

**5:4 & 5:5**  
**(“God in Religion” and “The Consciousness of God”)**

© 2012, 2014, 2017 Matthew Block

**Sources for 5:4 & 5:5**

- (1) W. R. **Matthews**, K.C.V.O., D.D., D.Lit., *God in Christian Thought and Experience* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1930)
- (2) Rees **Griffiths**, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., *God in Idea and Experience, or, The A Priori Elements of the Religious Consciousness* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1931)

**Key**

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)
- (f) **Light green** indicates Bible passages or fragments thereof, which are not paralleled in the source text.

Work-in-progress Version 24 Mar. 2012  
© 2012, 2014, 2017 Matthew Block  
*Revised 18 June 2012 and 21 Sept. 2014  
and 7 October 2017*

## PAPER 5 — GOD’S RELATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL

---

---

### 4. GOD IN RELIGION

#### I: MAN’S EXPERIENCE OF GOD (Matthews 1)

We are concerned to know what drives man forward in his quest for God,—

or what allures him,—what religion in its essential nature is; and this inquiry is suggested to us apart from any view which we may have about the truth of any religion (M 5).

It is generally recognized that one of the most important contributions to the solution of our problem of the nature of the religious consciousness was made by Schleiermacher, who was among the first to concentrate attention on religious experience and to make it the foundation of theology.... In his epoch-making work on the Christian Faith he propounded the thesis that religion is “a feeling of absolute dependence” (M 6).

5:4.1 The morality of the religions of evolution

drives men forward in the God quest

by the motive power of fear.

The religions of revelation

allure men

to seek for a God of love because they crave to become like him.

But religion is not merely a passive feeling of “absolute dependence”

and “surety of survival”;

Two salient and ineradicable needs of the spirit seek satisfaction through religion: the need for **unity** and the need for the substantiation of value (M 18).

Doubtless for us a return to polytheism would be a regression towards chaos. But if we try to place ourselves at the standpoint of the primitive believer, we can see that for him his belief in spirits or dæmons is a **relative unification** (M 19).

There is truth in the saying of Professor Hocking, “**All polytheism is imperfect monotheism**” (M 19).

The second need which is met in the religious experience is that for the substantiation of values.... The monotheistic faiths have held that God is the **substance of values**, Himself the supreme Value (M 20).

The religious attitude of mind has a peculiarity which is not easy to define but which has been indicated by most writers upon the religious consciousness in language coloured by their own particular theories. Schleiermacher touches upon it in his “feeling of absolute dependence”, Otto in his “sense of the numinous”, and Professor J. B. Pratt when he designates God as “**the determiner of destiny.**”

it is a living and dynamic experience of divinity attainment predicated on humanity service.

5:4.2 The great and immediate service of true religion is the establishment of

an enduring **unity** in human experience,

a lasting peace and a profound assurance.

With primitive man, even polytheism is a **relative unification** of the evolving concept of Deity;

**polytheism is monotheism in the making.**

Sooner or later,

God is destined to be comprehended as the reality of **values**, the **substance of meanings**, and the life of truth.

5:4.3 God is not only **the determiner of destiny;**

Religious states of mind contrast with those which are scientific or simply practical or moral in this respect, that whereas the scientific and moral are attempts at mastery over the not-self, to bring the objective material within the categories of the understanding or to **bend it to the purpose of the will,**

in religion the self seeks rather to be mastered, to bend itself to that “other” with which it is continuous (M 21).

[*Compare:* In this respect the religious attitude is more closely akin to that of **aesthetic** enjoyment, which wishes not to alter the object but to remain in its presence (M 21).]

Closely connected with this aspect of religion is the redemptive element which is present in every kind of religious life and system. No doubt the idea of **salvation** is more explicit in some religions than others, the conceptions of what man is redeemed from and what redeemed to vary enormously even in the highest examples of spiritual consciousness.

There is, for example, a profound and significant difference between the salvation of the Buddhist and the Christian. The former seeks release from **suffering,**

he is man’s eternal destination.

All nonreligious human activities seek to

**bend the universe to the distorting service of self;**

the truly religious individual seeks to identify the self with the universe

and then to dedicate the activities of this unified self to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman.

5:4.4 The domains of philosophy and **art** intervene between the nonreligious and the religious activities of the human self. Through art and philosophy the material-minded man is inveigled into the contemplation of the spiritual realities and universe values of eternal meanings.

