To Edgar S. Brightman

[6 December 1951]
[Boston, Mass.]

Brightman received this note with the following paper on J. M. E. McTaggart, William E. Hocking, and Brightman. He wrote at the bottom of the note: "I'm certainly going to take this into account. Thank you for your frankness."

Dr. Brightman

I am almost ashamed to turn this paper in because of the numerous errors found in it. How the typist made such error, I cannot understand. I have tried to correct as many of the mistakes as possible, but some of them I couldn’t. For an instance there is a long quotation on page 10 which from Hocking which should have been single-spaced without quotation marks, indented, and set off by an omitted line before and after it. The footnotes are also in somewhat bad condition. I have corrected them as much as possible.

I hope that this can {will} be taken under consideration in your correcting the paper. It so happens that I am financially unable to have it retyped.

[signed] Martin L. King

AHLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 114.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project


[6 December 1951]
[Boston, Mass.]

Following Brightman's instructions, King builds on his earlier comparison of McTaggart and Brightman, bringing the philosophy of William E. Hocking into his discussion. King concludes that Brightman "is much more sound

1. William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966) was a noted American philosopher of religion and proponent of what may be termed “objective idealism.” He attended Harvard University, receiving his B.A. in 1901, his M.A. in 1902, and his Ph.D. in 1904. After additional study in German
philosophically” than Hocking, who “fails to take seriously the fact that all truth, including religious, is based on the assumption that the human mind is valid and that the cosmos is rational.” Brightman gave this paper an A and commented: “This is an unusually thoughtful paper. It is a bit oversimplified, but it grasps central issues soundly. It would have been stronger had you restated your critique of my view, but you show real insight.”

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2. Brightman underlined "impossibility" and wrote, "as absolute proof."
The purpose of this paper is to compare and evaluate the philosophical views set forth in J. M. E. McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion*, and William E. Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* with those set forth in Edgar S. Brightman's course on "Philosophy of Religion". Before comparing these views, however, we may devote a few paragraphs to a summary of Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*. A summary of McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion* has already been given in a previous paper.

In this momentous work by Professor Hocking, a serious endeavor is made to reinterpret idealism in a way which will afford a positive groundwork for religion. The author, at the outset, states his cognizance of a deep distrust of the services of recent thought for the purposes of religion. Pragmatism has exposed the weakness of classical (idealism for) religious needs, but pragmatism itself is not considered constructive in this field. Idealism fails to work, not because it has a wrong point of view, but because it is "unfinished". It does "not give credence to the authoritative Object; shows so far, no adequate comprehension of the attitude of worship". It supplies too much a religion of idea, not adequately rooted in passion, fact and institutional life. Hocking thinks that these limitations may be supplied to Idealism by Mysticism of a certain type. The entire volume may be said, to be an attempt to achieve this task. The first part, in three chapters, deals with a statement of the nature of religion in pragmatic terms, by means of its effects in history and in persons.

Part II discusses "Religious Feeling and Religious Theory", and outlines the motives which have led to

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3. At the bottom of the table of contents, Brightman wrote, "Well outlined!"


the retirement of reason in religion. A study of religious movements shows that “religion renews its life in great bursts of impulse which emanate not from new thoughts, but from rarely impressive personalities . . . Their utterances are poetic, oracular, couched in figure and parable, not in [h]eses . . . As passion cools, theology spreads, and as theology spreads, passion cools still more.”7 After reading this passage and more like it, the reader is almost lead to believe that the author makes religion merely a matter of feeling. (It seems to be a favorite knack of Hocking to argue a view which he does not believe with such a positive bent that the reader is left with the impression that is is his view and then in the next instance to refute that view with a positive stating of his true belief.)8 But Hocking goes on to make it clear that he is not content to make religion a matter of feeling, apart from ideation. It is his conviction that “feeling” does not work apart from its guiding idea”, and that ideas are alive and vital only through such feelings as love and sympathy.9

Part III is a discussion of “The Need of God.” Different types of monism are reviewed with a view to determining what kind and degree of optimism is compatible with each, “for surely we will will have no world in which it is not possible to be optimistic and without danger to our moral fiber.”10 Some kind of monism is necessary to give character to the world. Without this, optimism is impossible.11

