

NOTE

HOMO CAPAX DEI: THOUGHTS ON MAN AND TRANSCENDENCE

Sixty years ago William Ernest Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* was published. It has been singularly influential in American theology and philosophy of religion ever since. In fact, Hocking's work speaks even more pertinently to our condition now than it did in 1912. Many of us who have been awakened from our neo-orthodox slumbers are now rediscovering in modes of human experience the proper matrix of theological reflection and interpretation. So we can re-read with new approval Hocking's words:

In proportion as the religious horizon is drawn close, the gamut of religious experience becomes trivial. . . . The near-by diety of a religion that betones immanence proves in experience to be a baffling object of worship. Paradoxically enough he is not so accessible as the unreachable God. . . . The explanation of the paradox seems to be this: that the effort to think God must first differentiate God from our other objects. But *we also* are in a different world from any of our World-objects; something in us is foreign and transcendent to all that we view. . . . Until the human spirit knows the self that is more at home in the infinite than here among Things, it has not yet found its Self nor its God. Only the transcendent God can be truly immanent. This also is a matter of experience.¹

Although we might express ourselves a bit more tentatively today, we would still share Hocking's convictions that real transcendence is experienceable and that self-transcendence is a valid clue to whatever transcendence itself can be said to mean. Indeed, contemporary theological discussion both here and abroad is virtually preoccupied with the theme of transcendence. This current stress may represent in part an effort to join issues forced upon our attention by the so-called "radical" and "secular" theologies, which have either rejected transcendence as unknowable or have futurized or politicized it out of all recognition to its traditional meanings. However, this emphasis also marks the degree to which these attacks from the theological left have unsettled the foundations of mainline Christian thinking and have actually become operative in much of our work.

Let me give some examples. From a Roman Catholic viewpoint, von Balthasar writes:

¹ *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (New Haven: Yale, 1912) pp. 327, 328-29, 330.

...it is essential to examine fearlessly the supernatural revealed truths of Christianity in the light of the sciences that have man as their object. . . . God, in becoming man and taking man into his trinitarian life, did no violence to human nature. . . . When God becomes man then man as such becomes the expression, the valid and authentic expression, of the divine mystery. . . . Humanism within Christianity is indeed the central theme of our time.²

And from a more strictly philosophical-analytical angle, G. F. Woods observes that "the deepest use of the vocabulary of transcendence is to describe the fact of being in existence."³ It would seem, then, that whereas transcendence has traditionally been regarded as an attribute of God alone, today it is closely bound up with an emerging theology of man.

Now it is this greatly broadened base of theological reflection, this "thinking from below" as Pannenberg calls it, of which I wish to take account here. First, some general observations. One is that the category of the transcendent in this expanded form has been undergoing some strange mutations. Its usefulness appears to depend upon its quite remarkable elasticity. Perhaps it can be made to cover so wide a field just because it can be made to refer to whatever is dubious, imprecise, or unprovable. So A. J. Ayer, some years ago now, called "transcendent statements" not merely those which refer to God or Being itself but those like "in the long run" or "for the most part" which go beyond (i.e., "transcend") the possibility of present sensory verification. It is odd, to say the least, that an effort to restrict the meaning of transcendence should result in applying it to most of the statements we make in ordinary, normal life.

Another preliminary comment is that while some philosophers have tried to rule out transcendence, some psychologists have been rediscovering its value for understanding human motivation and behavior. In particular, as Herbert Fingarette says, "psychoanalysis itself has long been moving toward more amplified and sensitive conceptions of the human being"⁴—conceptions in which such words as "spirit" or even "soul" are by no means without relevance. In this context, to be sure, transcendence is used almost entirely in the sense of self-transcendence as expressed in a patient's language, ego-integration, or value-orientation, for example.

This growing area of potential conflict or convergence should have a

² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Word and Revelation (Essays in Theology 1)* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964) pp. 87, 88, 89.

³ In his essay "The Idea of the Transcendent," *Soundings*, ed. Alec Vidler (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962) p. 56.

⁴ *The Self in Transformation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963) p. 4.

place on the current theological agenda. The work done over twenty years ago by David Roberts and Albert Outler needs to be resumed. But interdisciplinary inquiry, or participation by theologians in what Ernst Becker calls a unified science of man, will surely have important consequences within the theological workshop itself. Sooner or later questions like these will press for answers: Is human self-transcendence the sole or principal meaning of transcendence-in-general? If so, where does this leave theology with its traditional insistence on divine transcendence? Must the lines now be redrawn as between God and man, in our thought and speech about both or either? Such questions, I predict, are going to become increasingly urgent for the discipline and vocation of theology.