5:4.5 All religions teach the worship of Deity and some doctrine of human **salvation.**

The Buddhist religion promises salvation from **suffering,** unending peace;

the latter from **sin** (M 21-22).

[!]

In so far as he is religious man feels himself to be, in the end, impotent and miserable so long as he remains in his **isolated selfhood** (M 22).

the Jewish religion promises salvation from difficulties, prosperity predicated on righteousness; the Greek religion promised salvation from disharmony, ugliness, by the realization of beauty;

Christianity promises salvation from **sin**, sanctity;

Mohammedanism provides deliverance from the rigorous moral standards of Judaism and Christianity.

The religion of Jesus *is* salvation from

**self**, deliverance from the evils of creature **isolation** in time and in eternity.

5:4.6 The Hebrews based their religion on goodness; the Greeks on beauty; both religions sought truth. Jesus revealed a God of love, and love is all-embracing of truth, beauty, and goodness.

5:4.7 The Zoroastrians had a religion of morals; the Hindus a religion of metaphysics; the Confucianists a religion of ethics. Jesus lived a religion of service. All these religions are of value in that they are valid approaches to the religion of Jesus.

In religion the life of the spirit of man reaches **unity**, and the richest religious life has not left the other activities of spirit behind but has taken them up into itself. The Reality which it seeks and thinks that it has known is One in which the thirsts of the soul for **goodness, beauty, and truth** are not annulled but satisfied (M 24).

## II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GOD (Matthews 25)

The two fundamental maxims of Greek and Hebrew aspiration respectively **“Know thyself”** and **“Know God”**, are not contradictory but complementary, for man knows God in so far as he truly knows himself and he knows himself through knowing God (M 34).

[For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the **knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ** (2 Peter 1:8).]

Religion is destined to become the reality of

the spiritual **unification** of all that is **good, beautiful, and true** in human experience.

5:4.8 The Greek religion had a watchword **“Know yourself”**; the Hebrews centered their teaching on **“Know your God”**;

the Christians preach a gospel aimed at

a **“knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ”**;

Jesus proclaimed the good news of **“knowing God, and yourself as a son of God.”**

These differing concepts of the purpose of religion determine the individual’s attitude in various life situations and foreshadow the depth of worship and the nature of his personal habits of prayer.

“Not lehrt beten”, and in the prayers which are offered we may discern most clearly the kinds of need of which the worshipper is conscious and the kind of deity to whom he prays (M 35).

It is only those faiths which have clung to the personal conception of Deity which have had a “jealous God” who will tolerate no other gods beside Him (M 38).

[Anthropomorphism is the road along which the believing mind has travelled from superstition to noble creeds (M 31).]

#### IV: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OF GOD (*continued*) (Matthews 67)

This anthropomorphism, if so it may be called, is carried further in the Apostolic religious life; for that experience is built on the affirmation that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Creator is revealed as love through the Person and work of the Redeemer (M 87).

[The *Highest Anthropomorphism* (M 87, headline).]

The spiritual status of any religion may be determined by the nature of its prayers.

5:4.9 The concept of a semihuman and jealous God

is an inevitable transition between polytheism and sublime monotheism.

An exalted anthropomorphism is the highest attainment level of purely evolutionary religion.

Christianity has elevated the concept of anthropomorphism from the ideal of the human to the transcendent and divine concept of

the person of the glorified Christ.

And this is the highest anthropomorphism that man can ever conceive.

## II: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GOD (Matthews 25)

Two great streams flow together into the sea of **Christian** thought about God—the Hebrew and the Greek (M 39).

The **Hebrew** consciousness of God is a meditation upon righteousness.

It pushes to the furthest point the conception of Deity as the **Vindicator of moral values**, and for that reason it has a deep interest in history, in events, finding in them the revelation of the righteous purpose of God (M 40).

[contd] The **Greek** development, on the other hand, is dominated by the specifically philosophical impulse (M 40).

Philosophers were the real teachers of Greece—men who sought to understand, to find **unity** in experience (M 40).

The two elements within its experience of God have never been completely harmonized; the personal, “psychological”, living God of Hebrew tradition and piety has never been successfully identified with the God of metaphysics whose ancestry derives from Greece. Christian thought has never achieved a concept of God which fully satisfied the two needs of its heart (M 42).

