freedom. Hence, human destiny is tragic for as one's freedom is involved it entails guilt.

Phenomenologically in terms of one's consciousness the result is anxiety. This is not only a psychological state, but unfolds in three orders. The first is ontic as one's self-realization and self-affirmation are threatened by contingency – that is by the inclusion of both being and non being as noted with regard to Parmenides and Thomas above – by death and by the fated tragic destiny of the fall. The second order in which anxiety occurs is spiritual. This is the emptiness of the content of all beliefs. It is the loss of the spiritual center of meaning, leading to ultimate meaninglessness, to the extent even of the loss of the meaningfulness of a serious question about meaninglessness. Finally and definitively it appears in the moral order as my freedom inevitably chooses against my essential nature and personal fulfilment. Hence the ultimate tragedy of guilt which marks all else.

In this case then what can truth be? In actualised freedom reason is torn from its ground, and existential truth is that subjectivity which holds to the despair of this separation from the ground of being.

Synthesis: Resurrection

Only by passing through the darkness of the Fall can the divine light appear. Again Tillich approaches this both theoretically or speculatively and phenomenologically. In terms of theory because of his existential separation man is opaque to the divine. Consequently, God cannot be derived from an analysis of human experience – man cannot save himself.

Instead the divine depth of being must break through or reveal itself in particular circumstances. There the essential power of being of the thesis if delivered from the existential contradictions of the antithesis.

Revelation then is not a representation of the divine, but an opening of levels of the mind and of reality which were always there but previously had been hidden. In and according to particular circumstance they break through. As regards the threat of non being this appears in the power of

resistance to non being, that is as Being Itself, whereas in the context of anxiety it is manifest as the ground of courage or the courage to be.

Phenomenologically, this can be termed miracle for it rejoins both the objective and the subjective. The former or objective aspect can be called the sign event. The latter or corresponding subjective experience is that of ecstasy or if standing outside of oneself. This latter is the essence of miracle. When forced to the boundary of meaningless and despair even the acknowledgement of meaninglessness in an act of despair can be done only through the power of being it negates.

Hence faith opens not new objects, but new dimensions of being, which Tillich in metaphorical terms calls the unconditioned, the prius of both subject and object, both theoretically and practically. Phenomenologically this is the ground or abyss of being, the power of being which he terms the ultimate and unconditioned concern.

In an act of faith then one must distinguish the concrete contact from its ultimate concern. The former is enmeshed in the subject-object dichotomy. Consequently, it is not immediately evident in its divine content; it could change or even prove erroneous. However, this is held with ultimate concern and this is certain. This he terms beliefful realism for in this present the infinite depth and eternal significance is revealed in ecstatic experience.

In this light anything can potentially be a revelation of the divine; provided the polar disruption can be overcome the ultimate power of Being can break through into one's consciousness. For Buber this disjunction of content from spirit is a sticking point to which he objects. But for Tillich it is important not only that the divine can break through at any point and hence that anything can be theonomous, but especially that all of creation be restored and bespeak the divine. He considers the Catholic Church to be especially successful in expressing the divine in symbols and rituals, responding thereby to deep and authentic religious needs.

Unfortunately, we can elevate the means into an end and deify the trappings or the teacher of religion. Hence he forms what he calls the corresponding "Protestant Principle" which is the refusal to allow anything created to take on ultimate meaning.

Hence, he sees Christ on the cross is the final revelation inasmuch as he unites those two as the negation which affirms the ultimate, negating itself in the very act of affirming the ultimate. This is the essence of sacrifice. Christ on the cross is the final revelation to which all else is related and corrected as either preparation in the ages which precede or communication in the ages which succeed. Each in its own circumstances, even sickness and sorrow, meaninglessness or guilt, is related thereto and can be transformed into a miracle as a point at which the divine breaks through.

Tillich's thought does not then end in despair. For when old structures by their inadequacies begin to contradict life, through their very negativity a new level of being can be received, life can be transformed and the human spirit can experience resurrection and new life. All can be made theonomous once again.