TRANSCENDING AND BEING TRANSCENDED

Whether by chance or by good fortune I began writing this paper during a sabbatical leave in Rome. There I found abundant food for thought regarding the theme of transcendence in relation to self-transcendence. At times the religious scene only seemed to confirm the ancient prophets' suspicion that man is an inveterate manipulator and packager of what he takes to be transcendent: dressed-up Jesus-dolls, heavy with jewels, receiving popular devotion; statues of saints with feet worn smooth by centuries of kissing; relics and mummies under high altars—the whole triumphalist barrage of splendid, confident religion. However, there were also occasional glimpses of a more elemental awe and pathos in the presence of the transcendent: a tiny door carved standing partly open on a classical tomb; sheep gamboling respectfully in a mosaic heaven; or a Byzantine black Madonna staring wide-eyed from a side chapel. On balance I was inclined to think that man's expression of his dealings with the transcendent may be authentic only when it is ambiguous. May it not be the case that it is our real ambivalence toward transcendence which yields symbols and categories open to interpretation in at least two very different ways?

One possible way of reading the language of transcendence, verbal or nonverbal, is that of Feuerbach and his successors. All theology is a disguised anthropology; its statements about God should be taken as referring to man instead. Theology may give valuable information and even insight as to what being human means; but we are merely self-deceived if we suppose it to refer to anything above or beyond experience. "Man is the God of man," wrote Feuerbach; "I deny only in order to affirm. I deny the fantastic projection of religion and theology in order to affirm the real essence of man."⁶

⁶ Cited in Karl Barth's introductory essay to Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957) p. xviii.

It is hardly surprising that theologians should have rejected or tried to refute this unfriendly understanding of their whole enterprise, but possibly the vehemence of their reaction only masks an uneasy suspicion that an affirmative truth is lurking behind Feuerbach's rhetoric of denial. What honest theologian has never entertained the possibility that his own convictions, like the established certitudes of his tradition, may be nothing but probes launched into the unknown from the shaky platform of an all-too-human self-understanding? As a faith too sure of itself to bear criticism and correction only confesses its own unbelief, so a theology that cannot absorb the attacks of radical doubt is but an exercise in "fantastic projection." Barth, as is well known, used the example of Feuerbach to frighten students and readers into seeing just where a radical subjectivism must always lead. What he found intolerable here was "the possibility of an inversion of above and below, of heaven and earth, of God and man"—an overstepping of the warning given in the Reformation principle *Finitum non capax infiniti*. At the same time, however, Barth could treat Feuerbach's position as "a thoroughly sound reminder, necessary for a knowledge of the real God," and as confronting the theologian with "the question of whether he is really concerned with God and not with the apotheosis of man."⁶

Present-day theologians may well have some unfinished business to do with Feuerbach, but my point is that there will be no genuine dialogue with the human sciences until the anthropological character of religious and theological assertions is accepted and explored. Both Barth and his adversary agreed in conceiving human experience as in principle closed rather than open, as nothing but subjective states of consciousness. But what happens when the post-Kantian subject-object scheme is abandoned altogether? Today fundamental reorientations are in process that shift "the index-pointer of reality"; older dichotomies of fact and value, of "inner" and "outer," of "experienced" and "real" are no longer operational in many quarters; and new links are being forged among the disciplines that study what is distinctively human, looking toward more comprehensive and workable perspectives.

My proposal then is this. Let us shift our focus in theology from a superbeing called God to the examination of those experiences of transcending or being transcended which provide not only the occasions for religious faith but also the testing ground of its interpretation by theology. For some of us this may require bracketing the word "God" for a time at least, although my hunch is that what is intended by the word will always remain on the hidden agenda. The spirit of this proposal is

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

caught by Herbert Fingarette, who writes this about a protagonist in ancient Hebrew drama:

Job saw finally that the divine meaning of life is to be found in the numinous and indwelling quality of life lived and accepted in all its mysterious and untamable variety, not in supposed references to superlife Entities, Doings, or Compacts nor with an eye to the earthly rewards and punishments visited upon us from such a super-human world. Job learned that the meaning of life is not something outside life upon which to lean, not something outside life to which life points.⁷

Here the operative term is "meaning," as it was for Ernest Hocking's work. It is also, or may prove to be, the common term facilitating quite unprecedented break-throughs into theological relevance in the near future. That we cannot know until we try, but the prospects are encouraging.

