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# CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES

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## THE FINITE GOD

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NO DOCTRINE or theory should be denied a hearing or rudely discountenanced because of the clothes it wears. Certain valuable and helpful interpretations have been at the first interdicted or ostracized, largely because of external habiliments, rather than on account of internal weakness. Whether the modern doctrine of the finite God belongs in this class is before us for decision. We have no inclination to fling into the ragbag what should be sent to the tailorshop. But novelty is so much the rule in theological circles that when some migrant theory seeks landing and lodging, we feel inclined to turn customs inspector, and examine the baggage of the unnaturalized for alien complications.

Those who advocate a modification of the traditional view of God's attributes point us to the fact that many historic doctrines have been redefined. They claim that if restatement has been found necessary and acceptable in other items, why may it not be the same in the case of theism. We cheerfully admit that a restatement to bring truth nearer to the understanding and needs of the age is not only permissible but even obligatory. We should take our creeds out of the safety deposit vaults and put them to work. And, given a chance, if they do not work, they should be sent to the hospital for a major operation. However, the eagerness of professional surgeons does not always justify the use of the knife.

While attempting no genetic account of the doctrine of the finite God, it may be appropriate to mention a few of the many thinkers who have entertained this view. The most prevalent opinion seems to be that the modern origin of the doctrine was in John Stuart Mill, although some carry the beginning back to David Hume. Others whose names add weight are Horace Bushnell, F. H.

Bradley, Canon Rashdall, Mr. Howison, Prof. William James, Mr. Hobhouse, F. C. H. Schiller, and very recently H. G. Wells.

Prof. W. K. Wright, in a somewhat moderate way in his *Student's Philosophy of Religion*, and Prof. C. A. Beckwith in *The Idea of God*. (Both of these books were published late last fall.)

Pres. Hough's *Productive Beliefs* (Cole Lectures for 1919) should in the main be counted on this side. Some of these writers are most stimulating and their books well worth reading.

Of course, all names in the list of supporters are not equally impressive. We cannot take the estimate of Mr. Wells very seriously, for he is notorious in the earth for his discounting of all kinds of accepted values. You will recall that he finds it impossible to appraise the Washington Monument in more complimentary phrases than "an idiotic colossal obelisk." Mr. Wells specializes in labels which are libels.

Some of the reasons for undertaking the reconstruction of the conception of God are given by Beckwith thus (*Idea of God*, p. 7ff): We have no evidence that the world had a beginning, but rather that certain principles are eternally existent and that development has come by resident laws. Evil exists, but as its origin must be put out of God's reach, its abolition is impossible. Personality and social phases, it is claimed, limit God's power. We are further encouraged to proceed with revision because the Scriptures do not give a final view of God, but each generation is left to develop a sufficient idea of its own. This course, it is affirmed, is suggested by Scripture and illustrated by the procedure of the Apostles and church fathers. Additional warrant is derived from the relocation of authority in inner and rational sanctions as opposed to those that are external.

The outline of the present discussion is as follows: First, We shall state and consider objections that are offered to the traditional theism. Second, Considerations favoring the belief in a limited God will be given. Third, Arguments against the limitation idea will be set forth.

Finally, The case will be stated in favor of the historic doctrine of an infinite God.

I

The objections to traditional theism are at least eight in number. These we will cover briefly, attempting to show their defects as they are mentioned.

(1) It is said that tracing the origin of theistic conceptions to reason, often styled intuitionism, or to revelation, overlooks the historical development of man which has shaped his religious ideas (Beckwith, *The Idea of God*, p. 16). This objection is logically defective in that it proposes to refer a question of origin to a subsequent process for validification. But the terms of historic development pertain merely to generic description not to genetic explanation. This ancient error seems to have renewed vitality in our day.

(2) It is said again that the old theism failed to tell us what God did before he did anything, ere "creation" began. An eternity of idleness is intolerable.