Martin Luther King wrote his doctoral dissertation on this thought of Paul Tillich and moved to the life of a Pastor in Birmingham, Alabama. There indeed the old structures had grown inadequate and even oppressive. Suddenly he found himself called to face these structures. From his study of the Tillich's dialectic he knew that all things could fall apart, that through the disruptions of the poles of human life society could become oppressive. But like the diviner's rod he knew as well that down below the life springs of the divine still flowed and that they could be accessed. The route was neither to accept evil or to ignore it, but to face it and to call upon the Lord in the confidence that it could be overcome – that "we shall overcome". In the darkest of times he often called his old thesis director, Dr. Wolff, to talk over the strategies of the spiritual combat, to clarify

the question, to evoke the spirit. Upon his death no one else was able to provide the leadership needed by the movement, but his words of hope, his dreams embodying Tillich's dialectic, remain.

Notes

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4. *Ibid.*
5. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (New York: Benziger, 1947), I, q.2, aa. 2-3; *Summa contra Gentiles*, trans. by A. Regis (New York: Hanover House, 1955), II, 10-21.
6. See note 3 above.
7. *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, 16; *Summa theologiae*, I, qq. 11 and 14; *On the Power of God* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), q. 3, a.1 ad 12; and *Truth*, trans. by R.W. Mulligan et al. (Chicago: Regnery, 1952-1954), q. 2, a. 5.
8. Maurice Nédoncelle, "Person and/or World as the Source of Religious Insight," in George F. McLean, ed., *Traces of God in a Secular Culture* (New York: Alba House, 1973), pp. 187-209.
9. *Genesis* I:31.
10. Gerald Stanley, "Contemplation as Fulfillment of the human Person," in George F. McLean, ed., *Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*, vol. II of *Ethics at the Crossroads* (Washington DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1995), appendix.
11. *I John* 2-3.
12. *Mt* 5:20-37.
13. George F. McLean, "Symbol and Analogy: Tillich and Thomas," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, XXVIII (1958), 193-233, reprinted in *Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought*, T. O'Meara and D. Weisser, eds. (New York: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 195-240.
14. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13.
15. *Truth*, qq. I and 21.
16. Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Toronto: PINS, 1951).
17. Raimundo Panikka, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Toward an Ecumenical Christophany* (New York: Orbis, 1981).
18. *Summa theologiae*, I, qq. 3 and 11.
19. *De consolatione philosophiae*, trans. by H.R. James (New York: New University Library, 1906), 5,6.
20. See Parmenides; see also Shankara, *commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*, Introduction.
21. *Truth*, qq. 1-8; *Summa theologiae*, I, qq. 14 and 16.
22. Keith, p. 437.
23. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15.
24. T. Kondoleon, "Exemplarism," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, V. 712-15. See also *On the Power of God*, q. 3, a. 16 a. 5 and *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a2.
25. A.A. MacDonell, *A Vedic Reader* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1917), p. 210.
26. *John* 14:1-12.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *John* 1:9.

29. *Truth*, a. 21; *Summa theological*, I, qq. 19 and 20, a.1.
30. John Wright, "Divine Knowledge and Human Freedom: The God Who Dialogues," *Theological Studies*, XXXVIII (1977), 455.
31. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 76.
32. Wright, p. 464.
33. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), I, 606.
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35. Radhakrishnan, I. 103.
36. E. Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 189-93.
37. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 45 and III-I, 69.
38. *Ibid.*, III-I, 69, 16 and II, 45, 7-8.
39. Abinash Bose, *The Call of the Vedas* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970), pp. 19-21, 30.
40. Jaeger, pp. 31, 203-206.
41. McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, p. 40, frs, 2, 6, 7.
42. Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1974), pp. 30-34, 64-65.
43. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), I, 51.
44. "The Present Theological Situation in the Light of the Continental European Development," *Theology Today*, VI (1949), 299.
45. H.S. Smith, "Christian Education," in *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century, Whence and Whither?* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 110-11.
46. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 18-28 and 59-66.
47. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 91-94.
48. *Systematic Theology*, I, 174. Cf. "Participation and Knowledge, Problems of an Ontology of Cognition," *Sociologica*, Vol. I of *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Dirks (Stuttgart: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955), p. 201. "Being, insofar as it is an object of asking presupposes the subject-object structure of reality."
49. This is developed at length in Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, Terry Lectures (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952).
50. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 170, 174-75. Cf. "Participation and Knowledge," *loc.cit.*, pp. 201.
51. *The Courage to Be*, p. 87.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
53. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 73, 97, 177.
54. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 177.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73 and 272.
56. "The Present Theological Situation in the Light of the Continental European Development," *Theology Today*, VI (1949), 299-302.
57. *The Courage to Be*, pp. 142, 152-53.