There is also need of an Absolute—a changeless framework within which we may have the sense of real and progressive improvement. This is shown in the demand of the epistemologist: What can I surely know?—and also in the demand of the moralist: What ought I to do?12

But not only do we need a One and an Absolute;

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7. This passage is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 41.
8. Brightman remarked, “True!”
9. Brightman commented, “Also, what is love without ideas and ideals?” King misquoted Hocking; the phrase should read, “feeling does no work apart from its guiding idea” (Meaning of God, p. 69).
10. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 166.
11. Brightman asked, “Is optimism an a priori?”
12. Brightman changed “demand” to “question” in both cases. These questions are also in Hocking, Meaning of God, pp. 191–193.
we need God. "The crux of this problem is the presence of pain and evil in the world, and this must be dealt with in thorough fashion. Basing the discussion here upon a criticism of McTaggart's Some Dogmas of Religion, the conclusion is reached that pain and evil are assuaged through companionship, especially through the sense of association with the Divine. I need this relation with an "Other whose relat[i[o]n to me is not subject to evil through its own defects." Part IV is an attempt to show "How men knew God." This is through Nature and social experience. In defining nature, he says, "Nature is pre-eminently the world of socially verifiable things, the world of scientific research—which is general human collaboration on a common object. We look at Nature through the eyes of a social world." There is thus present to us everywhere Other Mind. All our social experience presupposes a fundamental relation with an Other. This social experience could not exist, it is asserted, if there were only empirical knowers in the world. "Our first and fundamental social experience is an experience of God." From this position it is not far to a restatement and adoption of the ontological argument. The reality of God is found in the necessity of the idea in all our limited and negative experience. The consciousness of defects and limits implies the consciousness of God. All other arguments conclude that because the world is, God is, but the ontological argument reasons that "because the world is not, God is". But God thus found is not an object among objects, natural or physical. "As an object in the world of objects, God is next to nothing". The development of the knowledge of God (Chap. xxii) is traced from the beliefs of primitive man to the conception of personality which includes law. "Religion becomes

13. Brightman commented in the margin, "Note the difference."
14. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, pp. 223—224.
15. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 280.
16. Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 294: "But if there are none but empirical knowers in the world there is no social experience."
17. Brightman noted this sentence and commented in the margin: "Basic for WEH!" The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 295.
18. Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 312: "These other arguments reason that because the world is, God is. The ontological argument reasons that because the world is not, God is."
19. Brightman wrote in the margin, "What, then, is he? Cf. p. 5" (see note 22 below). The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 323.
universal at the same time that it becomes most peculiarly personal.”

Part V presents a treatment of “Worship and the Mystics”. The importance of this section is revealed in this statement: “Worship brings the experience of God to pass in self-consciousness with a searching valency not obligating upon the pure thinker: in some way it enacts the presence of God, sets God into the will to work there.” Mysticism is taken not so much in terms of its doctrine as its deed. It is pointed out that religion throughout its history has been a matter of overt activity—of ceremonial, rite, dramatic enactment—more than a system of thought. The identification of worship with thinking is therefore a perversion. The author goes on to present an illuminating analysis and description of the mystical experience. Chaps xxvi, xxvii, and xxviii present a suggestive psychological account of the mystic way, through negation of the world and the self, to the passive attitude through which God enters and energizes the soul. The mystic seeks the whole, rather than any particulars of reality. Through this totality, experienced in worship, the details of one's occupations and interest are set in a luminous perceptive and given meaning and worth. But these two spheres of work and worship must alternate and thus enrich and support each other. “Prayer and Its Answer” are discussed in connection with this mystical experience and partake of its essence. Prayer is mystic insight and “the answer to prayer is whatever of simplicity, of naturalness, of original appreciation, is brought into our view of things by this act of obedience of the mind to its absolute object.”

Part VI discusses “The Fruits of Religion”. It deals with revelation, inspiration, and the prophetic consciousness. This discussion is controlled by the conception of mysticism just preceded.

The book ends with several important notes. They deal with the Subconscious, the Relations between

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20. The chapter on the development of the knowledge of God is actually chapter xxiii. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 337.

21. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 342. Hocking used “obligatory” rather than “obligating.”

22. Brightman underlined “its absolute object” and wrote, “Cf. p. 4” (see above, note 19). The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 439.
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Idea and Value, the Knowledge of Independent Reality, and the Nature of the Mystic's Love of God.