Why should the conclusion be resisted any longer that the God-question is part of the man-question? In a very real sense theology has always been anthropology; and long before the new hermeneutics became fashionable we theologians were aware that any form of understanding involves preunderstanding or self-understanding. The shift of focus I propose does not represent, as Barth feared, an "inversion" of meanings used in theological discourse. It is necessary to go on denying Feuerbach's denials, since one function of theology is always to protest against any "nothing-but" account of either man or transcendence. Facile reductionism or positivism of any kind is the implacable enemy of theological amplitude and growth, most especially when it crops up in theologizing itself. Nevertheless, it is generally a sound principle that a viewpoint is more likely to be true in what it affirms than in what it denies. Applying this to Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, or Freud as interpreters of religious man, it should be said that God, or better, transcendence, is what human experience *means*. Of course, Feuerbach never said this, but now perhaps we are able to say it for him.

TRANSCENDENCE AND LOGIC

The word "transcendence" carries many and confusing uses in our language. The verb from which the noun is formed originally signified an act of crossing over or going beyond, action initiated and completed by human effort. But since the act of transcending involved overcoming some obstacle in the transcender's way, a river or a mountain perhaps, the word came by extension to signify the barrier itself, that which "transcends" the would-be transcender. So by a kind of reversal not un-

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

familiar in the history of language, transcendence came to signify a state or condition of being transcended. The transcendent is what transcends me, not my own transcending act. In popular usage, it comes to mean what cannot be transcended. This change from active to passive voice has had a profound effect on theological discourse as well.

Given the etymology of the vocabulary of transcendence, what of its logic? The first thing to be pointed out is that how the basic noun is defined matters greatly. If transcendence is defined, implicitly or explicitly, as what is inconceivable or unknowable, then obviously we can never know or think it. If it is defined as impossible to experience, then no experience can be invoked as its expression or effect. As H. G. Woods observes, in such instances failure is not only invited; it is assured.⁸ Indeed, much discussion of transcendence, employing such definitions, is logically caught on dead center. To change the figure, it can never get off the ground because it has already defined itself as an impossible task.

Secondly, however, this impasse is only a logical one. People in fact will go on thinking and talking about transcendence, and they will continue to define it in the kind of language that suggests unthinkability and unspeakability. Does this indicate that we should not perhaps take our definitions too woodenly and solemnly, but ought to change the rules when a new sort of game is in progress? Yes, I believe it does.

Thirdly: If I persist in defining the transcendent as what cannot be known or experienced at all, and then go on talking about it anyhow, there must be some good reasons for this. At least I must have some dim understanding of what I say cannot be understood. Does not my knowledge of anything also include a knowledge of my ignorance about it, that is, of the limits or gaps that characterize my knowing? There is nothing utterly incredible or debilitating about such a situation, although it may sound paradoxical when put into words. But it does seem that I am taking a long and perhaps somewhat gratuitous step when I call something that is unknown also unknowable. If I am merely expressing the difficulty of the mental operations and linguistic adjustments which the situation requires, then my discomfort may be real enough but it should not be projected onto the reality which I am trying to understand.

I believe that this is what often happens in discussions of transcendence. Something important is being said in words like "ineffable," "infinite," or "eternal," all of which are grammatically negative. Their intent semantically, on the other hand, is usually positive in traditional theological discourse; they indicate here superlative being, not a lack of being. However, taken as they stand in phrases or sentences, such

⁸ In *Soundings* (n. 3 above) p. 48.

words appear to tell us more about man than about any supposed extra-human transcendence. They are implicit confessions of inability and inadequacy to deal with the transcendent in the only terms we have. Yet they do not let go of the transcendent altogether but keep it as a point of reference or at least of orientation. This is another way of suggesting that ambiguity regarding the transcendent of which I spoke earlier.

Two routes have been recommended out of this ambiguity. The first holds that transcendence means God and that God is to be defined as the *totaliter aliter*. On this view, human ignorance and incapacity are real enough but they pose no insuperable obstacles to the transcending God, who makes himself known by revelation. Only the wholly other can surmount the human barrier, and revelation does precisely this. Man can or should respond only by faith that this is possible in principle and actual in fact; it has already happened and will happen again. Ambiguity is removed by simply removing transcendence altogether from the human, natural realm.

