CHAPTER IX

THE 'PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE' OF WILLIAM JAMES

'Whoso touches this book touches a man.' We are reminded of this pregnant saying of Walt Whitman when we approach the work of William James. His powerful intellect, fierce passion for the good, and strong empirical sense come out in every page of his writings. His early scientific training as a doctor and a psychologist, coupled with his innate artistic temperament, led him to notice the individualities of things. This emphasis on the concrete realities of life is the distinguishing feature of James's work as a psychologist and philosopher. Whatever philosophic effort of his we take, the tendency to submit theoretical constructions to the test of life and experience is to be seen. Whether it is psychology or philosophy, pragmatism or radical empiricism, pluralism or theism, studies of religious consciousness or psychical research, everywhere that which is original to James can be traced to his burning passion to be faithful to the concrete particulars of life. He hates system and symmetry whenever they are secured at the expense of the empirical realities. This accounts for his impatience with vicious intellectualism and abstract absolutism which provide us with 'finished' pictures of the universe, which make no provision for the cardinal principles of popular thought such as freedom of the will, the reality of evil, the existence of God, and the progress of the world.
James takes up these ideas of current Christian thought, and tries to defend them against epistemistic systems, naturalist as well as idealist. He opposes static views of reality and stands out for genuine freedom and continuous creation in a flowing world. His moral seriousness, which has the courage to face risks and difficulties, cannot be satisfied by theories which find no room for man's adventure, daring and energy, and which little with man's sacred possessions by reducing the joys and sorrows of the world to mere freaks of the Absolute. James makes a serious attempt by means of his pluralism and radical empiricism to steer a middle course between empirical naturalism with its principle of the undisputed sway of the laws of mechanism, and transcendental idealism with its purely logical scheme of reality out of relation to the world of empirical fact. Both these theories regard personality as an illusion or a malady from which man suffer. But James had an American's democratic regard for the sacralities of personality. His one central interest in philosophy is to rescue human personality and its values from the clutches of 'inhuman' systems of science and philosophy. He makes an attempt to reconcile religion with science, common sense with philosophy (see the title of his paper on "Religion Action and Theism"). "Yet empiricism once become associated with religion as hitherto, through some strange misunderstanding, it has been associated with irreligion, and I believe that a new era of religion as well as of philosophy will be ready to begin." (Pluralistic Universe, p. 374).

To realise this end, it was found necessary to twist the definition of philosophy. Systems of philosophy are, according to James, "just so many visions, modes of feeling the whole push, seeing the whole drift of life forced on one by one's total character and experience, and on the whole preferred there is no other truthful word—as one's best working attitude." (ibid., p. 29). James openly confesses that his philosophy is the expres-
sion of his vision and not logic. "A man's vision is the great fact about him. Who cares for Carlyle's reason or Schopenhauer's or Spinoza's? A Philosophy is the expression of a man's intimate character, and all definitions of the universe are but the deliberately adopted reactions of human characters upon it. (ibid.) "Philosophy is more a matter of passionate vision than of logic... logic only finding reasons for the vision afterwards" (ibid. p. 175). When James makes out that philosophy is a matter of passion and not logic, that the true method of philosophy is that of direct and immediate experience, of intuition, of life, he is confusing philosophy with poetry, science with art, criticism with life. In philosophy we do not seek for faith and vision but for a reasoned explanation. But as we have already seen in the discussion of pragmatism, James cares more for the satisfying ease of the conclusion than for its logical cogency. Fulfillment of the needs of man is of greater importance to him than submission to logic and argument. He shares the instinctive beliefs of human nature in an open universe and the eternal self-existing many, freedom and individuality, spiritualism and theism. He gives us a philosophy of strife as in the world we see that "war is the father of all and the lord of all" (Heraclitus). Pluralism ought to be the permanent form of the world. "Real possibilities, real indeterminations, real beginnings, real ends, real evil, real crises, catastrophes and escapes, a real God and a real moral life, just as common sense conceives these things, may remain in empiricism as conceptions which that philosophy gives up the attempt either to overcome or to reinterpret in monistic form." (Will to Believe, p. 121).

Psychology commends itself as the best method of approach to philosophy, as it considers the self to be the unit of the world. It is no wonder that James, the greatest psychologist of his age, makes his philosophy hang round psychology. The will to believe is the guide to truth. The logical right to believe rests on the psycho-
logical will to believe. The kind of reality we will to believe is not the block universe which abstract intellect rests on us, but the plastic, malleable, unfinished world which experience gives us. If intellect comes into conflict with the demands of will, so much the worse for intellect. James bases his world view on the testimony of immediate experience. The amateur is the judge of philosophers: “none of us may treat his verdicts disdainfully for, after all, his is the typically perfect mind, the mind the sum of whose demands is greatest, the mind whose criticisms and dissatisfactions are fatal in the long run” (Pragmatism, p. 93). If absolutism tries to rationalise experience while nourishing itself on it, James’s view tends to hold fast to experience as it appears, immediate and pure, unanalysed and uncriticised. Being essentially democratic in its nature, James’s philosophy has in view the interests of the plain man. As he finds experience to be full of multiplicity, diversity and opposition, as he finds the universe to be not a closed system but an open one with room for chance, novelty and freedom, every philosopher must take note of these features of experience and shrink from making a coherent whole of the world.

We will see from our survey of James’s system that it suffers from the defects of its qualities. It is merely a mirroring of the moods of the empirical individual. James takes things as he finds them, and leaves them side by side without attempting to systematise them. The greatest defect of James’s philosophy is its unsystematic nature. This is due to James’s belief that nothing is true that can be stated systematically. There are two fundamental aspects of James’s philosophy, one negative and the other positive. The negative is the criticism of absolutism, and the positive is the defence of pluralism. We shall first turn to James’s criticism of absolutistic monism.
II

James's intense repugnance to every form of absolutism comes out in all his writings. He makes a number of criticisms; the value of which we may here consider.

Absolutism does not adequately account for finite consciousness. He asks, "If nothing exists but as the Absolute Mind knows it, how can anything exist otherwise than as that Mind knows it? That Mind knows each thing in one act of knowledge along with every other thing. Finite minds know things without other things, and this ignorance is the source of most of their woes. We are thus not simply objects to an all-knowing subject; we are subjects on our own account and know differently from its knowing." (Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 138). Absolutism considers that the finite individual knower is related to the Absolute as object to subject. "For monism, the world is no collection but one great all-inclusive fact outside of which is nothing—nothing is its only alternative. . . . When the monism is idealistic, this all-enveloping fact is represented as an Absolute Mind that makes the partial facts by thinking them, just as we make objects in a dream by dreaming them or personages in a story by imagining them. To be on this scheme is, on the part of a finite thing, to be an object for the Absolute; and on the part of the Absolute it is to be the thinker of that assemblage of objects. The Absolute is nothing but the knowledge of those objects: the objects are nothing but what the Absolute knows." (Pragmatic Universe, pp. 38-39; see also pp. 123 and 192-194). In the absolutistic theory, man loses his personal identity. "Pluralism lets things really exist: in the each form or distributively; Monism thinks that the all form or collective unit form is the only form that is rational." (Ibid. p. 321). We may observe here that it is an error to reduce the Absolute to the level of a purely cognitive subject. James tells us that idealism regards finite individuals as "constituent parts of the
Absolute's eternal field of consciousness," a view for which he would find it hard to get support from any of the classical absolutists. Again, idealistic monism is interpreted as the extreme opposite of pluralism, when it is said that monism assumes the all form, while pluralism the each form. The logical principle of idealism is not all or each, but all in each or identity in difference. It is the attempt of idealism to unify the manifold, not in the superficial way which for abstract philosophies has a fatal fascination, by either cancelling the all or the eaches, but in a vital and organic manner. The Absolute is not a unity which deletes all differences any more than a mechanical aggregate which collects all the parts. James's criticism holds against theories which regard the One as the sole reality, and the empirical variety as but the illusory appearance of a temporal unrolling. The concrete Absolute is not the unity in which all diversities disappear and all elements of human experience fade away. We have monism and pluralism, the monism of Parmenides as well as that of Plato, the monism of Spinoza as well as that of Hegel, the monism of Bradley as well as that of Boxedmet, the monism which makes the whole one and static, and that which includes the static and the dynamic aspects. James's criticism assumes that the abstract atomic individual is the final reality. We know as exists, but is existence identical with reality? What absolute idealism denies, is not the existence of the individual but his ultimate reality. We cannot get on in the world if each individual makes his self the centre of the universe. We cannot attain to the truth if we seek it from the individual point of view. Logic and life deny the ultimate reality of the individual. They clearly establish that what is is not the particular self but the universal eminelix in the particular.