58. "Participation and Knowledge," *loc.cit.*, pp. 201-202. He terms the system which stresses participation "mystical realism."
59. "The Permanent Significance of the Catholic Church for Protestantism," *Protestant Digest*, III (1941), 25-29.
60. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 252.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
62. *Theology of Culture*, pp. 91-94.
63. *The Interpretation of History*, trans. Part I by N.A. Rasetzki, Parts II, III and IV by Elsa L. Talmey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 60.
64. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 156, 171-72, 279.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 75-76.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39. Cf. "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, Vol. I of *The Library of Living Theology*, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 335. To this single nonsymbolic expression of the divine he has added severe limitations.
69. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 207.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
71. *Brhadaranyaka-Upanisad*, II. i. 20, and IV. li, cited by T.M.P. Mahadevan, "The Upanisads," in *History of Philosophy*
72. *Theology of Culture*, p. 92.
73. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 171.
74. *Theology of Culture*, p. 25.
75. "Symbol and Knowledge: A Response," *Journal of Liberal Religion*, II (1941), 203. Cf. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 6.
76. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 250-51.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 227.
78. *The Courage to Be*, pp. 184-85.
79. *The Protestant Era*, trans. by James Luther Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 76.
80. "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God," *The Christian Scholar*, XXXVIII (1955), 192.
81. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 94-99.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 255.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 83; Cf. "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Incarnation," *Church Quarterly Review*, CXLVII (1949), 141.
85. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 179-80 and 188-91. Bohme's *Urgrund* and Schelling's "first potency" are examples of dialectical nonbeing in God.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.
89. *Theology of Culture*, pp. 104-105.
90. *Systematic Theology*, II, pp. 24-25, 45. Cf. *The Interpretation of History*, pp. 60-65.

91. "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy," *Journal of Religion*, XIX (July, 1939), p. 208. Cf. *Systematic Theology*, II, pp. 31-35.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 32 and 38.
93. "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Incarnation," *loc. cit.*, p. 142.
94. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 44.
95. *The Courage to Be*, p. 35. Cf. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 191-192.
96. "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy," *loc. cit.*, pp. 211-14.
97. *The Courage to Be*, p. 48. Cf. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 189; II, P. 74.
98. "Freedom in the Period of Transformation," in *Freedom: Its Meaning*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), pp. 123-24, 131-32.
99. *The Courage to Be*, p. 54.
100. *The Interpretation of History*, P. 61.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
102. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 78.
103. "To sublimate, and the sublated (that which exists ideally as a moment), constitute one of the most important notions in philosophy. It is a fundamental determination which repeatedly occurs throughout the whole of philosophy, the meaning of which is to be clearly grasped and especially distinguished from nothing. Nothing is immediate; what is sublated, on the other hand, is the result of mediation; it is a non-being but as a result which has its origin in a being. It still has, therefore, in itself the determinateness from which it originates." G.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 106-107.
104. This, he says, would be the humanistic-naturalistic or the dualistic approach to God.
105. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 64-65.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 111. Cf. "What is Divine Revelation," *The Witness*, XXVI (1943), 8-9.
108. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 117.
109. *The Courage to Be*, p. 176. Despair supposes something positive. "The negative 'lives' by the positive which it negates." *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analysis and Ethical Applications* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 38-39.
110. *The Protestant Era*, pp. 79-80. Cf. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 114-20.
111. *Christianity and the Problem of Existence* (Washington: Henderson Services, 1951), pp. 30-31.
112. *Dynamics of Faith*, Vol. X of *World Perspectives*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 17.
113. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.
114. "The Problem of Theological Method," *Journal of Religion*, XXVII (1947), 22-23.
115. "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, I (1945), 10.
116. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 109.
117. "The Problem of Theological Method," *loc.cit.*, pp. 22-23.
118. *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 18.
119. *Ibid.*
120. *The Protestant Era*, p. 18.
121. *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 79.
122. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 133-35.
123. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-54; *Dynamics of Faith*, pp. 78-79.

124. *Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 123-33.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.
126. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.
127. "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Incarnation," *loc. cit.*, pp. 144-145.
128. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 118.
129. *Ibid.*, I, p. 236; *The Protestant Era*, pp. 66-68, 76-77, 217.
130. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-73; *Theology of Culture*, p. 107.
131. Martin Luther King, *Strength to Love* (London: Holder and Stoughton, 1964), pp. 149-50.