With this somewhat brief summary of Hocking's The Meaning of God in Human Experience, we may now turn to a comparison and evaluation of the views set forth by McTaggart in his Some Dogmas of Religion, and by Edgar S. Brightman in his course on "Philosophy of Religion". We may conveniently discuss the views of these men under four headings: 1. The Doctrine of God, 2. Religious Experience, 3. Religious certainty, and 4. The doctrine of immortality.

The Doctrine of God

As was stated in my previous paper, McTaggart's attitude toward the existence of God is essentially negative. For him, the doctrine of an omnipotent and creative God is metaphysically unsound. With such a negative attitude toward the God concept neither Brightman nor Hocking would concur. Both men affirm belief in a personal God. Indeed, Hocking affirms that any other conception of divine unity than the personal is "thinner and weaker". With McTaggart's view that belief in a personal God is unnecessary and metaphysically unsound, neither Hocking nor Brightman would agree. Their views of God are "evolutionary", while McTaggart's view is "revolutionary".

23. Underlining "brief summary," Brightman commented: "But satisfactory."

24. The preceding two sentences and the next two also appear in King's earlier essay on McTaggart and Brightman. In that essay his comments on McTaggart were more extensive: "[McTaggart] is willing to admit the possibility of a non-omnipotent God, whom he styles 'the director of the universe,' 'a person of appreciable importance when measured against the whole of the universe,' but such a belief is not at all necessary. The only reason why we should not believe in the existence of such a God, he says, is that there is no reason why we should believe in it." Commenting on the earlier essay, Brightman underlined "necessary" and wrote "'theoretical relativism'" above it. He also asked King to "specify reasons" in the margin next to "no reason why we should believe in it" (King, "Comparison and Evaluation of McTaggart and Brightman").

25. Brightman emended this sentence to read: "Both men affirm belief in a personal and creative God who knows all that is knowable."

26. Cf. "There is neither merit nor truth in rarefying the thought of God; nor in presenting him to our conceptions in terms of some thinner and weaker sort of world-unity easier to image and believe in than a personal world-unity" (Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 334).

27. Brightman commented, "or rather, negative."
There is one point in the God concept, however, at which McTaggart and Brightman are in essential agreement over against Hocking. Both argue that the existence of evil in the world is incompatible with the belief in an omnipotent being who is also good. But while belief in a non-omnipotent God leads McTaggart to the verge of Atheism, it leads Brightman to a modified theism. As stated in my last paper, it seems to me that Brightman, although rejecting theistic absolutism, faces his task with much more sympathy and understanding for contrary views than does McTaggart. Indeed, the reader gets the impression sometimes that McTaggart is simply indulging in logical trifling, that the discredited theistic doctrine is unworthy of serious consideration and may be caricatured to any extent.*

McTaggart's insistence on taking omnipotence as implying the power to make contradictions true makes his whole discussion at this point rather profitless.

We discussed Dr. Brightman's conception of the finite God in the last paper, but since certain details were omitted, we may restate those views in a more detailed form. Dr. Brightman's conception of the finite God begins with the contention that evil in the world is apparently outside the purpose of God and to some extent beyond his control; this suggests, therefore, a deity "whose creative will is limited both by eternal necessities of reason and by eternal experiences of brute fact"† These limits in God's nature Brightman calls "The Given". The Given consists of the "eternal, uncreated laws of reason", including logic, mathematical relations, and Platonic Ideas, and

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* See quotation from McTaggart's SDR, p. 4, my last paper.

† POR, 337

28. The preceding four sentences also appear in King's earlier essay. The quotation from McTaggart, Some Dogmas of Religion, pp. 202–203, reads: "An omnipotent person is one who can do anything. Now suppose that God had willed to create a universe, and had not willed that the law of Identity should be valid. It seems that we have no alternative but to be inconsistent or to be completely unmeaning. To suppose that the universe would not have been created, although God had willed that it should, would be inconsistent with his omnipotence. But the assertion that the universe could be created without being a universe, and without being created is unmeaning. And yet how can the universe be the universe, or creation be creation unless the law of Identity be true. Again is there any meaning in the supposition that God could create a man who was not a man, or that he could create a being who was neither man nor not man? But, if he could not then he is bound by the law of Contradiction and the Law of Excluded Middle, and, once more, he is not omnipotent" (King, "Comparison and Evaluation of McTaggart and Brightman"). In his remarks on the earlier essay Brightman wrote next to the quotation, "This is only an affirmation of a rational Given."