Embarrassing as this question is to one who professes to know all mysteries and all knowledge, it cannot be more difficult than is the following one for that same champion of finitude: What started the finite God and the world on their joint career of experience? Have we an uncreated world of elements endlessly synchronous with God? What mediates this dualism? If, however, our temporalist friend insists on an answer to his question, we can but reply according to his folly and suggest that there are 55,000,000 stars of the first seventeen magnitudes; if each star be a sun with tributary bodies, after the manner of our solar system, and a week be allotted for the creation of each, it might profitably occupy over 1,000,000 years. And if it be true that there are at least 25 times that many stars of all magnitudes, it would help fill out the schedule of divine activity for a short time. This question seems to emanate from the neurotic occidental demand that there shall be always "something doing," with no unintelligible awkward pauses. If this restless demand be otherwise insatiate,

then let its devotee depict his God striding forever through endless space sowing the ether with stellar splendor,—he surely might be less profitably employed!

(3) The statement is made that the traditional idea of God is a derivation from Greek metaphysics applied to Semitic conceptions.

Well, if this be true, matters could certainly be worse. If it should turn out that this conception is valid, it will not alter the case to discuss its origin. And, if it should be found invalid, no origin could give it life. We may, therefore, pass to the next objection.

(4) It is claimed that the old idea of God omits the humanization of modern Christology. That in the new Christocentric theology God is translated into the intelligible terms of human life, but the older interpretation left him in the unapproachable aloofness of Absolutism.

We have no desire to champion the abstract monotheism of Judaism remembering that it was this inflexible notion which laid the ground for the earliest doctrinal controversies. Frankly, we believe that the traditional theology has not been sufficiently Christocentric. And yet, we do not want a God whose deity disappears in a more phenomenal humanity, nor could we accept a Savior whose humanity vanishes into invisible deity. Furthermore, the conception of the *kenosis* of a limited God strikes me as a rather unmanageable idea. The modernist will doubtless rejoin that the *kenosis* is an unhistoric figment of New Testament theology, and that the *one* inclusive reduction of God to humanness will suffice. But we are not prepared to accept the loss of some of the finest areas of soteric truth within the whole realm of the divine achievement. The *kenosis* is a genuine enhancement of the worthfulness and worthiness of Christ's work.

(5) It is objected that the Infinite God is mechanical, arbitrary, autocratic, and not conformable to facts and ethical ideals. God, it is claimed, need not be made responsible for creation in order to bring salvation to the world, salvation being defined as the creation and conservation of personal values (Beckwith, pp. 121, 123).

The gist of this objection seems to be that God has done

things in his own way and that his reduction to human measurements is difficult. This has ever been the historic protest of the avowed atheist and religious Bolshevik since the dawn of human insurgency and we are not deeply impressed with its more recent endorsement. That God has done things according to the pleasure of his righteous will is not a serious defect. Furthermore, when God's timeless counsels were formulated the learned men of the twentieth century had not yet put in an appearance and consequently could not be consulted! Bound up with this objection is a redacted version of the redemptive process expressed in a definition of salvation. While the elimination of God as original Creator is no doubt impelled by the desire to clear the problem of the origin of evil, we are not disposed to relieve God of appropriate and necessary connection with the origin of things. Of this, more later.

(6) It is further affirmed that postulating the infinity of God leaves unsolved the problem of evil, as hinted above (Wright, p. 372). But does not the professional solution of the difficulty through making God finite unsolve the origin of good? In remaking God so that he could have had nothing to do with the beginning of evil, he is equally disqualified for initiating good.

(7) Perhaps the strongest objection to the Infinite God is in the alleged inconceivability of the idea. It is claimed that the Absolute or Infinite is not rationalizable and that making such a reduction entails antinomies in Christology, Cosmology, and probably in Psychology. But we have no right to base denial on our inability to think. Those empiricistic thinkers who identify creation with discovery, as, for example, in the matter of the moral order, hypostatize their own limitation. They assume that their inability to think something proves that the thing is not. Thus stated it sounds about as rational as would be a modern revival of Ptolemaic science, for that, too, rested upon similar limitations.

(8) Finally it is objected that the Infinite God reduces the values of religion. "Religious experience and divine personality are two necessary poles of thought.

But personality and the infinite appear to be irreconcilable" (Beckwith, 210). In essence this objection may be reduced to the one just preceding. It makes the limit of human understanding the limit of reality. In bald statement it carries its own refutation.

## II

While in the presentation of the foregoing points the case in favor of the finite God is indirectly set forth, we shall do well to examine more closely into the claims made for this doctrine.

