

II. *By* C. D. BROAD.

I MUST open my contribution to this Symposium with a few words of personal explanation. The subject is one in which I feel very little interest. I do not believe that anything of importance remains to be said on either side from a purely philosophical point of view ; and I am rather specially unfitted, through lack of the relevant experiences, to discuss it with profit to myself or others. I originally wrote a semi-popular paper on the subject simply because the Student Christian Movement in Cambridge asked me to take the negative side in a debate with Mr. Shebbeare on "The Validity of Belief in a Personal God." And I afterwards published my contribution (to which I attached very little importance) for the sordid reason that I wanted to be paid for it. I venture to take up some of your time with these explanations for two reasons. In the first place I want to make it quite clear that my article in the *Hibbert Journal*, though it contains nothing which I do not believe to be true, is to be regarded as a speech by the counsel for the prosecution. And, secondly, I want to make it plain that the subject is not one which I should spontaneously have treated or which I mean to revert to in future.

I propose to confine myself almost entirely to the elucidation of certain points which are raised by Prof. Stocks' paper. Prof. Stocks holds that "God" must be defined or described as "the object of the religious act or attitude." It is then the business of the philosophy of religion to determine what properties such an object must have, and to see whether and how far the existence of an object with these properties can be reconciled

with what we believe on other grounds about Reality. I wholly agree with Prof. Stocks in thinking that it is futile to attempt to prove the existence of God, or to determine his nature if he does exist, unless one takes specifically religious experiences as part of one's data. But I think that we need to be told a great deal more in detail about the "religious act or attitude" before we can estimate the value of the line of argument which Prof. Stocks indicates. Prof. Stocks refuses to identify "the religious act or attitude" with religious emotion, although he regards the latter as an essential part of the former. He seems inclined to identify the "religious act or attitude" with worship, and to define or describe "God" as "the object of worship." I take it that he means to include under "worship" certain specific emotions, actions, and beliefs which are closely bound up with each other. Now, if this is to be the basis of our discussion about the validity of belief in a personal God, it is essential to begin with a general analysis of a typical emotional situation; to consider the general relations between emotions, beliefs and facts; and to discuss the causal relations between emotions and beliefs. When this has been done we can return to the particular complex mental state called "worship" and can consider what relevant conclusions, if any, can be based on the fact that it exists.

*Analysis of an Emotional Situation.*—By an "emotional situation" I mean the kind of event which would be expressed by such phrases as "I am feeling love for X" or "I am feeling fear of a dragon in the coal-cellar." In any genuine emotional situation we can always distinguish two factors, and in many we can distinguish a third factor. The two factors which are always present are (a) the presentation of a certain object, real or delusive, and (b) a certain emotional attitude towards this presented object. The third factor, which is often but not always found, is the belief that the presented object has certain characteristics and that it is *because of* these characteristics that this emotional attitude is

directed to this object. I will now say something further about each of these factors.

(a) The object is always presented either as now existing or as going to exist in the future. In the first case it may be presented by sense-perception, veridical or delusive, or it may be presented by an explicit existential judgment of the form "Such and such an object now exists." In the second case it must be presented by an explicit judgment of expectation of the form "Such and such an object probably will exist." The question whether the perception is veridical or delusive and whether the existential judgment is true or false is entirely irrelevant to the analysis of the emotional situation. The emotional attitude is directed to what is *believed* at the time to exist or to be about to exist, quite regardless of whether any such object does or will in fact exist. I call the presented object to which the emotional attitude is directed the "Epistemological Object of the Emotional Situation," and I say that every genuine emotional situation has an epistemological object, whether or not there is any ontological object corresponding to this. It must be admitted, however, that there are mental states, analogous to emotional situations, in which it is difficult to be sure whether there is an epistemological object or not. If these really have no epistemological object I refuse to call them "emotional situations," and I call them instead "emotional moods." But I think it quite likely that even here there is an epistemological object which is just very vaguely conceived as "things-in-general" or "the future."