There is another way in which the same defect of absolutism to account for finite life is urged. "Why should the Absolute ever have lagged from the perfection of its own integral experience of things and refracted itself
into all our finite experiences?" (P. U. p. 120). "How, if perfection be the source, should there be imperfection?" (Some Problems, p. 138). If God was self-sufficiency, why did he issue out of it? Why does the supreme omniscience dispense itself in the dust of several consciousnesses? How can we reconcile metaphysical unity with phenomenal diversity? Why should finite centres come in at all? Mr. Bradley confesses it to be a mystery. Mr. Joachim admits the problem of how the complete subsistence of all things in the Absolute should involve as a necessary moment in its self-maintenance the self-assertion of the finite minds, a self-assertion which in its extreme form is error, to be an insoluble puzzle (see P. U. p. 311). But if absolutism fails to account for evil and error, pluralism does not fare better. James admits the incapacity of pluralism to account for evil and imperfection, by declaring that the problem for pluralism is not speculative but practical, "not why evil should exist at all, but how we can lessen the actual amount of it" (P. U. p. 724). Even on the pluralistic hypothesis, the account of creation is not clear. "We are indeed internal parts of God, and not external creations, on any possible reading of the panpsychic system. Yet because God is not the Absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of the other smaller parts—as similar to our functions consequently. Having an environment, being in time, and working out a history just like ourselves, he escapes from the foreignness from all that is human, of the static, timeless, perfect Absolute" (P. U. p. viii). How God can be a creator of whom we are internal parts and a part of the world just like ourselves, it is hard for us to conceive. Absolute idealism contends that there is no God without a universe. The temporal is the necessary condition of the eternal, imperfection of perfection.

The objection of James that monism contradicts the character of reality as experienced is invalid. James
argues that in the world we are acquainted with, change is real, and history is real. There are novelities and struggles, losses and gains. "For pluralists, time remains as real as anything, and nothing in the universe is great or static or eternal enough not to have some history" (P. U. p. 44). If good is already accomplished, then the process of its gradual accomplishment is an illusion. If God is the whole of experience, then evil becomes an illusion. But James has such a deep sense of the reality of evil and human suffering that he cannot but revolt against any philosophy which regards them as illusions, if not the inevitable alloy of perfection. The world of the Absolute, which is represented as unchanging, eternal, out of time and therefore out of history, a world which makes evolution and progress a mirage or an illusion, we cannot either approach or appreciate (see Some Problems, p. 130). Nothing is done on earth, it is all being done. We are important factors in the world’s work of soul-building. A perfect and eternal Absolute is fundamentally irrational even though the absolutist deludes us into the belief that the rationality of the universe requires it. If what is real is eternal, then history is unreal. But historical reality, as we know, which is essentially living, self-producing and self-creating, cannot be unreal. Therefore the eternal Absolute is unreal. But the alternatives are not exclusive. Both the eternal and the temporal may be real. The Absolute is not a blank eternal which denies the finite world of change and striving. With James, the absolutists are anxious to do justice to the finite process. They go the length of saying that there is no Absolute apart from the finite process. As James well knew, his colleague Royce (P. U. p. 115) had declared to the effect "were there no longing in time, there would be no peace in eternity" (The World and the Individual, vol. ii.).

How does the philosophy of James differ from absolute idealism? "The philosophy of the Absolute agrees with the pluralistic philosophy in that both identify human
substance with the divine substance. But whereas absolutism thinks that the said substance becomes fully divine only in the form of totality, and is not its real self in any form but the all form, the pluralistic view is willing to believe that there may ultimately never be an all form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected, that some of it may remain outside of the largest combination of it ever made, and that a distributive form of reality, the such form, is logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all form commonly ascribed to as so obviously the self-evident thing" (P. U. p. 34). But, if God and man are identical, what is the meaning of saying that the parts of reality are separate and are only externally related? If there is no dominating principle or controlling spirit, if things are cut off one from another, we have a radical pluralism without any trace of unity or order. If reality is a chaos, the general harmony which has resulted must be a chance resultant of independent forces. But James believes that there is unity in the world; only it is not complete (Pragmatism, pp. 129-140). In the world there is a tendency to attain more and more unity, though complete unity is not reached. 'Ever not quite' is true of all finite attempts to reach the infinite; a formula quite acceptable to the monistic idealist. Absolutism does not say that the actual world with which we deal is a realised unity. It is only the ideal. We should view the world as a vast and complex whole where everything is related to everything else. Plurality and chaos we have; unity and order we have to achieve. Victory is not yet won; perfection is not yet achieved. The fight is still going on. While it is true to say that the One is unthinkable without the multiplicity, multiplicity is unthinkable without unity. If James tells us that the finite world is a plurality of individuals with an environment opposed to and external to them, the monistic idealist admits it, since the presence of an opposing environment is a necessary
condition of finiteness. Everything finite, however vast and inclusive it may be, has still some elements unreduced to unity. It only shows that the finite is only the finite and not the perfect whole. But to say that there is no unity simply because we are finite cannot realize it, to say that there is no all-inclusive spirit or all form at all, is to doubt the central principle of our life with its aspirations after unity, love and service. If James has really doubts about the reality of all form, then it means that the individuals or each forms are alone real. In that case there will be no stimulus for progress, no assurance of victory, and no need to be dissatisfied with our self-sufficiency. The whole form is a thought bubble, and logic, ethics and aesthetics which try to realize it live in a fool’s paradise.

Moulin is fatalistic. To it freedom is an illusion. "What is, is necessary, and ought else is impossible" (P. U. p. 139). The iron hand of necessity grips the universe. The pluralist’s world is yet in the making, and depends for its fulfillment on man’s effort. "If this life be not a real fight in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is not better than a game of private theatricals from which one may well draw at will" (Is Life Worth Living?). Again, absolutism grants us 'moral holidays,' for "since in the Absolute finite evil is overruled already, we may, when we wish, treat the temporal as if it were potentially the eternal, be sure that we can trust its outcome, and without sin dismiss our fears and drop the worry of our finite responsibility. In short, they mean that we have a right ever and anon to take a moral holiday, to let the world wag in its own way, feeling that its issues are in better hands than ours and are none of our business" (Pragmatism, pp. 73-74). But if this way of arguing is correct, the belief in the Absolute gives us not only moral holidays, but makes our life one long vacation. It justifies our relaxing our anxiety not only occasionally but for all time. "It is very comforting to sick souls to be told that nothing
happens here below without the consent of God." But while morality requires pluralism, religion to which morality leads and in which it is swallowed up demands the abolition of pluralism in a monism. Our moral experience is not the highest. The religious experience transcends the moral. Moral life may presuppose an unfinished universe, a finite God, and a doubtful struggle. But the moral life will lose its vitality and meaning, and moral struggle its inspiration without the religious assurance. Morality points beyond itself to religion where we feel the openness of the universe and see all things in God. Only the religious conviction assures us of the triumph of good. "Any absolute moralism is pluralism; any absolute religion is monism." (Introduction to The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James, p. 118). As religion is the truth and completion of morality, even so is monism the crown and consecration of pluralism.