It is in brief that human responsibility, the existence of evil, the wearisome puzzle of unintelligible realities—these are best met by assuming that the unifying power is a limited superhuman spirit. God is the president of a democracy of selves, more or less incorrigible, and seeks to reduce to order the uncosmic world. It is affirmed that the limited God may be inferred from temporalism. "If God actively participates in history, if He lives and energizes in time, does He not grow? And if He grows, is He not always imperfect?" It is further said that if absolute perfection be anywhere an actuality, growth and struggle cease to be real, and the total career of all finite personalities becomes meaningless. But God, it is claimed, is battling away against the odds of nature and unfriendly men, hoping by continued experiment to discover how he may best bring the world to goodness. "There must be change or growth in God's experience or intuitive consciousness of His world, if life and history have any meaning" (*Field of Philosophy*, 469). "The only God who can speak with compulsion to our time . . . is a God who knows moral adventure as a personal experience. He must be a moral adventurer, too" (Hough, *Productive Beliefs*, 28). "His menial services are needed in the dust of our human trials, even more than his dignity is needed in the empyrean" (James, *Pragmatism*). Beckwith speaks of the need to make God real, to democratize Him (p. 31).

It is also urged that Scripture sustains the view of God as limited. He is represented as finite in both Old and

New Testaments, just as in Greek Philosophy, according to this claim.

The modern intolerance of paradoxes is sorry indication of profundity. The greatest thinkers in all ages have allowed paradoxes to stand. They suspend judgment at the point where reconciliation is impossible. But the modernist in dealing with the question before us sets up his objections at every point where an antithesis can be found. He would give fuller proof of his ministry if he should leave the antipodal statements alone in their glory. This, however, is not the way of the rationalist. We are reminded of the parody, "An honest God is the noblest work of man." But the finite God may or may not be honest. In fact he will need to be all things to all men, and will come perilously near to being not much of anything to anybody.

The limited God is aptly sketched by the lines of Pope, originally intended to describe man:

"Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all.  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world."

The finitized theology is a near-comic supplement to the fictitious pluralism of errant savants. Deny the infinitude of God and you have taken away the transcendent life which is the first term in the attitude which men—both saint and sinner—assume in the divine presence.

When we inspect the notion of God held by some who advocate the divine finitude to the effect that he is incarnated in an ever advancing humanity which gradually, by increased rationality, overcomes evil, we wonder what explanation they will give for God's origin. If he be exclusively immanent, cosmically coeval, and without extrasocial expression, the handbreadth of human experience would summarily compass the divine as well.

The socialization of God, with its implied limitation, is motived in part by a desire to evade the "pawn theory" of external providence. But the weakness of it is that while it gets somewhat rid of the human pawn, it reaches the greater embarrassment of a divine pawn. To accept



the bludgeonings of fate with unbowed head without doubt would test most acridly the self-faith and Stoical apathy of a finite deity.

The theory of a finite God seriously affects the doctrines of sin, of redemption, of inspiration, and of regeneration. To say that God's power, while limited, is sufficient to produce results implied in these phrases is assuming a knowledge both quantitative and qualitative regarding the claimed limitation which would seem to put its possessor beyond the need of any divine help, at least at the hands of a cosmic tinker whose only perfection lies in his being on the road to somewhere.

Sin, thus viewed, means that man is so much the worse for every mistake made, and so much the better for every right act. But that the ultimate character of both these kinds of action depends for final classification upon an ultimate Being cannot be fairly concluded if that Being is after all not ultimate, but a plodding experimenter who blunders as do we, only on a vaster scale.

### III

Professor J. A. Leighton states the case against the idea of a finite God: He says the view is logically defective and fails to solve the moral difficulties which are among the chief motives for taking it up. "Its moral world is—God and Company with assets and liabilities limited." If we accept any sort of pluralism, we have no grounds for idealism nor even for theism. "The only cogent and dependable form of idealism or theism is monistic or cosmical; the unity of the universe is grounded in the all-sustaining mind or will-reason." Pluralism in reality gives us a God "with limited assets and unlimited liabilities." If we make evil an eternal principle, "by what right does the personal idealist assume that its power can and will surely be permanently reduced by the synergistic efforts of God and man?" There would remain no ground of faith in progress. Prof. Leighton says: "Some of the motives of personalistic pluralism, and connected forms of so-called humanism and pragmatism are the consequences of an unhealthy preoccupa-

tion with the all-too-human, with the small change and parochialism, which lays undue stress on the accidents, freaks, ephemerality of human life, and fusses over these things with exaggerated emphasis. Instead we should stay ourselves by keeping company with the universal and stable and orderly in nature and the historic world."

