

Anders P. Bruner's Philosophy of Science

Chapter I

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## Borden P. Bowen's Philosophy of Theism

In writing a summary of this argument for theism, one is bound to limit himself to the positive steps, for in most cases the refutation of opposing arguments depend upon premises which do not appear in this book. The refutations are perhaps acceptable in conclusion, but premises are at times uncertain.

The argument and discussion of theism are taken up under three general heads. The first portion of the book consisting of the Introduction, and chapters I, II, III, and IV, is concerned with the establishment and expounding of an assumed postulate.

The 1<sup>st</sup> section Chap IV, considers the relation of God to finite things, to the Universe, i. e. God as a Creator.

Chap II and III, deal with the higher moral and spiritual relations of man and God.

The argument runs as follows:-

We find ourselves in a world which is to a certain extent intelligible to us. We see understood and comprehended certain limited facts and relations. We see these fragmentary facts and events, and formulate "an assumed Ideal Universe". We, as cognitions

beings "assume that the universe is rational" <sup>x</sup>  
 Our nature demands this assumption, and  
 as an implied principle of the assumption it  
 follows, that "Whatever our total nature  
 calls for, may be assumed as real in  
 default of positive disproof." #

This principle is applied in all arts  
 and sciences, in all the common conditions.  
 It should also be applied to religious thinking  
 as well, for we find religion a very import-  
 ant factor in our lives. Hence it follows  
 that in the discussion of them, we  
 must find some basic postulates, upon  
 which all will agree. Then by logic  
 and metaphysics this postulate may be  
 confirmed and expanded, reaching the  
 result that "Whatever our total nature  
 calls for may be assumed as real in  
 default of positive disproof."

A search for such a postulate, upon which  
 we may stand, we find that none of the  
 traditional arguments, (evolutionary accepted)  
 furnish us a basis, for each one implies in  
 the premise what it forms in the conclusion.

But in using the evolutionary argument  
 we find that we ~~cannot~~ have a basis, upon  
 which all arguments, all investigations must  
 depend, any argument any investigation

\* See P. 19. # P. 23.

conducted, otherwise than upon the basis of  
this postulate <sup>we</sup> is meaningless and absurd.  
"These postulates are: - Interaction, Law, and  
System."

We have therefore assumed an "interacting  
system, A. B. C. Now this assumption of  
an interacting system carries with it  
the implication of a "unitary being" which  
creates and maintains the members in mutual  
relations. For if we try to explain this system  
by saying that each member is independent,  
we deny interaction, because independent  
things cannot interact. In saying that A is  
independent of B+C. we destroy the universe,  
and have two systems. On the other hand if  
we try to show that the determining force  
rests in the system, we are simply adding together  
members and getting the unit. In case the deter-  
mining force rest in the members, for it that  
case we would only run in a circle,  
and could find no resting place. There are  
but two possible adequate explanations. 1st either  
the system is dependent upon a force M without  
or it is dependent upon a force N within.  
~~In either case the force is unitary,~~ which  
in either case the force is a unitary being  
"which creates and maintains the system in  
mutual relations. Which of these two systems

explanation is right mind of free will.

Having established the unity of the world ground we next meet the question of the intelligence of it.

Here we introduce two premises from metaphysics, 1<sup>st</sup> this being is the source of all the finite and its determinations 2<sup>nd</sup> this being is cause, not stuff.

But there are two conceptions of cause, either (1) mechanical "which pushes", or (2) intelligent, which leads. We must accept either mechanical or intelligent, i. e. we must accept either the position that the world ground is intelligent or non-intelligent. Now the Theist holds to intelligence, while the Atheist holds to non intelligence. The Theist in support of his position, points to 1. order and intelligibility of the world. 2<sup>nd</sup> indications of design in things 3<sup>rd</sup> intelligence in man. (4)<sup>th</sup> the over claims of reason and cognition upon an atheistic basis.

1<sup>st</sup> We have already assumed law and system, but all study assumes that this system is intelligible. For psychology teaches that we formulate this system for ourselves, by constructing out of experiences a rational universe, and objectifying the universe as such. But if this knowledge is to have any validity, the laws of thought must correspond to the laws of the universe itself.

This involves (1) a rational universe, (2) a knowing human mind (3) the laws of the mind and the laws of the universe must be identical, (4) there must be an arrangement by which the

outer world may be reproduced in the mind accurately, (5) Men must have rational natures which are identical.

All sciences and arts show this precision <sup>this unity of adjustment,</sup> and we are led to hold that the world ground is intelligent, and works according to intelligible laws.

2<sup>nd</sup> The design argument. "Is there a design?" is the question. While things apparently in their workings show a purpose, do they really show a design, an ideal. The theist says "yes. They are as they seem;" The atheist says "No they may seem to have purpose, but they really do not." Objections to this argument have rested upon misconception of design. It is not a cause of events, but simply an ideal towards which ~~men~~ things are tending.