The chief argument against absolutism is put thus: "Prima facie, there is this in favour of the mystics that they are at any rate real enough to have made themselves at least appear to every one, whereas the absolute has, as yet, appeared immediately to only a few mystics, and, indeed, to them ambiguously" (P. G. p. 25). But this argument is unsound. So many things which appear to us real are found to be unreal. The mystics are the specialists in religion who attempt to see God face to face and not merely through the eyes of tradition and history. The average man is not a mystic. Miss Evelyn Underhill writes: "We hope that the great dynasty of the mystical saints will never fail, but the lessons of history suggest that they are never likely to be numerous. Their white spirituality is too difficult for the average man, and is unlikely in the future, as in the past, to form the dominant element of his religion. Such mystics are the fine flower of humanity possessing as their birthright a special aptitude for God. Like other great artists and specialists, they have given years of patient effort to the education and full development of those powers in obedience
to that innate passion for the perfect which is the greatest of all human attributes." As the mystic's career is not within the reach of the majority of mankind, we should "be content with the tidings which those great wayfarers bring back to us" (Theosophist, Jan. 188, p. 363). In matters of religious belief we live at second hand, and it is only the mystics who can say, "We musicians know." They alone can speak, not as the Scribes and the Pharisees, but as having direct authority. The testimony of mystic consciousness is not ambiguous. If by mysticism we mean not merely the true spiritual life but magic and occultism as well, James is right in thinking that the verdicts of mystics differ. But there is mysticism and mysticism, mysticism which is magic and mysticism which is philosophy and the life of spirit, mysticism which is a disease of the brain and mysticism which is a discerning of reality, mysticism which is delusion and mysticism which is revelation. Differences are seen if our attention is turned to the views of the religious souls who are bred in creeds and conventions. Though the soul is the supreme judge in spiritual matters, it is much hampered in its life by the consciousness of bounds and traditions. So while those who need reality at first hand are unanimous about the mystic vision and experience, it is those that have received faith second hand that differ. If we interpret mysticism rightly then, there is nothing more remarkable than the perfect agreement of the testimony of the mystics far removed from each other in time and space, race and language. Perfectly unaware of each other's utterances, they still corroborate each other's evidence, suggesting to us that there is the inexorable logic of truth which forces them to have the same experience. Though in the expression of their vision the mystics generally make use of the religious formulas of the times, they agree in the fundamental facts, that spirit is the all-inclusive reality and the world is a divine manifestation. God is all and man is a passing phase of the infinite. "They teach that we worship an invisible
spiritual environment from which help comes, our soul being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are" (P. U. p. 308). That a higher principle operates in the universe and that reality is not an assemblage of things as they immediately are and appear to us, are the conclusions of mystical insight. Absolutism satisfies the mystic element in man. James recognises that absolutism has given satisfaction to most noble minds and has thus pragmatist justification. It offers consolations for the shortcomings of mundane existence and gratifies the longing for cosmic emotion. It is not impossible for the average man to reach the mystic state when he can verify the truth of the absolutist vision. The mystic insight is within the power of all. We only need to employ the higher sense which so few use. While mysticism is not a part of the normal soul's experience, it still can enter into it. The all form can appear to all when it will be seen how the each form is a relative "degradation" or expression of the all form. To a man stopped in the world and lost in this labyrinth, the absolute may be "a metaphysical monster, neither intelligence nor will, neither self nor collection of selves, neither truthful, good, nor beautiful as we understand these terms" (P. U.).

But to the mystic, it is the supreme all-enveloping spirit which is perfection itself. Absolutism is not, therefore, without its empirical verification. James admits that "the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretensions of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictator of what we may believe" (Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 487).

A great difficulty in the way of accepting absolutism is, How can many consciousnesses be at one and the same time one consciousness? This problem once led James to shrink from absolutism, but now he has solved it to his own satisfaction, though it was not his anxiety to vindicate absolutism that led him to do so. What is responsible for it is James's enthusiasm for Fechner's conception of the earth-soul. Fechner assumes that
conscious experiences combine and separate. They can keep their own identity unchanged while they form parts of wider fields of experience. James, for long, was of opinion that such combinations were impossible, and that higher thoughts were psychic units and not compounds. James says: 'Shall we say that every complex mental fact is a separate psychic entity subsiding upon a lot of other psychic entities, which are erroneously called its parts, and superimposing them in function, but not literally being composed of them? This was the course I took in my psychology, and if followed in theology we should have to deny the absolute as usually conceived, and replace it by the God of theism. We should also have to deny Leibniz's cork-soul and all other superhuman collections of experience of every grade, and so far at least as these are held to be compounded of our simpler souls in the way which Leibniz believed in' (P. V. chap. v.). But Leibniz's philosophy has such a fascination for James that he rebels against the tyranny of logic and seeks shelter in Bergson's intuition. We cannot logically conceive this compounding, but still reality affords practical evidence of it. Life seems to be irrational. We have only 'to give up the logic, fairly, squarely and irrevocably as a philosophical method,' for 'reality, life, experience, concreteness, immediacy, use what word you will, exceeds our logic, overflows and surrounds it' (1889). Thus by declaring that the transcends logic, James upheld the possibility of the compounding of conscious states and withdraws his previous objection to psychic synthesis (see Psychological Review, 1895). Now that the self-compounding of mind in its smaller and more accessible portions seems a certain fact, the speculative assumption of a similar but wider compounding in remoter regions must be reckoned with as a legitimate hypothesis. Mental facts do function both singly and together at once, and we finite minds may simultaneously be conscious with one another in a superhuman intelligence.' It is doubtful whether the
psychological problem of the composition of mental states is analogous to the metaphysical problem of the relation of the Absolute to finite minds, but whatever be here the truth, James is clear that absolutism cannot be criticised on this account. In vindicating Fechner's view of the earth-soul James allows that human consciousnesses can somehow form parts of a superhuman consciousness. The cosmic mind can very well unify and supplement its finite elements without in any way diminishing their reality as individual beings. It is thus open to an absolutist to consider finite selves at least as parts of the higher mind, even if he is not authorised in regarding them as the passing thoughts of God or his unreal appearances. But James is satisfied, seeing that, though the conceivability of the Absolute is admitted, it is done at the expense of logic. It is the anti-rationalism, if anything, that can save absolutism, if at all.

III

While James's view of pluralism is contrasted with that of monism, his method of irrationalism is contrasted with that of intellectualism. As James believes that rationalism and monism go together, he upholds an irrationalist pluralism. As logical systems of absolutism do not satisfy the cravings of the will, James suspects a snare in logic. The intellectual method is thin and abstract, while James's method is thick and concrete. The former is the purely logical and dialectical way of thinking, which is severed from contact with particular objects, while the latter stands on the secure region of positive facts and never leaves it. Absolutism follows the proud but arid path of intellectualism, while James pursues the humble but fertile path of resorting to the particulars of life. What James is fighting against is the tendency of abstractionism. While abstraction is necessary to get on in life, abstractionism is fatal to philosophy. Concepts help us to predict the future,
and they are of no value if they do not help us in the world of perception. As the concepts are the instruments by which we can grasp the rich moving world, we cannot totally break from the concrete current. Abstractionism anatomises the living whole, while abstraction helps us to realise its wealth and complexity. On account of our human limitations we cannot grasp the whole, but will have to study it piecemeal, but this does not mean that parts exist by themselves. Abstractionism is condemned by the intellectualist systems of concrete idealism. But James neglects the distinction between abstractionism and the use of abstraction, and complains of the intellectualist's method. He holds that concepts can give us only abstract outlines of things, wherein we should miss their concreteness, their continuity, and their living connections. With Bergson, James says, "The essence of life is its continuously changing character; but our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed." (Phil. p. 253). "When you have broken the reality into concepts you never can reconstruct it in its wholeness. Out of no amount of discontinuity can you manufacture the concrete" (Ed.). "Life is logically irrational" (Phil. p. 208). The reality of a changing world cannot be conceived by our intellect, but has only to be directly apprehended by living experience itself. We are told that as concepts are fixed while life is fluid, concepts cannot describe life. But why should a concept resemble life to signify it or describe it? Philosophy is not life, any more than thought is the thing. It does not require a William James to tell us that the abstract formulas of metaphysics are not the concrete riches of life. One cannot supersede the other, though one is not a falsification of the other. The continuity of sensible experience is no ground for the condemning of logic. If mechanical determinations are inadequate to the flow of life, we may try the teleological ones like life, organism, beauty, etc. There is no need to surrender hard thinking and take to intuition and such other doubtful remedies.
Again, what does James mean by saying that "life is logically irrational"? Does he mean that it is not the embodiment of reason? If so, it cannot lend itself to intellectual interpretation at all. But James gives us such an artistic though incoherent interpretation of life by his powers of intellect. He argues the question of monism versus pluralism and tries to convince us of the utility of monism. It is logic that has led James to pluralism. No doubt the real is the experienced, but it is also the rational, and the true view of life would be not a radical but a rational empiricism.