"Indeed, personalistic pluralism is in a state of unstable equilibrium. It must either go over to absolutism in some form, or admit that its God is neither the Creator nor governor of things, but only a somewhat superhuman product, like man, of the anarchical flux of reality. . . . But one does not care to worship even a superhuman product of the vortical flux." God must be either "the sovereign spirit of the whole universe," or "only a conditioned part thereof." "He cannot be both" (*The Field of Philosophy*, 421-5).

We must repudiate utterly the notion of a time-conditioned God. God is not in time, all times are in Him. God's acts are eternally timeless, but their dramatization for human intelligence brings them into the time order since all events knowable to man are timed. The timing function of human perception and conception must be rigidly confined to the phenomena. If you add the temporal augment to God, you make Him secondary, just as in the case of a like process performed upon a Greek verb, and incidentally exclude Him from the imperative mood.

#### IV

And now, finally, within the limits at our command, we will attempt to state defensively the doctrine of the Infinite God.

First, that God is infinite seems to be implied in both the revelatory scheme in itself, and the functions of God as thus made known. In the interpretation of God given by Jesus, the most authoritative source available, admitted at almost face value even by the modernist, there is no hint of a conditioned God. The discourses, parables and prayers of Jesus assume that Omnipotent Sovereignty rules the world. If Jesus could say "All power is given

unto Me," what less than Infinite Power could give "all power" to another?

The Logos idea, the whole mediatorial range of conceptions, all legitimate anthropomorphic terms, both Biblical and otherwise, point backward and upward to a Being whose perfections are so immeasurable that these devices are necessary as rational aids. A finite God could get along without a Logos or any mediating agent, and would be initially so anthropomorphic that analogy would melt into sameness. The finite God is represented as needing no mediator. This is achieved by cancelling transcendence. But, both logically and actually, immanence implies transcendence. The only reason why for any other than considerations of crassest utility there is a need for a God who fraternizes with man in his daily strife is that thus He becomes intelligible. This, if it has any worthy meaning, signifies that God in His complete reality is transcendent. Only the transcendent needs such laborious and elaborate translation. A merely superhuman deity of limited dimensions could surely come close to man without intervening term.

Immanence as an *a posteriori* fact points infallibly to transcendence as an *a priori* factor. God as a known involves God as an unknown. The tasks which God must perform give concrete clue to his character. In knowledge there is necessity that God have infallible remembrance of the past, for otherwise he could follow no policies, award no punishments, compensate none who are faithful; he must also have exhaustive apprehension of all that is now transpiring, his perceptions must be contemporary with every "now" of every human experience; and unless failure is to be the outcome, God must have insight into the future. All these items of knowledge must be his if God is to function efficiently.

Parallel to God's knowledge is his power which must in like manner far overstep finite boundaries. Opposing forces must never be able to call a "checkmate" on God. The only hope for the world to succeed lies in the success of God's plan. If God's jurisdiction over the universe be limited the results would be appalling. To illustrate,

think it in the astronomical domain. In such a case there could be vast ultrastellar islands, decillions of light-years in diameter ruled over by some imperious Wotan whose ambition will sometime lead to the annexation of our universe and the reduction of us and our God to vassalage. A finite God should carry accident insurance.

Objection to the doctrine of an infinite God deriving from the nature of personality is due to the limitations of personality as we know it. The process by which we get rid of these limitations appears to be but verbal. We can use the phrase "infinite personality," but the answering concept seems to be as far away as the "ding an sich" of Kant.

But, after all, the difficulty to which we have just referred may result from a metathesis of elements. Instead of assuming the propriety of measuring God by human personality, it may be that human personality should be measured by the divine. We recall the position of Herman Lotze to the effect that God alone can be the true personality. Such a view may be extreme, but it suggests that the conclusion to the incompatibility of personality with deity rests on too slender basis. Enlarge the interpretation of personality to agree with extra-human cosmic facts and any novice can combine it with infinite deity.