5:4.10 The **Christian** concept of God is an attempt to combine three separate teachings:

5:4.11 1. The **Hebrew** concept—

God as a **vindicator of moral values**, a righteous God.

5:4.12 2. The **Greek** concept—

God as a **unifier**, a God of wisdom.

5:4.13 3. Jesus’ concept—God as a living friend, a loving Father, the divine presence.

5:4.14 It must therefore be evident that

composite Christian theology encounters great difficulty in attaining consistency.



This difficulty is further aggravated by the fact that the doctrines of early Christianity were generally based on the personal religious experience of three different persons: Philo of Alexandria, Jesus of Nazareth, and Paul of Tarsus.

### III: THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OF GOD (Matthews 43)

5:4.15 In the study of the religious life of Jesus, view him **positively**. Think not so much of

The unbroken and triumphant nature of Jesus' communion with God has often been represented in theology by the assertion of the Lord's "**sinlessness**"... But it is perhaps unfortunate that so much stress should have been laid on this word. It is negative, and therefore suffers from two inherent defects: it is incapable of proof, and it cannot adequately convey the **positive** nature of Jesus' communion with God (M 51-52).

his **sinlessness**

as of his righteousness, his loving service.

We owe to Dr. Montefiore a clear statement of the real departure which the Gospel made from the standpoint of the best Pharisees... Here is the fresh and truly revolutionary interpretation of the Divine Fatherhood. God's love is **active** not **passive**, it goes out to seek and save those who are lost (M 59).

Jesus upstepped the **passive** love disclosed in the Hebrew concept of the heavenly Father to the higher **active** and creature-loving affection of a God who is the Father of every individual, even of the wrongdoer.

## 5. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD

### VIII: THE RELIGIOUS IMPERATIVE (Griffiths 160)

Kant was able to establish the imperative character of the moral law because he was able to show that ... its source was in self-consciousness and not in the external conditions of the struggle for existence, nor yet in the realm of the instincts which man has in common with the animals. Morality had its foundation in Reason, which is the distinctive property of self-consciousness (G 161-62).

[Static ethics and traditional morality are just slightly superanimal (12:5.10).] [The moral nature is superanimal but subspiritual (196:3.25).]

5:5.1 Morality has its origin in the reason of self-consciousness;

it is superanimal but wholly evolutionary.

Human evolution embraces in its unfolding all endowments antecedent to the bestowal of the Adjusters and to the pouring out of the Spirit of Truth.

But the attainment of levels of morality does not deliver man from the real struggles of mortal living. Man's physical environment entails the battle for existence; the social surroundings necessitate ethical adjustments; the moral situations require the making of choices in the highest realms of reason; the spiritual experience (having realized God) demands that man find him and sincerely strive to be like him.

[I]f there are religious values discoverable in our experience—values that cannot be equated with or derived from other values, such as the **scientific**, **moral**, or æsthetic—then there must be within the mind itself some pristine capacity for viewing the world in the way we call religious. Religion cannot be derived from non-religious characteristics of experience (G 165).

5:5.2 Religion is not grounded in the facts of **science**, the obligations of society, the assumptions of philosophy, or the implied duties of **morality**.

Religion is an independent realm of human response to life situations and is unfailingly exhibited at all stages of human development which are postmoral.

Religion may permeate all four levels of the realization of values and the enjoyment of universe fellowship: the **physical** or material level of self-preservation; the **social** or emotional level of fellowship; the **moral** or duty level of reason; the **spiritual** level of the consciousness of universe fellowship through divine worship.

5:5.3 The fact-seeking scientist conceives of God as the First Cause, a God of force. The emotional artist sees God as the ideal of beauty, a God of aesthetics.

We cannot reduce religion to **philosophy**, to the attempt **reason** naturally makes to organise experience and think out the world as a unity, or reach some Absolute or God as the principle of that **unity** (G 167).

The **reasoning philosopher** is sometimes inclined to posit a God of universal **unity**,

even a pantheistic Deity.

The religionist of faith believes in a God who fosters survival, the Father in heaven, the God of love.

Religion, then, cannot be equated either with philosophical speculation, science, morality, or æsthetics.... Not with morality, because, though morality is an integral part of any religious life,

it is never the whole of it (G 169).