The second route takes the position that since transcendence cannot be verified or confirmed by human knowledge, it must be abandoned as a category altogether. Then it will cause no further problems. Some of the vocabulary may be retained after translation into terms of human interrelationship and action, but any nonhuman or superhuman point of reference must be given up. Here the ambiguity is avoided by deciding that the transcendent, being meaningless, has no further claim to either man's awareness or allegiance.

And yet in each case something of the original ambiguity remains. The test of revelation is always that it reveals, and that means to a living human self. It is not enough to say grudgingly with Barth that man is man and not cat. A man or woman who "receives" revelation is more than simply a receiver; he or she, on Barth's own terms, is "God's other," made more completely human by the revelatory act. And as for the second case, *pace* Feuerbach, the view that all God-talk is nothing but man-talk claims to know too much; presumably God might say so with justice, but man is hardly in a position to make that assertion, for he would himself need to be transcendent in order for his statement to have validity. In each of these cases the ambiguity may have been reduced but it is still there.

What I think is to be learned from looking at the logic of transcendence is that the ambiguous character of its language and reasoning is a built-in feature of this odd enterprise itself. Neither the revelational nor the so-called atheistic solutions provide a genuine way out, because the experiences that give rise to the affirming or denying of transcendence are themselves ambivalent; it is as if a simple, homogeneous experience

of transcending, on the one hand, or of being transcended, on the other, could not be found in anything like a pure state.

TRANSCENDENCE AND EXPERIENCE

The question whether there is experience of the transcendent is a factual, not a logical question. More exactly, it is a matter for inquiry carried on by the methods proper to the human sciences, with theologians acting chiefly in a consultant role. But this is not to say that such inquiry has no logic of its own, nor that logical considerations are unimportant. We have already noticed how definition or conception of the transcendent may distort the very form of the factual question and may even inhibit the process of getting answers to it.

Nevertheless it is a question of fact whether the transcendent can be or ever is experienced. Abraham Maslow's study of what he called "peak experiences" is a familiar instance. The information he collected has undoubted value, even if he insisted that it all could be given a completely naturalistic explanation. Maslow's inquiry suggests once again the residual, inhibiting force of an early psychological positivism or reductionism which may defeat its own empirical purposes. Yet his work has real significance in liberating academic psychology from a monotonous leveling of human experience to subhuman behavior, even if it seemed to affirm and deny transcendence at the same time. For this reason, Maslow's work is pertinent for theology as well.

The researches in extrasensory perception carried on over the past several decades constitute another kind of exploration into the factual question. My sole interest in mentioning them here is to suggest that such inquiry is legitimate even if its conclusions are distinctly controversial. To ask the question of fact using controlled situations and precise observational techniques is indispensable for reaching any understanding of man in relation to transcendence that can claim present-day attention.

Much of this same empirical intention is shown in the efforts of recent theologians to isolate phenomena of transcendence before arguing from them for or against the conceivability of God. Here belong the "models" of Gordon Kaufman and the "myths" of Herbert Richardson, for example, which represent new sorties into a very old terrain. Whether we speak of models or of "signals" of transcendence, we are actually looking at experience for indicators of a range of reality that cannot be confined within experience. Indeed, we may be moving toward an abandonment of a contents-of-consciousness reading of experience altogether, which I believe to be the case.

In particular, John E. Smith has shown how considering experience

solely in terms of content greatly impoverishes the understanding of what a "fact of experience" is. The consequence of this way of rendering experience is a highly theoretical factualism and neutralism modeled on scientific techniques. When this way is taken as normative for all kinds of experience, it leads to the assumption that experience consists in making subjective additions to the neutral facts. But this assumption is exceedingly questionable in spite of its limited success in theoretical science. Someone—it may have been Professor Whitehead—has observed that when a man says something is a matter of fact, you know he is at his wits' end. John Dewey liked to repeat that knowledge is not a glassy eye beholding a ready-made reality. These I regard as valid protests against the notion that one dimension of experience can legislate for all the others. There is no single set of criteria which every candidate for credibility must meet. This is not to say there are no criteria, but only that experience itself is multidimensional and multidirectional, "this blooming, buzzing confusion," as William James called it.⁹

The question whether or not the transcendent is experienced is both complicated and difficult, but it is also unavoidable and momentous. Such a question requires that careful attention should be given to the symbols by which we convey the tone and texture of our experience. The facts in question are themselves symbolic in nature; they body forth, in one way or another, experiences of containment or encroachment, of value or disvalue, of fulfilling or limiting being. By attending to these symbols we do not decide the question of their referential truth; yet no theory of knowledge can do that for us either. What we do ask is a question concerning their fitness or rightness, their symbolic adequacy to body forth the experiences that give rise to them. But there is no bypassing the symbol in order to get back to the experience; for symbols are not only expressive of but also constitutive of experience.