29. Brightman underlined "beyond his control" and wrote, "beyond his creation."
also of equally eternal uncreated nonrational aspects, 
"which exhibit all the ultimate qualities of sense ob-
jects, disorderly impulses and desires, such experi-
ences as pain and suffering, the forms of space and 
time, and whatever in God is the source of surd evil."
* The Given, although eternally within the ex-
perience of God, is not a product of will or created 
activity.

Not only does God eternally find "The Given" in 
his experience, but he also eternally controls it. God's 
control of "The Given" does not mean complete de-
termination, for in some instances, "The Given", with 
its purposeless processes, constitutes so great an ob-
stacle to the divine will that God's endeavors are tem-
porarily defeated. God's control of the Given means 
that his defeat is never final and that even in the face 
of the most firm obstacles, he finds "new avenues of 
advance".† He never allows the Given to run wild, but 
he always subjects it to law and uses it, as far as pos-
sible, as an instrument for the expression of his divine 
purposes. 30

According to this view, God is not in perfect posses-
sion of life and truth, although He is actually on the 
way to such possession. The perfect God is future 
possibility, not present actuality. 31 It must be empha-
sized in passing that Brightman never places limita-
tions on God's ethical nature. Although God's power 
is finite, His goodness is infinite. 32 Moreover, Bright-
man's God is infinite in time and space, "by the sense 
of his unbegun and unedning duration and by his in-
clusion of all nature within his experience".‡ So that 
Brightman's God is "A Finite-Infinite God".

There is much that can be said to commend Dr. 
Brightman's view at this point. It has the advantage of 
accounting for the evil in the world without involving

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30. Brightman marked the last half of the paragraph, underlined "never final" and "'new 
avenues of advance," and wrote, "Good."

31. Brightman underlined "perfect," "such," and "future possibility" in these two sentences 
and remarked in the margin, "unclear." These sentences, which are also in King's previous essay, 
had earlier elicited another comment from Brightman: "I don't like the idea of a completed God 
who has nothing to do. This contradicts both" (King, "Comparison and Evaluation of McTaggart 
and Brightman").

32. This sentence and the following one are also in King's earlier essay. Brightman wrote in 
the margin of that essay that "He is always perfectly ethical."

33. Brightman corrected "by the sense" to "in the sense" and changed King's spelling of 
"unending."
the character of God. Moreover, it has the advantage of establishing the Christian ideal of sacrificial love on metaphysical grounds. But there are also some difficulties inherent in this view. Some of these I tried to point out in the last paper* and for that reason, I will not present them here.34

In contrast to Brightman's view, Hocking is a theistic absolutist. He expresses agreement with McTaggart's contention that the finite God is "of no worth".† So that Hocking rejects finitism as a means of accounting for the fact of evil. He believes that only a type of monism can lead to a genuinely optimistic outlook.35 Though "no one can doubt that evil is evil", nevertheless, a radical pluralism or even an ultimate dualism in this respect is impossible; "there must be a unity in overcoming evils", such that overcoming makes a difference to the whole. "No man", he writes, "can be content to accept evil as finality; each must have his theory of evil, as a means of bringing that evil under the conception of the whole, and so . . . of disposing of it." Evil, in other words, is "transmutable", apparent evils are seen to be goods in broader contexts, and experience reveals that pain can be "overcome" in courageous devotion to a certain cause. The "untransmuted" evils of a "closed life" are ultimate only if one assumes that no absolute mind exists, which, in its timeless perspective, creates a moral continuity beyond the present and the apparent. We must believe that the Real is the Good, and that evil is somehow "less real". No optimism can "take evil straight"; it must rather be based upon a clear and

* See my last paper, P. 6

† Hocking, MGHE, 225-6. McTaggart differs from Hacking in holding that arguments for theistic finition are more valid than those for absolutism. Of course, he ultimately sees no value in either.