Only a personality could in any proper sense become incarnate, and only an infinite person could have in adequate measure both ample motive and purpose-directed need for an incarnation. Both personality and infinity are integrated predicates of deity, and therefore cannot be at variance with each other.

But the need for an infinite God appears to be all the greater because of the very limits upon personality as we know it. Fullness of life is an ever sought and never reached human goal. As the *summum bonum* of human aspiration it both lacks explanation of origin, and insistence of appeal if we take away the eternal pull-from-the-top, the irresistible lure of the life in which all fullness dwells, whose dateless realization of all ideals points the way for human effort. Apart from the acceptance of a

perfect personality the fragmentariness of human life could not be sensed, for the verdict of imperfection implies the norm of perfection. A barely "melioristic universe" could not be guaranteed by a merely melioristic deity.

The charge will be made that the doctrine of an infinite God is but a logical phrase, a bodiless concept, an unverifiable hypothesis. We may retort that it is not more so than is the opposing doctrine of a limited God. Again, it will then be said that we should prefer the view which is more easily rationalizable, more amenable to our normal processes of thought. But to that our rejoinder is that we are seeking truth, not mental easement by accepting the easiest road. Whether the idea of an infinite God is more difficult than the idea of a finite God is not the question. Whether we can or cannot think our way through the mazes of any philosopheme may determine whether we are eligible to the Victorian Society, but is not competent evidence of the eligibility of the doctrine to the elect universe of truth. Again and again, in the history of intellectual progress, ideas disallowed of critical or timid minds, in the curious reversals of fate, have become the head of the corner.

The problem of how to think God is sometimes expressed in terms of his attributes, and some conclude that we save God from embarrassment by introducing limitative features. Says Pres. Hough, "When we allow God to be caught in the chains of his own attributes, we have really become the victims of our own words" (*Productive Beliefs*, p. 32). But when we put God into the empiric stream of causal affairs, have we not caught him in the chains of *our* own attributes and made him the victim of our phenomenal terminology? The superbly human aspects of the Everlasting Father qualify his absoluteness, not by way of denial, but rather by addition.

If we are not too insistent on solving all contradictions, we will find some very rich areas of truth. The practical motive may properly be assigned great weight in such problems. And the practical side of this doctrine in its simplest form is this: Man should meet God at

every actual and possible turn in the world, and this can be only if God is there to be met. Whether we, agreeing with Prof. Royce, regard the unity of the world as taking up into itself even its own discords, as the strident notes of a symphony resolve into harmony, thus absorbing the evil element,—this is unessential, but the vital fact is that unless the victory for righteousness is initially won in the divine purpose and confidence there can be no victory. “His truth is marching on” because God himself is the eternal essence of victory.

The doctrine of an infinite God is further sustained by the intimations contained in other conceptions.

The perfection of God would be shorn of meaning if the aspect of infinity be cancelled. While accepted by some, this limitation is subversive of the moral order because ultimate sanctions would be gone and the norms of conduct derived only from temporal sources.

Nature also as a developmental scheme calls for the infinite. Someone may ask, “Are not the factors to be controlled limited in number?” If so, what need of an unlimited agency in charge?” But, we do not know that the factors are less than infinite in number. The whole of material reality has not yet been measured, and even if it could be, that would not settle the questions of the innumerable parts and still more uncountable possible combinations of parts.

And, further, the permanence of the cosmic factors, especially the personal, gives a “genuine clew to an ultimate principle of permanence in change” called by Royce “axiological eternity.” These words would be as “sounding brass and clanging symbol” if the conception were not crowned with the identifying linkage with the infinite person of God.

The theist feels the need of reinforcing his rational proofs, which are open to attack at a number of points, by setting up the plausibility of an Infinite in the world on the strength of the fact that there are several kinds of accepted infinity. These are, first that which has reference to the indefinitely great; second, the perfect, or self-complete; third, the unlimited; and fourth, the

"new infinite" of number series (from Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*, 480-482). These infinities which are in actual use, should keep the apologist from feeling that he has a weak case.