James's chapter on M. Bergson gives us the impression that the two writers are of the same opinion about the nature of intellect and its objects. But on examination we shall find that it is not so. While both discredit the conceptual function altogether, they do so for different reasons. Both recognize the distinction between immediacy and reflective experience. To Bergson immediacy belongs to pure duration and intellect is a fall from it, as it disintegrates the pure flow. To James immediacy belongs to perception, impulse and feeling. As this immediate experience is conflicting, knowledge comes to the rescue to remedy its defects. Intellect in James does not disintegrate but harmonizes. Bergson and James have different views of intellect. According to Bergson, concepts alone make things intelligible, but things are not the living flux. They are static aspects of reality, which is genuine freedom and continuous creation. When the flow of life is arrested, it solidifies into hard lumps which we call things. To know reality as it is, we must plunge into the stream of consciousness; to know things as they are, concepts are quite adequate. Intellect correctly represents things. Bergson with James regards intellectual distinctions and logical methods as instruments of practical action. But Bergson does not believe in the ultimate reality of the world of practice. As the tools and concepts of intellect have arisen for the satisfaction of practical needs, their validity is also continued
to the world of action. But we should dispense with intellectual symbols if we want to catch the nature of reality as it is. As for Bergson truth and reality are extra-practical, the deficiency of practical intellect to grasp reality follows logically. Bergson does not say with James that the world we deal with in the ordinary business of life is the only reality. If there is no other world than this, then Bergson holds that intellect is sufficient for its needs. From the practicality of intellectual concepts and the sole reality of the world of action, the complete adequacy of the conceptual method irresistibly follows. It is surprising that James does not realize that the adoption of Bergson's theory commits him to the unqualified support of the conceptual method. The world of practice and conceptual thought are not incongruous to Bergson, and, therefore, to James they might not to be incongruous. James is anxious to fight and kill intellectualism and so upholds Bergson, but as he does not accept Bergson's premises, he does not achieve his aim. James is not very particular about the consistency of his arguments, if only his heart's desire is fulfilled. While conceding that logic should not be the sole guide to philosophy, but that will also should be consulted; he finds fault with unbelief for doing just what he asks philosophers to do. "The whole monistic pyramid seems to me to be a product of will far more than one of reason" (P. U. p. 143). Any stick will do to kill a dog.

James prefers immediate experience to intellect; we cannot say anything about it, neither criticize it nor approve of it. In its presence we have to be dumb and speechless. "As long as one continues talking, intellectualism remains to undisturbed possession of the field... I must point to the mere idea of life, and you by inner sympathy must fill out the what for yourselves" (P. U. p. 230). Bergson throws both perception and scientific thinking into one class of inadequate methods of grasping reality. But to James perception is all right.
Sense experience is to him the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem of knowledge. Bergson develops on the lines of Plato and Spinoza; James looks to Hume and Mill for inspiration. For him, the true home of reality is to be sought in the primitive flux of the sensational life. James's world-view is based on the testimony of immediate experience. It is one of radical empiricism as he himself styles it.

IV

Radical empiricism according to James consists of (1) a postulate that things which are of an inexperienceable nature like the Absolute, thing-in-itself, etc., do not form part of the material for philosophic debate; (2) a statement of fact, that "the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more nor less so than the things themselves"; (3) a generalised conclusion, viz., that "all portions of our phenomenal world are continuous, etc., with another, without any foreign principle being necessary to serve as the \textit{cement or support}" (\textit{The Meaning of Truth}, Preface, p. xii). Our immediate experience is not to be identified with the pure experience with which it is continuous. Pure experience rid of all conceptual elaboration does not exist. It is only an unattainable limit. We can reach it by relaxing our consciousness. It is not to be identified with a purely subjective state, but to James everything is both subjective and objective. More correctly, the distinction between self and non-self arises later (see \textit{Radical Empiricism}, p. 23). We may be inclined to call this theory panpsychism, as we find experience everywhere, and an unconscious experience is a contradiction in terms. But James would not consent to this description, as according to him pure experience which constitutes reality has nothing conscious about it. Not only things but relations among things are directly experienced. The relations that bind and contribute to
decisions are quite as much as the terms that are bound immediate data of experience. The relations which unify have the same metaphysical status as the terms they differentiate. This view of the externality of relations is the effect of James's immediate and particularistic vision. Empiricism to be radical should not admit into its constitution any element that is not experienced, and if relations that connect experiences are admitted, they should be viewed as "experienced relations" as "real as anything else in the system" (ib. E. p. 42). Pure experience is the stuff of the world. It is viewed as mental or material according to the context. In itself it is unqualified actuality or experience. The table is physical when regarded as part of the chain of physical causation, mental when regarded in relation to the function of knowing. Sensation and the sensible reality are absolutely identical with each other. What is in one context a physical phenomenon becomes in another a fact of consciousness. The content of the real does not differ from that of the psychic. Subject and object, thought and thing are but practical distinctions of functional order. Pure experience has a knack of getting into two places at once, the human mind and outer space. What distinguishes consciousness in the function of knowing which is a relation between different parts of pure experience. Knowing involves an experience felt in two different contexts. The pragmatist's theory of truth follows from this doctrine. Truth is no transcendent, indefinable relation, but only a particular relation between the different parts of experience. A conscious occurrence, a fragment of experience is real, but not either true or false. It only is with the stamp of reality impressed on it. It bears the immediate evidence of its existence. Truth and falsity apply when we take into account the bearings of this experience. If it leads to confirmatory developments it is true; if it leads to deadlocks and contradictions, it is false. Truth therefore happens in ideas. It is not an intrinsic indefin-
able quality but an extrinsic and adventitious property which supervenes on facts of experience. It is the attribute of the relation between the present fact and the future course of experience.

James regards radical empiricism as more fundamental than pragmatism. The view is too original not to produce a shock. On examination we shall find that radical empiricism can be justified only as a temper of mind or an attitude, but not as a philosophy or a doctrine. To call a thing which does not involve relation to a knower, experience is a queer use of terms. Experience is always a relation. It implies over and above the object experienced relation to a subject by whom it is experienced. Even though we admit that the actual object is immediately given, without any mediation, it does not follow that experience is not a relation. There is a difference between being and consciousness of being, existence and knowing. We cannot reduce all things in the universe, acts, objects and contents, to experience pure and simple. Again, when James says that everything is born of pure experience, we ask, What is this pure experience? James thinks that it is "that which is not yet any definite what." It is another name for feeling and sensation, which perhaps new-born babes in their first moments have. But even if it is feeling or sensation, we require a feeling, individual. When James says that both mental and material states are pure experiences which differ only in their functions, he repudiates a distinction which is imbedded in the very structure of experience. Criticising the ontological argument Kant asked, What is the difference between two dollars which I think of and two dollars in my coat pocket? James's answer is that it is nothing. We seem to be perilously near Humanism with its doctrine of ideas and impressions which differ not in their stuff, but in some incidental qualities like the aggressiveness, with which they strike on the mind, consciousness, etc., Are we to imagine that pure experience is material when
it is thick, and mental when it is thin? Is the difference between the mental and the physical just a difference between two ways of arranging the same material? Is it only a difference of context and function? Are we to say that concepts which have according to James a logical reality, sensations, or ideas, which have a mental reality, objects like trees and houses; which have a physical reality, are only forms of pure experience? James answers in the affirmative. He holds that the same item becomes either an object in mind, or a state of consciousness or a physical thing in the outer-world, according to the net-work of relations into which the item enters (see R., F. pp. 13-14). If it is the same thing that now figures as thought and now as thing, how is it we have two sets of properties which differ so much? But James thinks that the two are not so widely different as commonly conceived. For he asks, "How, if 'subject and object' were separated by the whole diameter of being and had no attributes in common, would it be hard to tell, in a presented and recognised material object, what part comes in through the sense organs, and what part comes 'out of one's own head'?" (R., E. p. 29). It is James's considered opinion that the two worlds differ, not by the presence or absence of qualities, but by the relations in which they exist.

It both mental and physical contexts refer to the same experience, can we not have a comprehensive consciousness? Can we not have an experience in which we can contrast the one context with the other? It is quite possible for us to have such a higher experience, an absolute mind distinguished from the relative minds with their special contexts.

What on this theory is the nature of self? Consciousness as a metaphysical entity is dismissed. It is a complex of pure experiences which can be related in various ways. It is only a context of experiences. The same items figure as members of diverse relational contexts. Grouped in one way these items form mind, in another, they form the physical world. The relation
between subject and object becomes illusory, and we do not know what makes the context of self. May it not be that a total context is necessary to account for the process of knowledge? Do we not require some identical being throughout the psychical changes? How else can we explain the obvious psychological fact of a self which owns all thoughts, feelings and desires? Can a mere 'passing state' be capable of personal activity?