Symbols of transcendence are not privileged or special but common and universal. Metaphors of outwardness and inwardness, of height and depth, of light and darkness, or of fullness and emptiness, are characteristic of normal everyday experience. That is to say: our experience itself is analogical, symbolic, whether its dominant tonality is scientific or dramatic, cognitive or imaginative. And transcendence is a constant accompaniment or background to all experience; I transcend and I am transcended; I even transcend myself, whenever I act and know I act or think and know I think. I have no possible way of getting out of my own skin even though I know, in Michael Novak's phrase, that I am not "an

⁹ See John E. Smith, *Experience and God* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968) esp. pp. 36-41.

ego in a bag of skin." My only recourse is to symbol; for symbol is the acknowledgment of the *presence* of being other than my own, including my presence to myself in being.

My experience of the transcendent is not that of a distinct sensible feature or quality of an object, person, or event; neither is it that of something hidden behind what appears to me. It is rather the experience of *presence* whenever and wherever it occurs. If this word seems imprecise, that is because the experience it evokes is elusive and mysterious. Yet it may be pointed out that in the very divergent philosophies of Sartre and Marcel this term "presence" has been central and controlling without becoming merely arbitrary. The word or a synonym for it is indispensable for understanding our experience of being in existence, as the term not only indicates that other beings exist and are recognized as existing but also warns against any premature dogmatism about what can or cannot be experienced.

Among the many symbols that might be chosen for comment, here is an analogy coming from the writings of an eighth-century monk called the Venerable Bede: "The life of man is like the flight of a bird." The bird flies out of the darkness through an open window into a lighted room, where he remains for a time, then darts back through the open window into the darkness. Is this a symbol of experience or of transcendence? Obviously, of both together. In an appropriately odd way it locates experience within transcendence, yet also relates transcendence to experience. It suggests both continuity and discontinuity. Where man comes from he does not know, nor where he is to go; but in this lighted space called the world he fashions his tokens of origin and destiny.¹⁰ By means of symbol man experiences transcending and being transcended, creating and recreating a fully human world.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Earlier I put some questions to which I now return. First: Is human self-transcendence the sole or principal meaning of transcendence-in-general? I answer, not the sole meaning, certainly, but for our present theological situation the most basic if not the most central. Reinhold Niebuhr built his analysis of human nature on the premise that "spirit" means self-transcendence as disclosed in knowing, deciding, acting, and interacting within the world of persons and events. From our present vantage point, however, his analysis seems somewhat clouded by a tendency to identify self-transcendence with sin, with pride and rebellion against God as necessarily bound up with any self-surpassing capac-

¹⁰ I owe this citation to the late Carl Michaelson, who used it in his Birks Lectures at McGill University in 1964.

ity in man as such. In Niebuhr's view man is ruled out of order, his motives and actions are "inordinate," if he does not keep his subordinate place before God.

But can we really agree with such an understanding of what being human means today? I believe not. A person subject to chronic anxiety is engaged in examining and shaping the self, with his therapist's help, looking toward a new level of insight and integrity. An artist uses wood, paint, language to achieve "dynamic form" out of the tension set up by an interplay of psychic with material forces, and a new creation results. An oppressed minority moves from nonviolent resistance to violent confrontation with the powers-that-be, committed desperately to goals of freedom and dignity for all its members. Integrity, creativity, dignity—all instance the fact that to be a man or woman means to be a self-transcending self with visions of possibility yet unrealized but realizable.

When Blaise Pascal wrote that "man infinitely surpasses man" and that "man is not made but for infinity," he was not making a devotional statement; he was thinking of mathematics. Transcendence, even if its right and proper name should turn out to be God, has nothing to fear from self-transcendence. Ambiguous it surely is, fraught with potentialities both terrifying and encouraging; but they can be recognized and dealt with quite apart from supposing that they violate some pre-established boundary. The symbols of transcendence as a barrier erected around man and in some sense against man have outlived their usefulness in theology as elsewhere.