(b) The emotional attitude may take various qualitatively different forms, *e.g.*, love, fear, awe, etc. And several qualitatively different emotional attitudes may be directed at the same time to the same epistemological object. They may then fuse in various ways to give complex emotional attitudes. Lastly, any specific kind of emotional attitude towards a given epistemological object may exist in various degrees of intensity.

(c) No doubt when an object is presented as existing or going to exist we nearly always have some further beliefs about its qualities and relations. Now it seems to me that such beliefs sometimes do and sometimes do not form an essential part of the emotional situation. When I have a certain emotional attitude towards a certain presented object two cases may arise.

(i) The attitude may be directed on to the object as such and without reference to my beliefs about its qualities and relations. I say then that the emotional situation is "immediate." In that case my beliefs about the characteristics of the presented object are not factors in the analysis of the emotional situation.

(ii) On the other hand, the emotional attitude may be directed to the presented object, not as such, but as believed to possess certain qualities and relations. I say then that the emotional situation is "mediated." In that case my belief that the presented object has these particular qualities and relations is an essential factor in the analysis of the emotional situation.

It is important to notice two points here. (i) Even when an emotional attitude is *directed to* a presented object as such, and not to it as believed to possess certain characteristics, it may nevertheless be *caused by* certain characteristics which the presented object in fact possesses. The cause of my loving a certain person may be the fact that he possesses certain qualities which I neither know nor believe him to possess. (ii) When an emotional attitude is *directed to* a presented object as believed to possess certain characteristics it may nevertheless *not be caused* either by this belief or by the fact that the object does possess these characteristics. I may believe that a certain man is intelligent, and I may have the experience which would be described as "admiring this man for his intelligence." Yet he may not in fact be intelligent. And my admiration may not really be caused by my belief in his intelligence but by the shape of his nose and the tone of his voice about which I may have no

beliefs whatever. To say that a certain emotional attitude is directed to a certain presented object as possessing certain characteristics means only that I *believe* the object to have these characteristics and that I *believe* that the possession of these characteristics causes my emotional attitude towards this object. Either or both of these beliefs may be false.

I will now sum up my general analysis of emotional situations. Every emotional situation involves the presentation of a certain object and the direction of a certain emotional attitude towards this presented object. The object may be presented either by perception or by an existential belief or expectation. If the emotional situation be immediate no other factor is involved in its analysis. If it be mediated there will be a third factor, viz., a belief that the presented object has certain characteristics and that these determine the emotional attitude. Any or all the beliefs which are involved in an emotional situation may be false. The perception which presents the object may be hallucinatory, or the existential belief or expectation may be mistaken. Even if this be not so the presented object may not have the characteristics which it is believed to have. And, even if it has the characteristics which it is believed to have, the belief that these determine the emotional attitude may be false.

*The Causal Relations of Emotion and Belief.*—Having now analysed emotional situations to the best of my ability I propose to consider the causes and effects of emotional situations, and in particular the causal connexions between emotional attitudes and beliefs. An emotional situation arises when a certain object is presented and a certain specific emotional attitude is called forth and directed to this object. One cause-factor which must always be present is the pre-existing emotional dispositions of the subject. The occurrence of a particular emotional attitude on a particular occasion is determined by the stimulation of a certain emotional disposition. We must there-

fore consider what this stimulus may be. It seems to me that there are at least four important cases all of which actually occur. (a) An object may be presented and may be believed to have certain characteristics. This belief may determine a certain emotional attitude towards the object. And the emotional attitude may not determine any further beliefs about the characteristics of the object. *E.g.*, I find myself in presence of a dog which looks fierce and seems to be unchained. This presentation and these beliefs about the presented object determine the emotional attitude of fear. And this need not determine any further beliefs about the characteristics of the dog. (b) The second case resembles the first, except that the emotional attitude which is determined by my original beliefs about the characteristics of the presented object determines in turn certain further beliefs about this object. *E.g.*, I meet a certain person whom I admire because I think him good-looking, and then my admiration causes me to believe that he is intelligent. (c) An object is presented and a certain emotional attitude is called forth and directed to this object, not by any beliefs that I may have about the characteristics of this object, but by some quite different cause-factor. This might be (i) something purely internal, *e.g.*, the state of my liver ; or (ii) some characteristic which the object in fact possesses although I know and believe nothing about it ; or (iii) the characteristics which some other object possesses or is believed to possess. As a result of this emotional attitude I come to believe that the presented object has certain characteristics and that these are the cause of my emotional attitude towards it. *E.g.*, a man is rendered cross by business worries or by a torpid liver or by some unnoticed mannerism in the person whom he is talking to. As a result he feels anger towards this person. In consequence of this he believes, rightly or wrongly, that this person is being deliberately rude to him and that this is why he feels angry with this person.