The problem of knowledge cannot be easily understood on this theory. Our knowledge of objects is of two kinds, knowledge of either mental or physical objects. We can say that knowledge of an object which is mental belongs to the mind series, but to what series does knowledge of a physical object belong? The problem of perceptual experience is insolvable in this theory.

To say that reality is experience means in theory of knowledge that reality is known as experienced. But the way in which James interprets experience makes it impossible for the individual to reach other reality than his own experience. In systems of Idealism, while sense data are taken as the starting-point of knowledge, it is possible for us to transcend sense knowledge by means of thought. But that way is closed to James. For according to James things as well as relations are given to us immediately in experience. We have but to open our eyes to see in experience things as well as their relations. If we irrationalize reality and assume with Kant that it is a disconnected manifold, then there is work for thought which is to induce order and unity from outside. There is no need for any such thought function in James's view, as the given order is a real order with unity and continuity. The function of thought is only to represent and substitute symbols for experience, the source of all truth. The value of thought consists in its adequacy to experience. Its function in relation to experience may be compared to that of paper currency in relation to a gold reserve. Thought can abstract and generalise from concrete situations, but we can never go beyond them.
It follows that thought can never transcend experience. We transcend passing experiences, for we move on from one experience to the next. But we cannot go beyond the individual's experience. It is doubtful if we can on this theory recognize a reality other than the individual's own experience. James accepts as automatic the existence of a multiplicity of human beings. Has he any right to it? How does an individual acquire knowledge of other minds? How does James get over solipsism? “Objective reference is an incident of the fact that so much of our experience comes as an insufficient, and consists of process and transition” (R. F. p. 71). There must be something more than what we have felt, ‘reality existing elsewhere.’ Our experience is not self-sufficing but points beyond. But for this impulse to pass beyond given experiences our experience might remain subjective. It will not point outwards if it is not self-transcendent. But if there is an internal necessity compelling given experiences to point beyond themselves, does it not follow that there are internal relations as well? The only satisfying and self-sufficing experience is that which does not point beyond itself, and that is the whole experience. Fragmentary experiences are related to other fragments and will never satisfy our reason. The whole alone is self-containing. Our dissatisfaction with the immediately felt, and our need to call for ‘more’ are due to the fragmentary, discordant nature of the given. The felt discord is the stimulus to thought. Our reason tries to purge the given of its discord and contradiction and make it conform to its supreme laws. The tendency to pass from the given is traceable to the logical demand to eliminate the contradictions from presented experience. Our reason will not stop until we reach the harmonious whole which includes all experiences. James admits as much when he observes, “Though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing.
and leans on nothing” (Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods, ii. 114). Thus James implicitly admits the reality of an absolute experience. Solipsism he tries to get over by saying that there are some common objects in which our minds meet. The same experience may run into a million variants. How can separate individuals’ different currents of experience come to coincide in certain points? How can the same object become part of different fields of consciousness? In short, how can we have objects or a universe in common? Idealistic monism gets over this difficulty by positing a universal consciousness which includes the individual consciousnesses and serves as a bond of union and basis of agreement, wherever there is agreement. As for the mind, James says, “Why do I postulate your mind? I see your body acting in a certain way. Its gestures, facial movements, words and conduct generally are expressive, so I deem it actuated as my own is by an inner life like mine. This argument from analogy is my reason” (k. C., pp. 77-78).

V

The criticism of monadology has resulted in a negative account of pluralism. We are insanely led to think that James’s system guarantees freedom and novelty. A God who is of real help to us and personal immortality. Let us see whether it is so.

As we have already stated, the whole is in course of realization. The sum total of things is not yet a single system but a totality of conflicting individuals. The universe is sustained by the perpetual struggle among the many forces that compose it. The connections among the parts are not of the nature of linkages, and not yet vital and organic. The individuals are distinct; there is no doubt about it. The world process is quite a real one. But we cannot understand the growing unification, the impulse towards unity and the visions
of unity which mystics have, until we posit an absolute as the fundamental and controlling reality.

Pluralism does justice to the first impressions of the world. Physically speaking, the individuals are diverse. But there is a steadily growing unification among these separate units. In logic, ethics and religion we are told that the different individuals understand each other, love each other and interpretate each other. We are taught every day to aim at the unity and adopt the unselfish standpoint and drop the separatist selfish one. We are enjoined to promote the well-being of the whole and not conserve our private individuality. James's whole-hearted advocacy of sympathy, disinterestedness, and unselfish conduct, beauty, beatitude and devotion to ideals is a tacit confession of the lower value of individuals as separate entities. While the differences are due to the artificial barriers set up by the senses, intellect is every day urging to break them down and enable the individuals to realise the unity of spirit which is present in them all. At first sight it may seem that we are cut off one from another, but we soon realise our unity. When the natural blindness or the Mays of intellect ceases, we feel the inwardness of God and the unity of mankind. The philosophic or the intuitive vision tells us of the harmony and living unity of all creation. "Monoism must mean that all such apparent disconnections are bridged over by some deeper absolute union in which it believes, and this union must in some way be more real than the practical separations that appear on the surface" (Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 112). There are some respects in which the world is many and some in which it is one, and if we are to evaluate the features of the world, the monistic are superior to the pluralistic. No pluralism can be a consistent one, unless it is subordinated to a monoism which is the true crown of all pluralism. Such a relative pluralism will make God not a person over against other persons but an impersonal or suprapersonal spirit.
A pluralistic hypothesis is generally regarded as involving the independence of the soul. But when James rejects the mechanical determination of mental life, it is not in favour of the 'soul' theory. He does not admit a soul which is the ground of man's individuality and is capable of surviving the death of the body. In his psychology he no doubt considers it to be more satisfactory than the mind-body or the material monad theory, but he believes that psychology does not require it. The unity of mental life can be accounted for without it. While in his psychology he leaves it an open question, in his Principles of Psychology he completely gives it up (see P. U. p. 290). The 'soul' is a useless and scholastic concept. Mental experience does not require a subject to support it. "To be as a mental experience is only to appear to some one" (P. U. p. 295). All that we need is the passing thought of each moment of consciousness. Separate experiences hang on to one another's fringes. Is it this kind of individual that James proposes to conserve?

In developing his view of immortality, James points out how the brain is the indiviuduating organ, and how when brains are destroyed our drops of consciousness slip back into the shining sea. The way in which he develops the theme reminds me of Plato or Spinoza, rather than of Lotze or Renouvier. "Out of my experience, such as it is (and it is limited enough), one fixed conclusion dogmatically emerges, and that is this, that we with our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves, and Conant and Newport hear each other's fog-horns. But the trees also communicate their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the ocean's bottom. Just so there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother sea or reservoir. Our 'normal'
consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the force is weak in spots and faint influences from beyond break in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connections. Not only psychic research, but metaphysical philosophy and speculative biology are led in their own ways to look with favor on some such pan-psychic view of the universe as this" (The American Magazine, 1906). If the individuals are only manifestations of a common mind, unique expressions of an underlying unity, is it right to call this theory pluralism?

There are pluralists who (like Dr. Howison) in their anxiety to safeguard the self-sufficiency and the spiritual nature of the monads hold them to be timeless. James does not belong to that group. He is interested in the temporal becoming of the individual, the process of his development. James calls himself a "lengthwise" pluralist [see International Journal of Ethics, pp. 127-142, vol. xxii. No. 2]. This is due to his psychological bias. Experience is a flow, a temporal succession. No philosophy can ignore the temporal quality of experience. "The world that each of us feels most intimately at home with is that of beings with histories that play into our history, whom we can help in their vicissitudes even as they help us in ours" (P. D., p. 40). In the interests of ethical freedom James emphasizes time and becoming, but if there is no individual who is to be subject to time the pluralism becomes but an empty word.