3<sup>rd</sup> Argument from theory of knowledge.

We have established the idea of relation of individual knowledge to the universe, and the relation of other ideas.

From the standpoint of the necessitarian, there are no mental acts, only happenings. An idea is merely an event. But the atheist, who holds to ~~no~~ intelligence of the world ground, is a necessarian, yet he assumes mental activities, and tries to reason, even though his whole thesis rests up the basis, not of mental activity, but of mental passivity. Atheism is self contradicting and therefore is

self destructive, and leaves the theist free to hold his position that the argument from the theory of knowledge points to an intelligent world ground.

Hence the position of the theist is maintained, and our intell's world ground is seen to be a being unitary intelligence.

When the question of the personality of the intelligent world ground arises, we have to choose between two positions. either the world ground is a personal self conscious intelligence, or it is an impersonal unconscious intelligence. Now intell's sense and rationality have been surfermed. Unconscious impersonality is incompatible with a rational intelligence, for an unconscious intelligence is nothing more than a blind force. But a conscious intelligence is a personality. And when the objection is urged that the finite personality is realized only through the objective world, we only affirm that the conscious intelligence of the finite has a beginning, while the conscious intelligence of the infinite does not. But an eternal unbeginning self is as feasible, as an eternal unbeginning not self. In fact it is not through the not self that we become personal, but the

not-self limits our personality, hence the highest personality would be found in the being least conditioned by the not self, or in the World general.

Thus far we find on first sense an Intelligent Personality, <sup>or God</sup> we proceed to inquire what must be some of the attributes of God.

We find

1<sup>st</sup> Unity. i. e. God is indivisibility, yet complex. We cannot find the solution of the question from the mechanical point of view, for that cannot account for the manifoldness, and complexity, and still maintain the in-divisibility of God. We turn therefore to free intellect, as the only real unity which can justify plurality and still by its self consciousness maintain its unity as distinct from the plurality. God, therefore, being free intelligence, has unity, and He alone has unity in this sense.

2. unchangeability. This attribute cannot be given God, if interpreted from the mechanical point of view for it would exclude activity. It must be explained metaphysically, i. e. it simply means the continuity and constancy of God's nature.

3. Immutability. Again the mechanical interpretation is excluded, the idea of space cannot be involved, for if God

were "spread out" it is evident that a part of him would be in one place and a part in another, and omnipresence can have no meaning if it does not mean concentration of presence. It therefore can have no meaning under the idea of space is confined to the nature of God as its source, and God's activity is immediately and wholly connected with any factive event. In this sense God is omnipresent.

4. Eternity.

The only limitations which can exist for God are intervals. Now time is but a form of change, and not a reality. A being, therefore, like God, which is in full possession of itself and does not go through a process of self-revelation, is not in time, so far as the being himself is concerned. He would be the all inclusive present. He is simply "I am" without meaning or without expectations.

In this sense he is eternal. But his revelation <sup>to us</sup> is in time, but that which is in time to us is without time to God, for he comprehends the whole at once.

5.<sup>th</sup> Omnipresence, i.e. knowledge of past present and future, is incompatible with freedom, and must be denied.

6.<sup>th</sup> Two views have been held upon this question. 1.<sup>st</sup> That God can do the doable.

2.

but is limited by certain necessities. 2<sup>nd</sup> that God can do the impossible.

The 1<sup>st</sup> is manifestly an absurd position. The first assumes a different meaning after considering the nature of truth and law. The question of freedom and necessity is involved. Now truth and law must be founded in God, for God is the unconditioned, i. e., law and truth are but an expression of Gods nature. Neither is a reality, but exists only in and through God, and thus are dependent upon him, and not the reverse. "God does not exist and then act, but exists only, in and through his act." He is exerting his greatest power when he is acting the greatest, therefore rather than saying that God is limited by certain necessities, we must see that these apparent necessities are but expressions of his omnipotence.

God and the World.

There have been two general classes of exposition of the relations of the finite to the infinite. One is theistic. The other is fideistic. Any fideistic conception involves the idea of God as stuff, and is inconsistent with an established principle of

finite cause. Now can the finite be considered as modes of the infinite, for this is incompatible with unity. There are but two logical conceptions possible.

1<sup>st</sup> The conception which regards the finite as a mode of the infinite, without any proper thing <sup>2<sup>nd</sup> as a product of god.</sup> level. This conception is illustrated by the relation of thoughts to mind. "The thoughts are not modes of the mind but mental acts." Finite things are not modes of the infinite, but acts of the infinite. There is no more distinction between the finite and the infinite, than there is between thoughts and the mind. But whatever may be the relation, the finite must be considered as created. God is the agent, but the freedom of creation is a mystery. God did not make the world from nothing. But rather he caused that to be which was not before. He is the free cause.