(d) A certain emotional mood is called forth in the first or third of the ways enumerated under (c). This produces either an hallucinatory perception of a certain object or an existential belief or expectation, true or false. The emotion is then directed to this presented object, either immediately or mediately. In the latter case the belief that the object has certain characteristics which cause the emotion to be directed to it may itself be caused by the emotional mood, or it may be independent of this. *E.g.*, stories told to a child by his nurse may generate fear when the child goes into the dark, and this fear may produce a belief that there is a dragon in the coal-cellar, or even an hallucinatory perception of one. And the child may then be frightened of the dragon which it believes to be there, either immediately or because it believes that it will eat him.

There are three general observations to be made here. (i) When I say that certain beliefs about a presented object may cause a certain emotional attitude towards this object and that this may in turn produce further beliefs about the object I include under this heading the following special case. I may start by believing that a certain presented object has a certain characteristic to a certain degree. This may produce a certain emotional attitude towards the object. And this in turn may cause me to ascribe the *same* qualities and no others to the object but in a *higher degree*. One's admiration for a person may originally be caused by the belief that he is good-looking, and this emotional attitude when once generated may cause one to think him better-looking than one originally did. (ii) Such processes may go on alternately. The emotion may cause one to magnify the qualities of the object, and this magnification may in turn increase the intensity of the emotion. (iii) Just as there is no need for the beliefs which generate an emotion to be true, so there is no need for the beliefs that are generated by an emotion to be true. We must distinguish the following cases. (1) If

the existential belief be generated by the emotional attitude it is much more likely to be false than true. For its truth, if it be true, will be the merest matter of chance. (2) If the existential belief be true, but the emotional attitude generates some part of the beliefs about the characteristics of the object, two cases may arise. In the first place the emotion may directly generate the belief. If so, the truth of the belief, if it should happen to be true, will be a matter of pure luck. Secondly, the immediate effect of the emotion may be that we take a much greater interest in the object and pay much greater attention to it. This will increase the likelihood of our discovering characteristics of the object which we should not otherwise have noticed. When an emotion determines a belief in this indirect way there is a fair chance that the belief may be true. Both these alternatives are often realised in the beliefs which are caused by the emotion of love. If I love a person I do no doubt notice minute details about him which I should not have noticed if I had not loved him. And this may very well give rise to true beliefs about certain of his characteristics. On the other hand, the emotion may directly cause me to exaggerate the admirable qualities which I already believed him to have and to ascribe other admirable qualities to him for which there is no good evidence.

*Appropriateness of Emotion to Object.*—There remains one other important point to be cleared up in connexion with emotional situations. This is the notion of *appropriateness*. This involves a question of value, which may be called “ethical” or “aesthetic,” according to one’s definition of these terms. In general outline this notion of appropriateness is perfectly familiar to everyone. It is appropriate to feel sorrow at the misfortunes of one’s friends, and it is inappropriate to feel admiration for an ugly building. Moreover, even when the specific *kind* of emotional attitude which is felt toward a certain

object is appropriate to that object, the *intensity* of it may be inappropriate. Enthusiastic admiration for a quite moderately beautiful picture is inappropriate in degree. The general principle is that there is a certain kind and degree of emotion which is appropriate to an object which has certain characteristics to a certain degree. And this means that if any different kind of emotional attitude, or any different degree of the same emotional attitude, were felt towards this object, the total emotional situation could not be intrinsically better and might be *intrinsically* worse. (It might of course be *instrumentally* better to feel a different kind or degree of emotion. The appropriate kind and degree of sorrow for a given misfortune might tend to incapacitate one from giving the help which one could otherwise have given.)