VI

Let us see whether James's views of God, freedom and immortality are radically different from those associated with absolutism and can be regarded as more satisfactory. As everywhere else, even here, James asks, How do these bear on man's life and experience? He does not worry about the so-called proofs of the existence of God. He simply wants to know
how a belief in God will work, what characteristic results religious emotion has. "According to William James all the philosophico-theological arguments which have in view the demonstration of God's existence and the determination of his attributes are illusion. In fact only those notions have a real content which are interpreted by the differences in practical conduct" (Émile Boutroux, Science and Religion, English translation, p. 378). James is anxious to give us a God who whether or not he satisfies the intellectual requirements, fulfills the moral and religious demands. "Meanwhile the practical needs and experiences of religion seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man, and in a fashion continuous with him, there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more god-like self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realised in it at all. Thus would a sort of polytheism return upon us" (Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 525-526). Only the polytheism James thinks to be possible and probable is not the crude polytheism of primitive religions, where the Lords many and Gods many quarrel with one another, but a perfect harmony where the several heroes co-operate one with another. Polytheism is only a possibility (see Varieties, pp. 524-526). In his chapter on Fechner in the Phrenologie des Universums, James suggests that there is room for a hierarchy of superhuman beings. But the conception of God which has the hearty support of James, is that of an elder brother of all spiritual beings, vaster, wiser, and more powerful, but not essentially different from them. He dwells in the world and works under
limitations imposed by its essential nature. James offers us a God who is finite and limited, but still lends his ear to our prayers and looks after our wants. But James knows that God to be of any use to man should be continuous with man, friendly to him, more powerful than man, at least large enough to trust for the next step. But unless God is infinite and all comprehensive, we will not have this security. Unless God is continuous with each individual and more powerful than all these put together, we cannot trust the outcome of the struggle. If there is something outside God, as there will be if he is only a big man, then he may suffer defeat on bigger issues. A finite God, even though he does his best along with man in a bad world, cannot be sure of success. A Napoleon or a Caesar may muddle through difficulties to the end, but it is quite possible he may not. James takes his stand on the reality of the moral struggle. "It feels like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe, which we with all our idealities and faithfulnesses are indeed to redeem" (Will to Believe, p. 67). James suspects the Absolute, as it idealizes the struggle we are at home in (see P. U. p. 49). The world is a battlefield between the forces of reason and chaos, light and darkness. In this field of combat peace is quarrelling with war, life with death, existence with extermination. Reason and light, life and existence are slowly progressing through human effort. It is in this struggle that man requires a power large enough to trust for the next step. Without it life is a gamble and is not worth living. Only the Absolute can give us the security we need. But James did not like this view of things. So he turns round and says we do not need to be assured of the issue of the struggle. It is better to be doubtful about it. We must be willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous" (Pragmatism, chap. viii.). Pluralism does not think that the world will be saved, but only hopes that it may be saved with the help of man, for "shipwreck in detail or even on the whole is among
the upon possibilities” (Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 142). “For practical life, at any rate, the chance of salvation is enough” (Varieties, p. 526). The world may be saved, but there is no certainty that it shall be saved. What inducement will there be for man to work if James gives no answer to the question, whether we would reach the port or suffer shipwreck on the way? We are bound to ask, “Is there somewhere in the innumerable some responsive kindness, some faint hope of toleration and assistance, something sensibly on our side against death and mechanical cruelty?” or, “Is the whole scheme of nature evil? Is life in its essence cruel? Is man stretched quivering upon the table of the eternal vivisector for no end—and without pity?” (Wells, Mrs. Brizard sees it through, pp. 139 and 234). God either is or is not. If he is, he offers us the security. If God be for us, who can be against us? If he is not, we have to surrender ourselves to caprice and fate, taking courage in both our hands. If we feel that we are wrestling with a relentless antagonist on a hopeless issue it will paralyse our springs of action. It will produce a chilling sense of useless effort which will smash our hopes. James believes in God, tells us that we can trust him, and is sure that all is bound to go well. “A world with a God in it to say the last word may indeed turn up as ice, but we then think of him as still mindful of the old ideals and sure to bring them elsewhere to fruition; so that where he is, tragedy is only provisional and partia., and shipwreck and dissolution not the absolutely final Things” (Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results, p. 14). But as such an argument logically culminates in an absolutistic conception of God, which is a red rag to James, he suddenly turns the tables, abandons the whole scheme, and asks us to consider the world to be wild and chaotic, dangerous and irrational, and dispense with belief in God, which alone can give us the assurance that ultimately the world can be reduced to unity and order. Only belief in the Absolute can satisfy the
emotional and volitional tendencies of the human soul, its needs and aspirations, its visions of perfection. Without this belief about the Absolute, we shall not have the necessary moral earnestness. Evolution requires for its complement, perfection; time, timelessness; appearance, reality; and freedom and responsibility of individuals a deeper monism.

As a matter of fact, belief in a cosmic spirit which is friendly to us is the verdict of the religious consciousness. This belief is not dependent on dogmas. Nor if religion should stand on dogmas, it must stand, either or fall with them. Religion is essentially personal and not dogmatic or institutional. It is a man's reaction to life and not faith in books and creeds. Religious experience tells the individual that through struggle and strain, discord and darkness, he will attain to peace and harmony, unity and light. James is not right in thinking that the religious consciousness does not demand an infinite God. It is not true to say that we only feel a connection with something greater than ourselves that makes for power and righteousness. We feel the reality of an infinite God. There is room for ambiguity in the testimony of religious consciousness, simply because religious souls have often to employ the current philosophical jargon. In many cases intellectual conditions are unconsciously accepted in the interpretations of religious consciousness. What the religious soul needs may not always be faithful to what is felt. But reflection on the data of religious consciousness is decisive in showing that religion demands an infinite God. If philosophy takes into account facts of religious consciousness, we will be led to the abstractive theory. Only in it are the higher values of spirit affirmed and maintained. James declared in answer to a question put to him, "I believe in God, not because I have experienced his presence, but because I need it so that it: 'must' be true" (Hibbert Journal, x. 1. p. 233). If there is no God "there would be a great lack, a great void in life" (ibid.). James admits that mystical states
are unknown to him. To him the nearest approach to a mystical state is the condition when the individual feels himself at home in the universe, feels himself to be at one with the highest that he knows or can conceive of. The individual then acquires a broader outlook, larger vision and greater powers. New energies are added on to him from a wider order of things, which wider order James calls God when he is in a philosophizing mood. But when he uses his psychological glasses, he calls it his unconscious nature. If God is not to be identified with the unconscious, it becomes the absolute experience which mystics have tasted and felt. Even if with James we admit that philosophy is a matter of intuition and not intellect, absolutism becomes justified. We are led to it, whether we take our stand on the vital life and faith of the mystics or the certainties of the understanding.

James's pluralism identifies the human substance with the divine (P. C. p. 31). This means that God should be viewed as the whole. If God and the creatures are viewed as distinct from each other, then we shall have a hard and fast dualism which James himself criticises. "The man being an outsider, and a mere subject to God, not his intimate partner, a character of externality invades the field. God is not heart of our heart and reason of our reason, but our magistrate, rather, and mechanically to obey his commands, however strange they may be, remains our only moral duty." A mechanical view which leaves the human subject outside the deepest reality of the universe cannot satisfy the contemporary mind, and if we insist on a more organic and intimate relationship between God and man, we are led to absolutism. "Our contemporary mind having once for all the possibility of a more intimate Weltanschauung, the only opinions quite worthy of arresting our attention will fall within the general scope of what may roughly be called the pantheistic field of vision, the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator,
and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality” (P. U. p. 30). If the human soul is to be viewed as “part and parcel” of the central spirit, what is the difference between James’s pluralistic theism and absolute idealism? If God is to be a transcendent deity, then he becomes the God of David or Isaiah; if he is an immanent One, then he becomes the Absolute. A finite God partaking of the characteristics of both is an impossible compromise (P. U. pp. 310-313). If God is one of the ‘eaches’ we cannot understand how he can be at the same time an each distinct from other eaches and yet the soul of all of them.

James regards us all as the friends and collaborators of God. God and men are fellow-soldiers in the struggle to banish evil from the world. “God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity” (Is Life Worth Living?). If God is not morally perfect to begin with, if he has also to grow in insight and wisdom, if his character is subject to growth, it is a misnomer to call him God. Such a God is too human for any religious purpose.