~~Again we may view it as a product of God~~  
~~as a substantial product.~~ This idea of creation is the only one which preserves the unity of God. But there is a possibility of two interpretations here. We may look upon creation as a necessary part of gods nature, or as a product of his free will. The former view is opposed to the idea of freedom, and it, therefore falls of its own weight. Therefore we must look upon the finite as appearing

of a divine free will,

But in thinking of God as the creator we must not permit our notions of time to enter into the question, for we have seen that God is <sup>not</sup> subjected to time, but is the all inclusive Present. "I am".

God wills creation, but we must not suppose time to exist previous to the creation. We can not admit the idea of an uncaused will in God. Willing with God is the logical, but not chronological antecedent of creation. The will to create, and the ~~initial~~ creation are co-extensive.

The world was created, therefore, by divine will. As to the present relation of the divine will to the finite. 1<sup>st</sup> is a law which regards God's mission as fulfilled after the first creation. The other system sees so little of ~~the~~ regularity in the world that a constant creative force seems necessary to keep the world going.

Neither of these explanations is adequate. The facts out of which the first grew, are real, and show the constancy of God's forces, but that they are eternal laws, but that God proceeds along the same lines. It is doubtful if God is creating in the physical world, but simply carries out his long established system. But when

we get beyond the spiritual physical world into the spiritual world, we meet with difficulty in applying the principle.

But divine govt. in its proper sense is applied only to spiritual finite beings, which are free. Govt. has no meaning when applied to a physical thing. Then free spirits are the subjects of divine govt. This implies a world govt. for such a cosmic movement without aim or purpose could not be the outcome of a self-reflecting god. We can find ~~with~~ adequate signs of that final purpose in the world of things, here we turn to the world realm.

But there is no way of deducing the ethical ideal from the metaphysical attributes of god. But there is a finibility of world nature and we find ourselves possessed of a world nature, hence we assume a world nature. To account for this we turn to a world author. Natural thought for generally regarded world nature is not so pointing to a world nature in god.

There is as much as we recognize god as the author of our world nature ~~any~~ <sup>is a sin</sup> <sup>is a sin</sup> <sup>is a sin</sup> against god. We have to take this on faith, there is no logical proof.

The ~~next~~ <sup>next</sup> form for argument for world life

is the idea of progress in history, and the demand of nature for a moral life. But these arguments do not account for the moral nature. Our whole moral idea rests upon the possibility of free choice, it rests upon the assumption that there is some element of chance of self-determination in our lives. Facts would seem to substantiate the non-moral, as well as the moral condition, and yet by faith we cling to the moral end. Even experience does not favor the government of God's world government, and while these arguments are going on, they men speak of God's best government, and this is a mere justification of an assumption of a moral goal. But the value of life must be decided by the race. The things which life counts worth while are the things which count in the left hand. But the futurist ignores what sense of good there is, and goes on his way complaining. But finally we find back upon the face and holy love of God as the highest conception of the moral ideal.

But therein for a meaning upon futuristic morality. Atheism makes void all conception of a moral life, for how can an automaton be anything more than a mere thing, a thing fashioned hither and yon, even his ideas and purposes but the product of his fate. He can have no moral judgments, for it is not his to judge.

he can have no moral ideals, for his ideas are  
but events, and is only ideal can be the present  
event in his mind; he can have no system of  
duties, for if he had a duty, being an automaton he  
could not carry it into execution.

A moral life can be only for the theist, only in  
the thought of the Kingdom of righteousness. Ethics  
must not only affect some of living, but must  
give ideals.

### Criticism

The whole scheme reminds me of the  
boys kite. It was a good kite, but it had  
so much tail that it would not fly.

It seems to me, too, that there are glaring  
inconsistencies. On p. 129 he says that consciousness  
is a consciousness of our states thoughts etc." It seems  
to me that he argues in idea of consciousness of  
thoughts, states etc. in the firmness of the world  
ground. But on p. 152 "It would be with  
out memory and expectation, yet in absolute  
enjoyment with of itself. For such a being the  
present alone would exist; its now would  
be eternal, and its name 'I am'. For us  
the unconditioned world ground, or God  
is such a being!" I cannot see the  
two conceptions are to be reconciled.  
I think that it is a characteristic error

of the whole book, that he deals with one topic at a time regardless of all others. He seems to write without memory and without expectation yet in absolute enjoyment of himself."

Chapter II appears to me as a quilled attempt to avoid inexplicable problems. There was only one place where I felt sure that he knew his line of argument. At p. 179 in answer to the question "How is it possible?" he replies "there is no rational answer. His argument for the Trinity seems to me a denial, of of every thing that he tried to prove, in the 'attributes' of unity."

It shot it seems to look to look such a long unnecessary tail into the first three chapters,

Abstract is good but the criticisms are too much in the style of the worst parts of the book. The inconsistency between p. 129 + p. 152 is not made clear.