We must now go into further detail. It is necessary to draw a distinction between *formal* and *material* appropriateness, analogous to the distinction between the formal and material correctness of an argument. An emotional attitude is materially appropriate if the presented object actually exists and actually has such characteristics that the emotional attitude which is felt towards it is appropriate to it. An emotional attitude is formally appropriate provided that it *would* be materially appropriate if the presented object existed and had those characteristics which the person who feels the emotion believes it to have. If I believe that a friend is in pain an attitude of sorrow is formally appropriate and an attitude of amusement is formally inappropriate. If my belief is mistaken, and he is really rocking with suppressed laughter and not writhing with pain, an attitude of sorrow is materially inappropriate and an attitude of amusement is materially appropriate.

It only remains to add that nearly all the remarks that I have made about emotional situations can be applied in principle, *mutatis mutandis*, to conative situations.

*Application of these Results to Theology.*—The description of “God” as “the object of the act of worship” seems to me to have two closely connected defects. (1) A definition, or a description which is used in place of a definition, should not contain a tacit assumption. Now when we talk of “the object” of a certain act we are assuming that this act has one and only one object. This ought to be proved and not assumed. If we confine ourselves to the *actual* objects towards which religious emotions have been felt it seems certain (a) that such emotions have been felt by the same person towards many different objects of the same kind, and (b) that they have been felt by different persons towards objects of different kinds. I suppose, e.g., that a polytheist worships a number of objects of the same kind. And, again, I suppose that Spinoza felt towards the Universe as conceived by him the same kind of emotions which ordinary theists feel towards their God or gods. And yet it is certain that the Universe as conceived by Spinoza is quite a different kind of object from God as conceived by ordinary theists. (2) This difficulty could in part be avoided by substituting for the phrase “the object” the phrase “the *appropriate* object.” I suspect that this is what Prof. Stocks really means. And I think that this change ought certainly to be made. We should, I think, be quite justified in saying that, although Jehovah and Jupiter and Huitzilopochtli have in fact been objects of religious emotions and acts, yet they were formally inappropriate objects. And I should not hesitate to say that, although Spinoza undoubtedly did feel religious emotions toward the Universe as he conceived it to be, yet the Universe as conceived by Spinoza is a formally inappropriate object for such emotions. But, even when this substitution is made, we ought to leave out “the” in our description. We ought to say: “A god is a being which has such characteristics that the emotion of worship is appropriate to it.” We might admit that only one *kind* of

being could answer to this description, though even this seems to me to need proof. But, even if we admitted this, it would still be necessary to prove that there could be only *one being* of this kind. I think that it would be held by Prof. Stocks that no object would be formally appropriate to the emotion of religious worship unless it were believed to have the characteristic of uniqueness. Probably most philosophic Theists would agree with this, and it may very well be true. But it is a synthetic proposition, and it should be stated separately and explicitly and not smuggled in under the form of a descriptive definition.

If we descriptively define "a god" in this way a system of hypothetical theology could then be developed. It would consist in determining as accurately as possible what characteristics an object would have to have if it were to be an appropriate object of the religious act or emotion. Let us see what these characteristics are according to Prof. Stocks. (1) I am not clear whether he holds that the object would have to be the Universe as a whole. He says that in the religious act or attitude a man "is in response and relation to the world as a whole." He also says that "Religion offers . . . a certain reading of the world as a whole . . . the religious truth emerging in the religious act as the vision of the ordering principle of the whole." In another place he is more specific. He tells us that the religious act or attitude is bound up with the belief that "the world is an order in which man's spiritual interests are recognised and securely established." Putting these statements together I come to the conclusion that Prof. Stocks probably means to assert something of the following kind. The appropriate object of the religious attitude is *not* the world as a whole but is something which is believed to be "the ordering principle of the world." But the religious attitude is inseparably connected with certain beliefs about the world as a whole, viz., that it is an order in which man's spiritual interests are recognised and

securely established, and that it has an ordering principle. It should be noted that neither of these two beliefs about the world as a whole implies the other. The world might have an ordering principle but men's spiritual interests might not be guaranteed. And man's spiritual interests might be guaranteed (as they would be on Hegel's or McTaggart's views of the Universe) without there being "an ordering principle" in any other sense than a set of fundamental facts about the structure of the Universe.