Then there is a positive value for faith in the infinite conception not elsewhere discoverable. The advantage to faith is two-fold: It has an enlarged scope, because there is more to be laid hold of than in case of finite conceptions; and it meets an increased need, because the rational encounters severe limits in seeking to enter the field. Again, in its connections with social needs and processes, both with reference to the things to be provided for and the things to be provided against, the Infinite God alone can meet the demand. He is capable of complete democratization, for he continues constantly adequate to an ever growing social order which can never catch up with him. Any other interpretation lacks amplitude. To account for social integration there is needed a causality which transcends both corporeally and temporally the series to which it is applied.

Christian Sociology is not a matter of statistics or graphs or census sheets. It is fundamentally concerned with a point of view, viz.: measuring and interpreting the social organism in terms of the Christological ideal. If we undertake to derive our metric from the limited range of human or quasi-human relationships we raise man's batting average but classify him as a minor leaguer. The only permanently adequate way to measure social achievement is to locate the calculus higher up. The finitized theology is axiologically weak.

The modernist democratization of God leads to the extremist view that the group spirit may be equivalent to God. As Prof. Hocking has shown by the argument from dependence, it will not do to take society for an object of worship, "for society is itself dependent on worship" (*Journal of Religion*, I, 494-6). The corrective for the trend toward social pantheism is found in the realization of the all-embracing, incalculably intricate web of social experience, whose manifestations in civic, economic,

aesthetic and religious progress hark back to a pre-existent factor.

We need a God whose morality is beyond question. The propriety of his acts cannot be put on the tardy *a posteriori* basis of human conventions. The only sufficient accrediting of divine character must lie within the circle of its own potentialities. To claim otherwise admits an irresolvable ethical, and ultimately cosmical, dualism from which we cannot escape. The moral argument for God's existence would thus be lost. Worse than that, the highest sanction which invests with efficiency all the personal, social, and circumstantial sanctions would be gone. If we make God a member of human society he thus becomes ethically dependent upon human standards. His morality becomes conditional. But, on the other hand, if man be put in a divinely standardized society, human morality thus secures an axis of reference.

If any use is to be made of the empiric idea in cosmic exegesis, it must not be in the direction of imposing limits on God, but of recognizing the limits of man. For every noble goal of man a necessarily limited conception of an Infinite God vastly surpasses an equally limited conception of a finite God. Of the limitation, due to native inability to conceive adequately, there will be no uncertainty in any case, the only question being whether it will have a big enough outline to begin with, in order that there may be something when the task is completed. Experience has already sufficiently tested the matter and found that mankind makes no progress in spiritual eugenics by fostering bourgeois lares.

All essential limitation of God may be sufficiently found in the trinitarian interpretation which exhibits God as self-limitative. The working of this limitative principle is expressed within the deity, but also in his relation to the cosmos. This is a true principle of *reductio ad populum*. None other is needed.

We have not attempted to make a specific use of analogies from pure mathematics nor from astronomy with demonstrative intent. But we are assured that "without infinity there could be no science" (C. J. Keyser, *Mathe-*



*matical Philosophy*), and that from the telescope there comes the tidings that the very stars in their courses fight against a finite God. We do not claim that the relation between Mathematics and the Philosophy of Religion is transliteral. Some able thinkers have assumed this to the detriment of their systems. While asserting the independence of Philosophy from the method of Mathematics, we fail to see the consistency of admitting a fundamental conception as valid for the one while denying the validity of its literal counterpart for the other. In preference to the mathematical definition of infinity, however, we would accept the metaphysical definition which says infinity is absolute perfection or self-completeness.

"God is the one self-complete being who includes all forms of perfection. He has an inner life which transcends the life of the world. . . . The imperfection in the world, its suffering and evil, are elements in the divine plan" (Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*, 484).

As expressed in his Son's gospel, God accompanies "every generation not to be judged by it, but to judge it" (Hermann, *Eucken and Bergson*, 204). Even if the divine infinity be denied as a predicate, we may shift the question and claim that it is infinity as subject, not as predicate, that we are defending. This is a logical parallel to the concepts of the soul and immortality which cannot be demonstrated in the abstract. The attack seems to be wholly upon infinity as a predicate. But we claim that to say "God is infinite" is an analytic, and not a synthetic judgment.

We agree with Pres. Houghton of Northwestern when he says, "If you are going to keep Ethics as a permanent part of the life of man you must keep the foundation in an assured conviction regarding a personal and righteous God." And, in common with Pres. Hough and others, we do not decry but welcome the enriching thought of God as a participant, provided he does not get lost in the adventure. For, the circumstantial demands upon Providence are terrific.