34. This paragraph appears in King's earlier essay with a lengthier critique of Brightman's idea of God: "First, Dr. Brightman does not completely escape dualism. It is true that he escapes cosmic dualism, but only to leave a dualism in the nature of God. Does not such dualism leave faith in a supreme God endangered and triumph over the non-rational Given uncertain? What evidence is there that God is winning a gradual mastery over the limitations in His nature? Then, too, this theory seems to establish too sharp a dichotomy between God's nature and his will. We use these terms to denote different aspects of the divine life, but at bottom they involve each other. God's nature gives content to His will and His will gives meaning to His nature. It is the union of the two which constitutes the divine Personality" (King, "Comparison and Evaluation of McTaggart and Brightman"). King placed a footnote after this sentence: "For an elaboration of this criticism see Knudson, DG, 274" (referring to Albert C. Knudson, The Doctrine of God [New York: Abingdon Press, 1930].) Brightman underlined "a dualism in the nature of God" and wrote, "All personality is unitas multiplex." Brightman wrote after King's last question, "If there is none, then certainly there is none for an absolute God!" Brightman wrote after the last sentence, "But explain how will could change logic!"

35. Brightman underlined "monism" and remarked, "Monism might be finitistic."
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satisfying view of the Whole, in its infinite past and future, whose reality is ultimately good.* God, then, is “moral” as “He-Who is”. It is only as One beyond good and evil that He can transmute evil into good, as the allpowerful One whose “sun shines upon the just and the unjust”. The ultimate triumph over evil is found in an “association which cannot be corrupted”, with an “Other-than-all-men”, through whom pain and evil are seen, “from the outside”. God is the “Tao”, the “still, small voice”.†

When it comes to his attempt to establish the existence of God, Hocking again parts company with Brightman and McTaggart. He feels that the ontological argument for the existence of God is the only persuasive and necessary argument, and also truly “empirical”. This argument, he says is the “only one which is faithful to the history, the anthropology of religion. It is the only proof of God.” It is “empirical” and not a priori because such an idea could not have arisen apart from some appropriate “experience”. It is impossible that my idea should be a “mere” idea, for it is only possible for me to take this standpoint, external to nature and myself, an idea insofar as I do at the same time take it in experience also . . . The ontological arguments, in its true form, is a report of experience”. And the true form of the argument, he says, is not thus: I have an idea of God; therefore, God exists. But rather thus: I have an idea of God; therefore, I have an experience of God. Reality can only be proved by the ontological argument; and conversely, the ontological argument can only be applied to reality. But insofar as reality dwells in self, or Other Mind, or Nature, an ontological argument may be stated in proof of their existence. Thus, the Cartesian certitude may with greater validity be put into this form: I think myself, therefore I exist . . . I have an idea of physical Nature, Nature exists . . . In whatever sense I can think the independence of beings, in that sense independence obtains between them. That which is most independent of me, namely the Other Mind, has been the first object of our on-

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† Ibid, 330–332.

36. The term “Other-than-all-men” and the comparison of God with Tao are in Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 224.
37. The quotation is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 307.
38. The quotation begins with “It is impossible” and is from Hocking, Meaning of God, p. 312.
theological findings. The object of certain knowledge has this threefold structure, Self, Nature, and Other Mind; and God, the appropriate object of ontological proof, includes these three.*39

This argument does not seem convincing to either Brightman or McTaggart. McTaggart's atheism immediately eliminates him. Brightman on the other hand finds evidences for God in the law and order of nature, the adaptation of means to ends and the presence of a directive force in evolution, the fact that value as a personal experience must have a personal source, and the trend toward monotheism in the history of religion.40 In the midst of all of these, however, Brightman never points to the antilogical argument as presenting valid evidence for the existence of God. Hacking seems to be one of the few modern theists holding to antilogical argument.41

### Religious Experiences

The question of religious experience is one that receives fruitful discussion in both the works of Brightman and Hocking. McTaggart's anti-theistic bias causes him to face this problem from a totally negative perspective.42 Hocking begins his thought at this point with the view that the specifically religious experiences are those of powerful natural phenomena and of social crisis, experiences characterized by a sense of awe and mystery which leads to a recognition of ignorance and stimulates theoretical and practical activity. And the decisive and unique "experience of The Whole" is to be discovered in religious worship and mystical experience. The worth of worship lies in the ambition to find the ultimate powerful reality to which man must adjust himself and by which he is judged. Worship seeks perspective on all the major issues of life; bringing all established habits of thought.