Now, granted that the religious attitude and these beliefs about the world as a whole are inseparably connected, I am still quite in the dark as to the precise relations between the two. Do the beliefs call forth the emotional attitude and present it with its object? Or does the emotional attitude generate the beliefs? Or does the belief that the Universe is such that our spiritual interests are guaranteed call forth the religious attitude, and does this in turn cause the belief that there is an ordering principle and direct the religious attitude on to this supposed ordering principle? Or do we start by believing that the Universe is *more or less* favourable to our spiritual interests, and does this produce an emotional attitude which in turn generates the belief that our spiritual interests are "*securely established*"? It is surely of vital importance to have some answers to these questions before we can decide what weight to attach to these beliefs.

(2) Prof. Stocks further holds that no object would be appropriate to the religious attitude unless it were capable of "responding" to the worshipper. He holds that one essential factor in religious experience is that there is a feeling which the worshipper interprets as response by the object of his worship. By saying that a God must be "personal" we mean that it must be capable of responding, and we do not mean to assert any more than this and whatever may be implied by this. Now we are acquainted with nothing that can respond to our emotions except persons. We are thus compelled to think of God by analogy

with a finite person. But we may quite consistently admit that the analogy is imperfect and that we do not know how to fill in the details. I find myself in complete agreement with this. It is because the Universe as conceived by Spinoza is admittedly incapable of responding to the worshipper that I hold that it was an inappropriate object for the religious emotion which Spinoza undoubtedly felt towards it.

We now come to the final question. Suppose we admit (as I am inclined to do) that there is a specific kind of attitude called the "religious attitude." Suppose we admit that it is bound up with the belief that the Universe is such that our spiritual interests are "securely established," and with the further existential belief that there is an "Ordering Principle" which guarantees this. Suppose we admit that the appropriate object of the religious attitude is this supposed Ordering Principle, conceived as unique and as capable of responding to the worshipper and therefore as so far analogous to a person. Are we a step nearer to answering the question whether the belief in the existence of an object with these characteristics is *valid*? Prof. Stocks interprets the word "valid" in such a way that the question is hardly worth asking. He says: "What is a valid belief except something with which metaphysics must reckon in the account that it seeks to render of reality? In this sense it seems evident that the belief in a personal God is as valid as the belief in Space and Time and Matter, or in the chairs and tables of the external world." Certainly "in this sense" the belief is "valid"; but in this sense the statement that the belief is valid is a perfectly trivial proposition which no one has ever denied. Even if one held the preposterous view that religious beliefs, emotions, and rites were "invented by Kings and Priests for the enslavement of peoples" they would still be "something with which metaphysics must reckon in the account that it seeks to render of reality." Surely, *e.g.*, Berkeley was discussing

the " validity " of the belief in matter ; and surely it would be a very odd answer to make to Berkeley to say that the belief is valid because metaphysics has to reckon with it.

When I am asked whether a certain belief is valid I understand the question to mean, not whether the belief *exists* and is important and not whether it is *true*, but whether we are justified in holding it on the data available to us. The only answer that I can find in Prof. Stock's paper to the question which we are supposed to be discussing is the following sentence : " The evidence of the existence of such an object is to be found in the religious act itself." Now I hope that after the analysis of the earlier part of this paper it is perfectly evident that this is not true. The existence of an emotional attitude guarantees the existence of its causes and of its effects. Some of these causes and some of these effects are or may be beliefs. If so, the existence of the emotion guarantees the *existence* of these beliefs. But it has not the faintest tendency to guarantee their *truth*. And I must confess that this seems to me so obvious that I am almost ashamed of labouring the point.

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