The problem of evil leads to the conception of a finite God. We do not want to identify God with the whole of things, as it would be to make him the source of all imperfection and evil. The perfection of God, we somehow assume, is incompatible with his being the author of evil. Strictly speaking, the only satisfactory conception of God is that which makes him not a creator but a fellow-creature. If God is the creator also, then he becomes responsible for the universe and its evils. There is no point in his trying to break loose from the evils which he allowed to crop up. God finds evil opposed to him. He tries to fight it as we do, since he cherishes the ideals for which we live and long. So to preserve his perfection, we identify God with the goodness of things and oppose him to the evil. The God of religion is not the all but a higher presence, a part of the universe, though the ideal part. “God, in the religious life of ordinary men, is the same not of the whole of things,
heaven forbid, but only of the ideal tendency in things, 
believed in as a superhuman person, who calls us to co-
operate in his purposes, and who fortifies ours if they 
are worthy. He works in an external environment, 
has limits and has enemies. The only God worthy of 
the name must be finite. If the absolute exist in addition, 
then the Absolute is only the wider cosmic whole of which 
our God is but the most ideal portion, and which in the 
more usual human sense is hardly to be termed a religious 
being at all " (P. U. p. 225). But how can we say that 
God has an environment which is external to him, if we 
are part and parcel of the Divine substance? Supposing 
he has an outside environment, limits, and enemies, 
can we depend on him for the success of our moral enter-
prise? Is it not necessary for God to be the whole, if we 
should have the assurance of final triumph? Passing 
by such difficulties, we find James's finite God to be only 
one of the articulations of the Absolute. He may be the 
ideal tendency of things, but the Absolute is the whole, 
unifying the ideal and the non-ideal tendencies. While 
God has something outside of himself, the Absolute is 
not limited by anything outside itself; God is not the 
Absolute since beyond him lie other experiences. There 
may be an absolute experience which includes those of 
God and man. "The Absolute is not the impossible 
being I once thought it " (P. U. p. 298). God is finite 
and subject to growth. But he can never grow into the 
fullness of the Absolute. "The finite God whom I con-
trast with the Absolute may conceivably have almost 
nothing outside of himself: he may have already 
triumphed over and absorbed all but the minutest frac-
tion of the universe; but that fraction, however small, 
reduces him to the status of a relative being, and in prin-
ciple the universe is saved from all the irrationalities 
incidental to absolutism " (P. U. pp. 125-126).

But in the struggle with wickedness, James feels sure 
that God will win in the end. Struggle and crisis are 
not the end of things. We shall attain to peace and
harmony. From this, it follows, if anything follows in James's philosophy, that evil is only temporary and partial. It is not the last word of life, though it is an essential phase of its existence. It is a chance element in the universe which can be expelled from it. Ideally the whole world is divine.

James asks us to admit the reality of God since such a belief has value for concrete life. "Or Pragmatic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true. Now whatever its residual difficulties may be, experience shows that it certainly does work" (Pragmatism, p. 299). But as we have seen, what works is not a finite God who is one among many, nor a collection of Gods who are all larger than individual men, but an infinite God who is the whole, the source of our being as well as the support of our lives.

Again, James and Fechner regarded body and mind as necessarily connected, not only in man but throughout the world. James adopts Fechner's theory that no part of the universe is soulless or is a spirit without a body. "The lower orders of mind go with the lower orders of body. The entire earth on which we live must have its own collective consciousness. So must each sun, moon and planet, so must the whole solar system have its own wider consciousness in which the consciousness of each plays one part. So has the entire stellar system as such its consciousness; and if that stellar system be not the sum of all that is materially considered, then that whole system, along with whatever else may be, is the body of that absolutely realised consciousness of the universe to which man gives the name of God." As the body of man is an organism compounded of many organs, so the soul of man is the combination of all the various consciousnesses which belong to the various organs. There is a consciousness of the whole human race formed by the union of all human souls, though each soul in its individuality is unaware of the
union. James agrees with Fechner in thinking that "the more inclusive forms of consciousness are in part constituted by the more limited forms"; only in part, since the relations of the several minds constituting the earth-soul are there in addition to the minds themselves. Since our mind is not the bare summing up of our sights and sounds and tastes, etc., but has in addition to these terms their relations also of which the terms are unaware, so the earth-soul traces the relations between the contents of the million minds of which no one mind is conscious. So, according to Fechner, there is an earth-soul and a soul in every one of the heavenly bodies. All these compound and form a great universal consciousness. To account for the abnormal facts of self, James postulates a subconscious self from which we derive inspiration. Psychical research led him to believe in the reality of a wider psychic self with which our smaller selves are continuous. The tenderer parts of personal life are, according to James, "continuous with a more of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside of him and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself, when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck." (P. U. chap. viii.) Cannot we call the superhuman experience the Absolute experience? James fights shy of the name, but is quite willing to call it God. While our argument thus far leads us straight to an absolutistic conception, James, afraid of the difficulties of determinism and a block universe, which are incidental to the absolutistic conception, ties down the most comprehensive earth-soul in an eternal environment (P. U. pp. 309-311). James believes that Fechner makes God religious and places him under conditions which he cannot violate. "His will has to struggle with conditions not imposed on that will by itself" (P. U. p. 294). Thus does his earth-soul become the God of theism, and not the all-enveloping spirit. Our point is that when Fechner and James allow that human consciousnesses are parts of a
wider whole, they are accepting absolutism. But we cannot state better the absolutistic theory of the relation of the absolute to the individuals, than in the terms of Fechner. "No other content has it than us, with all the other creatures like or unlike us, and the relations which it finds between us. Our cachexy collected into one are substantively identical with its all, though the all is perfect; while no cachexy is perfect." (P. U. p. 173). If there is such a soul of the type Fechner imagines and James allows, what is its relation to God and the world? James's account does not escape the necessity to account for the origin of the world from the wider whole called God, if not the Absolute. How did it escape from its perfection into error and imperfection?

James thinks that the Absolute is so infinite and unpractical that it cannot be true. It is an abstract abstraction which has no influence on life. We have already shown how it alone can aid us in life. But let us set against James's view the statement of Royce, which indicates the real nature of the Absolute. "The Absolute seems to me, personally, not something remote, unpractical, inhuman, but the most pervasive and omnipresent and practical, as it is also the most inclusive of beings" (W. James and Other Essays, Pindare vi-vii).

VII

Absolutism is deterministic, has no place for freedom, while James's pluralism provides us with an open elastic universe full of opportunities for the play of freedom. The reality of change, authentic novelty of future, etc., demand the reality of freedom and the negation of determinism. Freedom is the complement of pluralism. We require a universe where the individual is free to risk the realizing of his ideal. To be a world of novelty and change, it cannot be a world where everything is the necessary effect of something else. We cannot conceive the universe as a closed sphere. Reality is in a large
exact indeterminate and characterless and makes it possible for us to make anything out of it.

James’s whole doctrine of the will to believe presupposes that though the past is dead and gone and so is unalterable forever, the future is indeterminate and determinable along the lines of human wishes. Of course no man has the whole field of possibilities open to him. There are certain aspects of the universe which are fixed and stable, and others which are fluid and unstable. It is difficult to draw a line between them.

“Determinism denies the ambiguity of future volitions, because it affirms that nothing future can be ambiguous.” (Will to Believe, p. 158). In monism there is nothing contingent, there is nothing in actual reality that corresponds to the notion of indeterminateness, everything is necessary. Dismissing this view, James relies on ambiguous possibilities. The theory of radical empiricism allows that the consciousness of bringing to pass one act out of a number of possibilities is a datum as precise and concrete as any other, a genuine experience accompanied by the immediate conviction of its objective reality. In short, there is the experience of choice. When one of several possibilities is realised, something new is accomplished in the world. “In our personal experience we are witnessing what is really the essential process of creation” (Somes Problems, pp. 214-215). It is a world of real growths and crises, of genuine struggle. It is true that an analysis of the present does not tell us of what is to occur in the future. It may be that the future has to be won by an effort. But there is another aspect by which the future should be founded on the past and be in continuity with the nature of things. With absolutism James contends that mechanical determinations do not hold good in the higher levels of spiritual life. It does not mean that the life of spirit has no law or order in it. The contrast between mechanical and teleological or spiritual determination is not one of law and anarchy, but of two different kinds of order. James rightly contends
that the mechanical part of the universe does not lay down the law for the rest. As a matter of fact, mechanism is to be used in the realisation of the higher ends. But we cannot on that account infer that law is incompatible with selfhun. In his desire to reserve room for the will to create, James frees the self from all subjection to law. The nature of self is incompatible only with mechanical law. As we have seen in the discussion of Bergson, identity is not sameness, diversity is not unlikeness, negation is not contradiction, and law is not necessity. Creative synthesis of self is quite compatible with law and order. But it may be said that this law of immanent logic is quite as bad as that of mechanisms necessity. It also implies a block universe which has no room for option or contingency, arrest or failure. But as we have seen, the law of logic we cannot escape from. We have to admit an ideal working in and through the parts. James allows it, Bergson agrees to it, and no pluralist can safely reject it. It is the whole that works unconsciously in the lower stages, and becomes the standard of right and the object of choice in the higher human stages (see James's *The Will to Believe.* *The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life*). But error and prejudice, ignorance and selfishness thwart the clear expression of the ideal. On account of these factors which vary with different individuals, the Absolute sometimes succeeds in manifesting itself, sometimes does not. Absolutism does not construct the universe after a dead pattern, but only tells us that if we dispassionately examine the march of events or the course of the world with all its trials and set-backs, blind alleys and by-paths, we will find a particular tendency at work. If we accept this one central basis we secure freedom; if we surrender it we make chaos and caprice our Gods. The law of the whole is the law of freedom. Otherwise freedom becomes caprice, licence or acting on the spur of the moment. Free conduct is conduct determined by an ideal and congruous with the logic of human nature,
and this James has to admit in the interests of ethics. But in a world of pure indeterminism and fresh begin-
nings there is neither law nor order, neither freedom nor necessity.