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39. The quotation begins with "I have an idea of God; therefore, God exists" and is from Hocking, *Meaning of God*, pp. 314–315. King referred to the improper format of this block quotation in his letter to Brightman that accompanied this paper. See p. 76 in this volume.

40. Brightman wrote in the margin, "also values & religious experience."

41. Brightman corrected "antilogical" to "ontological." He commented, "Knudson finds some appreciation of it."

42. Brightman underlined "McTaggart" and wrote "Love."
under judgment, it makes possible fresh perceptions. It is an “essay in detachment”, beyond the partial detachments of art and science. In mysticism, this aim at detachment is expressed in the via negativa; concentration and unification of thought prepares the way for the “loss” of the self in deeper insights.* 

For Hocking, the valid mystical experience is not a matter of “pure thought” alone; rather, “purity of heart” is a necessary precondition. And, through the “principle of alternation”, worship must bear fruit in work, and vice-versa. Only through such an “alternation” can spiritual staleness and fatigue be overcome and the sense of the worth of living be recovered.

Hocking insists that the “experience of the Whole” is different in kind from all other types of experience. Surely all sensory experience, at least is experience of definite particulars, or perhaps of definable complexes, and thus of “parts”. Even value-experiences have specific referents. But the experience of the Whole is ultimately undifferentiated.

Brightman agrees with Hacking that “apart from specifically religious experience there is no basis for belief in a specifically religious reality”;† nevertheless, he cannot agree with him that any one type of religious experience is self-authenticating or normative. He prefers, rather, to define religious experience broadly as “any experience of any person taken in relation to his God”.‡ He is appreciative of various types of phenomena which could fall within this classification, but refuses to take any specific form as determinative. Meditation, prayer, mystical insight, religiously motivated activity in society in the interest of ideals—all of these may be religious experience. He accepts, in the main, Hocking’s analysis of worship.§ But he does not go so far as to believe that there is a kind of “pure” experience uncolored by the assumption of the experient. “Pure” religious experience, he says,

is an abstraction as unreal as “pure” sensation in psychology. Some mystics and empiricists in religion appear to have forgotten this fact. On the other hand,

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* Ibid, 356, 386
† Fern, (ed), CAT, 61†
‡ Brightman, POR, 415
§ Brightman, R.V., 190 ff.†

44. This citation, which is not listed in King’s bibliography, is to Edgar S. Brightman, Religious Values (New York: Abingdon Press, 1925).
religious beliefs, apart from the experience out of which they grew and on which they are nourished are abstractions equally unreal.*

This is in line with Brightman's view that coherence is the final criterion of truth. No single experience carries its truth with it; all must be tested in terms of "coherence" and synoptic insight into experience as a whole.†

It is encouraging to find two of the most eminent philosophers of our time taking such an active interest in religious experience. {Although,} as we have seen, they differ in some detail, both are at one in giving equal recognition {to} the rational and the mystical—{to} logic and religious experience. May it not be that the profound insights of great minds like Hocking and Brightman will serve to defend religion and religious experience in the face of philosophers and psychologists who are contemptuous of religion in general and Christianity in particular.

Religious Certainty

We have not had much opportunity to speak of the philosophical methods of McTaggart, Hocking and Brightman in this study, mainly because McTaggart and Hocking make little if any reference to their methods in the works under discussion. It is clear, however, that Brightman's method is that of rational empiricism. "Experience", he writes, "is the necessary starting point of any philosophy of religion".$ His conception of empirical method is bound up with the idea of coherence as a criterion of truth. "Coherence is no repudiation of empiricism. It is simply an insistence that empiricism must be complete, well-ordered, clearly defined, and rationally interpreted."§ Now, this empirical emphasis has profound implications in Brightman's views on religious knowledge and religious certainty. It leads him to abandon the rationalistic ideal of "finished" truth. Whereas Hocking, even