The ancient commentary on the Gallic war has a sententious phrase which literally translates, "For Caesar

everything had to be done all at once." The words applied to that famous Roman are hyperbole, but if changed to read, "For God everything had to be done all at once" they would be litotes. The more complicated the situation, the more masterful his movement, and the more complete his triumph,—though to human understanding it may not be visible until long after the crisis has passed. Were every civilized people and every organized government on earth to muster force in defiance of heaven, to dismantle the fortress of Revelation and scuttle the decalogue, it would be in its cumulative demands only a recreational incident in divine affairs to quell the insurrection and assert the triune sovereignty.

Such occurrences are not imaginary, they are historic. "Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision." We support a faith which asserts the repetition to the end of time of these divine triumphs. We have no difficulty in "accepting the universe" if we accept the God of the universe as infinite in his wisdom, love, and truth.

Beckwith beautifully abandons his finite God in his final paragraph. He quotes Psa. 147:3-4,

"He healeth the broken in heart,  
He bindeth up their wounds.  
He counteth the number of the stars  
He calleth them all by their names."

Then proceeds: "Only that Good Will could heal the broken hearted with whom lay the control of infinite worlds of space and time; and he alone would be worthy to guide the universe in its trackless path through eternity without the loss of a single shepherded star to whom a broken heart is among the most precious of all values" (*Idea of God*, 335).

Dr. Leighton has characterized religion in a way which makes the Infinite God inevitable. "The supreme paradox of the religious attitude . . . is that, while it is always historically or culturally conditioned, it is essentially faith in the meta-historical or eternal quality of the values

which it sees and serves. There is no genuine religious attitude, whether of revealer, prophet, mystic, or humblest worshiper, that does not, to the experient, bear the quality of lifting his soul and its values and aspirations above the raging torrent of time. For religion is essentially concerned with God as the perfect embodiment of the supreme values of life; and with the relation of the soul of the individual . . . to a Divine Reality in which there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning . . . God, the object of faith and worship, transcends and includes, in his concrete livingness, the true, the beautiful and the good, which are partially glimpsed, served and enjoyed by personal spirits" (Leighton, *Man and the Cosmos*, 545, 560).

Such is the logical necessity for the Infinite God that even the champions of limitation seem to have put a reliable Guarantor back of the whole to insure the proper outcome. It is practically invoking Infinitude. Prof. Hough, vigorous defender of the "adventurous God," expounds one aspect of his character under the caption, "The Infinite Nearness of God." When the finite interpretation has served its supposed purpose in handling a few knotty problems, the discussion elsewhere glides back insensibly into the traditional view.

It may not be out of place to conclude our discussion with the remark that no safe arrival can be guaranteed for any theological expedition which rejects the classic paradigms of truth in favor of novelty or of casuistic demand. It should be remembered that literally scores of such doctrinaires have perished along the path of the centuries, or shrunk into the pitiful obscurity of dessication. No better fate can await world-supports constructed of earthly stuff, gods made to order according to pragmatist's specifications, deities graven into the image of temporalist's options.

We know what Prof. Drummond says to be true: "How this finite and this infinite are brought to touch, how this invisible will of God is brought to the temporal heart, must ever remain unknown" (*The Ideal Life*, 318). And yet we do know that the unlocal God becomes definitely

local in and for the believing heart. We know that he who is the same and whose years shall have no end (Psa. 102:27) remembereth that we are but dust. We know that the divine mystery kept in silence through times eternal (Rom. 16:26) at the last of these days consummative of divine purpose and expressive of human opportunity has been spoken forth to us in a Son through whom he made the ages. We know that while from everlasting to everlasting he is God, we do not have to look backward to find him. He is historic, but also trans-temporal. We know that the divine prescience does not make him an idle spectator. His interest in our thoughts is far greater because he knows them ere we think them. We are assured that he makes the wrath of man eventually to praise him because the world is so constituted fundamentally that only he who worketh the righteousness of God integrates with the growing order, and yet against the unwitting fulcrumage of resistant wills God works for good.

Divine origination demands a past infinity,—whence historic cosmology. Divine possession demands a present infinity,—whence current social science. Divine direction demands a future infinity,—whence predictive teleology. And these three infinities are one.