My second question: What now becomes of classical theology's insistence on transcendence as belonging to God alone? The answer is perhaps already clear. In Rome I heard an older Gregorian professor say that by the year 2000 kneeling or bowing would probably no longer be considered appropriate ways of honoring God in church. At the time I was not sure I agreed, but it was an intriguing idea. In any case, are not patriarchal or monarchical conceptions of transcendence highly suspect in our time? They are nostalgic and anemic, not merely unpopular; and theologians ought to do better, if it is the meaning of God in human experience that is to be made known.

Efforts to reconstitute the God-idea by finitizing, relativizing, or temporalizing what it means are scarcely more adequate than the absolutisms they reject. I cannot even think of finitude without also thinking infinity, or I forget what being finite means. In any experience of the changing, I have at the same time a strange experience of the unchanging, perhaps in terms of the remoter cycles of nature or of the immediate, autonomous quality of the moment of change itself. This is why we cannot think immanence without also thinking transcendence; for if

one thing is said to reside or remain in another, then by the same token it is distinguishable from that other. Nor can we think of transcendence without thinking immanence; any case of radical otherness must be recognized as such and announce its presence, so to speak, within observed, interpreted experience. Of course we can only write or speak of one thing at a time; and it may be necessary to correct overemphasis or introduce new analogies in order to keep one's whole idea in view. Yet the business of theology is to state the immanence of the transcendent, without assuming that the immanent is identical with whatever is actual; and its business is also that of stating the transcendence of the immanent, without assuming that the transcendent simply means whatever eludes or exceeds experience. As man lives on both sides of this traditional distinction, it is not impossible to think that God does too.

In particular, why may not man's self-transcending capacity be properly expressed as God's immanent activity in him? Classical theology has called this "the image of God"—a symbol which like any other both identifies and discriminates. Or why may not man's awareness that he is transcended by other self-transcending beings serve him well when he tries to form a thought of being-itself?

The third question has to do with how the lines are to be redrawn, in light of this discussion, between God and man. An obvious reply might be: Why draw lines at all? But we do need to know as clearly as possible what we are talking about when we use these words—or we are not the theologians we profess to be. The older anthropomorphisms that stressed authority and accountability, superiority and submission, have surely spent most of their force. So too have the spatial symbols that buttressed them: above and below, outside and inside, extension and limitation, and the rest. More recent efforts to spell out a kind of geometry of the God-man relationship by using symbols like "vertical" and "horizontal" have not fared much better, even when linked with warmer terms of interpersonal "encounter" and "response." Their value is not only limited but limiting, as they betray our curious preference for diagrams, models, typologies rather than for symbols that are empirically specific and spacious at the same time.

Meanwhile, within the arts and sciences a whole new set of symbols has been emerging, symbols that suggest that the search for God starts with man's search for himself, or at least that human self-transcendence is to be explored and relied on for whatever meaning God may still have in our epoch. My hope is that theology may be done now in this broader context, maintaining its integrity as a historic discipline while assuming a more consultative and supporting role.

The Reformation theologians drew a hard and fast line: *Finitum non capax infiniti*. By means of this general common-sense principle they wished to keep man from confusing himself with God, especially in his thought of God. A clear and honorable principle if there ever was one; in order to "think God," as Hocking wrote, we must "differentiate God from our other objects." To be sure, but only if it begins, quoting Hocking again, from "the self that is more at home in the infinite than here among Things."

I have no new line to draw, nor do I believe that this is necessary to the pursuit of theological adequacy and effectiveness today. My own allegiance is to another, much earlier Christian principle, *Homo capax Dei*, which I take to mean that God became what we are in order to make us what he himself is. Considering the antihumanism that engulfs our present world on every side, this principle is not to be taken unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, soberly, and in the fear of God.¹¹

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¹¹ In addition to works mentioned in the text, a sampling of recent essays in this field should include the following: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The God-Question and Modern Man* (New York: Seabury, 1958); *Transcendence*, ed. Herbert W. Richardson and Donald R. Cutler (Boston: Beacon, 1969); Edward Farley, *The Transcendence of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960); and Gordon S. Kaufman, "Two Modes of Transcendence," in *The Heritage of Christian Thought*, ed. Cushman and Grislis (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).