† Brightman, POR, 436.
‡ Brightman, POR, 9
§ Ibid, 193

45. Cf. Brightman, Religious Values, p. 9: "'Pure' religious experience . . . is an abstraction as unreal as is 'pure' sensation in psychology. Some mystics and empiricists in religion appear to have forgotten this fact. On the other hand, religious beliefs, apart from the life out of which they grow and by which they are nourished, are abstractions equally unreal." 89
though admitting the values of empiricism, still insists upon the relevance and possibility of "eternal truth" and certainty. For him, God as the Whole is an object of certain experiences, and not a metaphysical hypothesis: Hypothetical belief in God is worthless, he feels; only certain knowledge qualifies for commitment and devotion. The certainty of the experience of the Whole makes possible the free and experimental character of the scientific method itself. So that he can speak of theoretical certainty in religion as well as in scientific inquiry. Brightman agrees more fully with James and Dewey at this point, than he does with Hocking. All truth is held by him to be hypothetical. All propositions, including propositions about God, are seen to be constantly subject to revision or capable of achieving higher degrees of probability, though never certainty. But, though we must be content with "theoretical relativism", rather than certainty, we can accept a "practical absolutism" since our most coherent hypotheses at least enable us to move towards further truth.

I cannot help but feel that Brightman's is much more sound philosophically at this point than is Hocking. At this point, Hocking's empiricism is not empirical enough. I cannot see how Hocking can insist upon a theoretical rather than a "practical" certainty in the whole field of scientific inquiry. It seems that he fails to take seriously the significance of the particular and the contingent with which the natural sciences have to deal. Moreover, he fails to take seriously the fact that all truth, including religious, is based on the assumption that the human mind is valid and that the cosmos is rational.46

The Doctrine of Immortality

At last we come to a point on which all of our thinkers under discussion are agreed. They are all at one in affirming the validity of the doctrine of immortality. They differ, however, in arguments used to establish the validity of the doctrine. As I pointed out in my last paper, McTaggart, because of his anti-

46. Brightman marked this paragraph and wrote "Good" in the margin.
theistic thinking, has no use for the ethical argument for immortality. He feels that we {must} always fall back "on purely metaphysical arguments." These turn out to be based on abstract considerations as to the nature of substance. The perdurability of substance naturally refers just as much to the past as to the future. McTaggart believes, accordingly, that our present existence has been preceded by a plurality of future lives.47

One wonders how McTaggart can hold so firmly to a doctrine of immortality and at the same time deny theism. Certainly this is an enigma to me. Apparently McTaggart is unique in this position, for no other well-known philosopher has held such a view. We may be safe in saying that every other philosophical believer in immortality has affirmed theism.†

Hocking holds that immortality is an achievement. The reality of the self is not a fixed quantity. Justice demands that the matter be determined by the degree of reality which the self attains. This is a philosophical interpretation of the orthodox view that one's destiny in heaven or hell is determined by how he has lived. In Hocking's view, those who accept life as an invitation to become real achieve immortality. Only God knows the fate of the others. It must be noted that Hacking is not as certain about immortality as McTaggart. McTaggart feels that there can be absolute metaphysical proof for the doctrine. Hocking, on the other hand, admits that there can be no complete certainty about immortality. It is an empirical problem with no empirical evidence.

Brightman, unlike McTaggart, finds the only vigorous argument for immortality resting on a theistic basis, namely the goodness of God. If there is a supreme creative cosmic Person, says Brightman, then "there is an infinitely good being committed to the eternal conversation of values". Certainly God the conserver of values must be God the conserver of Persons, since Persons are of highest value. Brightman would agree with Hocking that there can be no complete certainty about immortality. For him, faith in immortality is faith in the goodness of God. Brightman's belief in a finite God never leads him to believe

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* See my last paper, p. 7
† Brightman, POR, 402

47. This paragraph and the following one also appear in King, "Comparison and Evaluation of McTaggart and Brightman."
that God is so finite that he cannot conserve values. He holds that every argument for God, whether as absolute or as finite, is an argument for God’s power to control His universe so as to achieve value, and every argument for His goodness is an argument for his obligation to conserve Persons as intrinsic values.48

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48. This paragraph also appears in King’s earlier essay for Brightman. In that essay he attributed the quotation correctly to Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, p. 401. The original passage reads: “There is no sufficient reason for supposing [God’s power] to be so finite that he cannot conserve values. In a word, every argument for God, whether as absolute or as finite, is an argument for God’s power to control his universe so as to achieve value; and every argument for God’s goodness is an argument for his obligation to maintain persons in existence as intrinsic values.”

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During the first semester of DeWolf’s Seminar in Systematic Theology, students were required to give a twenty-to-thirty-minute oral report on a religious journal, chosen from a list of twelve journals compiled by DeWolf, and to submit a one-page