If we apply mechanism to mind there can be no freedom. Human choice is not mechanically deter-
mained by any conflict between the psychical contents at the moment of choice. This would be to travesty the
purposive character of man's working. It is also true that the illusion of determinism is due to an et post
facto interpretation of mental life. For as James is fond of quoting, life looks forwards, intellect understands
backwards.

But James is not an upholder of chance and caprice. He declares, "Whoever uses the word chance, instead of
freedom, squarely and resolutely gives up all pretence to control the things he says are free" (Will to Believe,
p. 158). But still when he speaks of novelty he does permit chance. James believes with Renouvier "in
absolute novelties, unmeditated beginnings, gifts, chance, freedom, acts of faith" (id., p. 164). "That genuine
novelties can occur means that from the point of view of what is already given, what comes may be treated as a
matter of chance" (Problems of Philosophy, p. 143). We may not be able to predict what a man would do under
given circumstances. This does not mean that his character has nothing to do with his conduct. But it
only shows that the fulness of a rich spirit cannot be comprehended by us. The incommensurability between the
future and the present is due to our weakness.

If the individual should have complete freedom, then that possibility would produce the notion of a Providence
governing the world. The crux of pluralistic theisms which are equally anxious for divine omnicompassion and
human freedom is the problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. In this difficulty James employs
the analogy of the chess player. As the expert chess player is certain to beat his rivals, even though he does
not know exactly the details of the proposed moves of his adversary, even so God, the infinite mind, will see that everything is ordered, in spite of the ambiguous possibilities open to finite spirits. "The creator's plan of the universe would be left blank as to many of its actual details, but all possibilities would be marked down. The realization of some of these would be left absolutely to chance, i.e. would only be determined when the moment of realization came; other possibilities would be contingently determined, i.e. their decisions would leave to chance till it was seen how the matters of absolute chance fell out. But the rest of the plan, including its final upshot, would be rigorously determined once for all" (Will to Believe, p. 182). God has got the certainty that whatever course the world may take, it will reach home ultimately. James allows now and then miraculous interferences, though they are not of the objectionable type (see footnote to p. 182, Will to Believe). God gives the finishing touches to the world of man. In spite of the indeterminations of the Pluralistic universe, the supremacy of good which is the goal of human endeavor is guaranteed. But that does not seem to be a world of real risk. James craves for a universe where the fight for freedom is genuine, where the result is not secured. For him there is no use of a world where the outcome is predetermined and the end is inevitable.

James and the absolutists are at one in denouncing the mechanical determination of psychical life; they are at one in upholding the teleological character of mental activity. They are agreed in the consideration that mechanism is only the helmsate of freedom and not its contradiction. Absolute determinism as well as pure chance they condemn with equal force. Freedom of the individual both uphold, but the difference comes here that, while James is able to say that the individual is free since when confronted by two motives he may do the one or the other, decision comes as a bond from the blue without
any reference to past character, absolutism contends that this description of choice is inadequate and unsatisfactory. Arguing against the mechanical conception of the self, James still adopts it in his view. That is the root fallacy of James's theory. James propagates the problem from an abstract point of view. He allows himself the privilege of breaking up the concrete unity of the self into the two artificial abstractions of the self and object, and then asks, What is the relation between the two? Either there is order or no order. If there is, it is absolute idealism; if there is not, it is pure chance. The former James cannot adopt, and so holds that the future is what is undetermined and unconditioned. James himself says that pure chance is no good as it is another word for impotence (Will to Believe). Real freedom where the whole self operates, which is the absolutistic theory of freedom, James will admit if he views experience as a whole. The nature of the decision is rooted in the essential character of self. Were it not so, then the operations of the self will have neither order nor intelligibility nor freedom. A truly free act will be based on the true nature of the self, and not be an anarchistic element which suddenly springs upon the scene of self. While each concrete situation is something new, special and unique, requiring the agent to judge and act for himself, it is wrong to think that the resulting decision may be unconnected with the past. In spite of varied play and adventure, James's chief analogy tells us there is a certain unity of direction which absolutism insists on.

VIII

We find that absolutism is sometimes criticised on the ground that it denies personal immortality. "Denial of personal immortality is one of the mubbolths of pan-ligion" (Stuart, Idols Thekcin, p. 38). When James was asked, "Do you believe in personal immortality?" If so, why?" he replied, "Never keenly; but more strongly
as I grow older" and "because I am just getting fit to live" ("Religion of William James," Hibbert Journal, vol. x, p. 228). James cannot logically hold to personal immortality since he does not believe in a soul. There is nothing which can survive bodily death in his scheme. James's philosophy is not therefore keen about the survival of human personality after the death of the body. James adopts the transmission theory of the relation of brain to consciousness. There is a great sea of consciousness and our individual consciousnesses are but drops of it, the brain of each man serving as the channel through which the water of the sea flows. The vast unity of consciousness is separated into parts and given finite forms by the brain. But James is not inclined to interpret the consciousness behind the brain as one absolute mind. It is quite conceivable according to James that there are many minds behind the scene. But whether it is one mind or many minds, personal immortality is given up. But many pluralist thinkers would not agree with James in his view of immortality. But if with James we view our personality as of doubtful continuance after death, if personal life after death is only an illusion about death, then there is no reason why we should regard personal existence as real. We should treat it as less than real. James's ideal, even though it is not absorption in a universal mind, is still absorption in wider units of consciousness. If it is admitted that the individual after death is absorbed in some wider unit, this is to question the ultimate reality of the personal surviving self. So long as we consider the life of the individual to be due to a temporary and partial separation of the part from the whole, so long as we think death to be reabsorption of the part in the whole, we can say that personality is a transitory illusion and self is a prison from which we escape at death. It also follows that James's hypothesis of many minds is a venture in speculation. We are told that the principle of individualization is in the brain; we ask, To what is the separate-
ness of the many units of consciousness behind the brains due? When all brains are lost, all separation will disappear and there will be only one mind. James's prejudice in favour of many minds or a hierarchy of consciousnesses is due to his pluralistic presuppositions and admiration for Fechner's philosophy. But even Fechner admits that each member of the hierarchy is at once a consciousness for itself and a part of a more widely inclusive consciousness of a higher level or order. It is quite possible and very probable that there is only one absolute consciousness. From this larger whole of which our minds are fragmentary manifestations each of us draws spontaneous energy in our moral and intellectual efforts. James's mother-sea of consciousness or subliminal self can only be one and not many.

IX

We see how the conceptions of a mother-sea of consciousness or the wider subconscious self of abnormal psychology, of God as creator of all, of freedom as a compromise between chance and necessity, of the transitory nature of the individual and the transmissive theory of the function of the brain, are all incompatible with a rational pluralism and can only be reconciled with a monistic idealism. In spite of all these doctrines, which find their natural home in absolutism, James professes himself to be an adherent of pluralism. But, as we have already seen, James is not very scrupulous about the logic of his position. One gets the impression that in philosophy he is at the mercy of the latest fad. He is ready to resort to Fechner and Bergson in his anxiety to pull down absolutism; but he does not pause to consider that the central theorems of Fechner and Bergson go against the dogmas of pluralism. The one great lesson of James's philosophy is that no solution of the philosophic problem can be called satisfactory which does not take into account the claims of common sense. But
the failure of his system can also be traced to his hurried attempt to satisfy without critical analysis all the claims, aridical as well as profound, which the plain man puts forth. In spite of it all, James has secured for himself a permanent place in the republic of the great philosophers by his very valuable contributions to psychology and insistence in philosophy on the values of the human spirit.