From the side of religion you may pass to morality, but from morality there is no obvious nor even a possible path to religious experience.

Not with æsthetics, because the worship of beauty in the abstract, and the emotions awakened by a beautiful object considered in and for itself, in no way resembles religion, which always links all objects with the world as a whole, and sees God in all things and all things in God (G 169).

The religious consciousness is *sui generis*, but it is more. It is the ancient mother of all the sciences—the science of nature, of morality, of art, of philosophy (G 169-70).

5:5.4 Moral conduct is always an antecedent of evolved religion and a part of even revealed religion,

but never the whole of religious experience.

Social service is the result of moral thinking and religious living.

Morality does not biologically lead to the higher spiritual levels of religious experience.

The adoration of the abstract beautiful is not the worship of God;

neither is exaltation of nature nor the reverence of unity the worship of God.

5:5.5 Evolutionary religion is the mother of the science, art, and philosophy

which elevated man to the level of receptivity to revealed religion, including the bestowal of Adjusters and the coming of the Spirit of Truth.

The evolutionary picture of human existence begins and ends with religion, albeit very different qualities of religion, one evolutionary and biological, the other revelational and periodical.

Is the religious valuation of life **normal to human nature** and can we always deal with men on that assumption? Is it a fact that the seemingly irreligious really view life through purely secular eyes ... or is it only the case that they do not accept the particular brand of religious thought and practice we are offering to them? ... If the latter, if religious indifference is due not to a deficiency of nature, so to speak, but rather to a failure to accept religion on our particular terms, then the imperative remains and is, in fact, operative (G 172).

And so, while religion is **normal and natural to man**, it is also optional. Man does not have to be religious against his will.

## II: DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GOD (**Matthews** 25)

[Source? Compare 103:6.1 & 196:3.28.]

5:5.6 Religious experience, being essentially spiritual, can never be fully understood by the material mind; hence the function of theology, the psychology of religion.

The essential doctrine of the human realization of God creates a **paradox** in finite comprehension. It is well-nigh impossible for human logic and finite reason to harmonize

The **paradox** to which we have referred comes to the surface in a theoretical form in the crucial problem of religious thought—the debate between transcendence and immanence. A philosophy which will justify the religious attitude must maintain both that God is **immanent**

the concept of divine **immanence**,

God within and a part of every individual,

and that He is **transcendent** (M 26).

with the idea of God's **transcendence**,

the divine domination of the universe of universes.

These two essential concepts of Deity must be unified in the faith-grasp of the concept of the transcendence of a personal God and in the realization of the indwelling presence of a fragment of that God in order to

Either conception, in the long run, must deprive **worship** of its **justification** and prayer of its reality (M 26).

**justify** intelligent **worship**

and validate the hope of personality survival.

The contradictions which [religion] seems to offer to our intellect are not of the kind which allow us to dismiss the object as unreal.... They indicate rather that we are dealing with an object which is **beyond our full comprehension** (M 28).

The difficulties and paradoxes of religion are inherent in the fact that the realities of religion are utterly **beyond the mortal capacity for intellectual comprehension.**

5:5.7 Mortal man secures three great satisfactions from religious experience, even in the days of his temporal sojourn on earth:

Two needs in particular [man] discovers—that for the **unification** of experience, the **intellectual** need,

5:5.8 1. **Intellectually** he acquires the satisfactions of a more **unified** human consciousness.

and that for the **substantiation of universal values**, the moral and the æsthetic need (G 37).

5:5.9 2. **Philosophically** he enjoys the **substantiation of his ideals of moral values.**

5:5.10 3. **Spiritually** he thrives in the experience of divine companionship, in the spiritual satisfactions of true worship.

5:5.11 God-consciousness, as it is experienced by an evolving mortal of the realms, must consist of three varying factors, three differential levels of reality realization. There is first the mind consciousness—the comprehension of the idea of God. Then follows the soul consciousness—the realization of the ideal of God. Last, dawns the spirit consciousness—the realization of the spirit reality of God. By the unification of these factors of the divine realization, no matter how incomplete, the mortal personality at all times overspreads all conscious levels with a realization of the personality of God. In those mortals who have attained the Corps of the Finality all this will in time lead to the realization of the supremacy of God and may subsequently eventuate in the realization of the ultimacy of God, some phase of the absonite superconsciousness of the Paradise Father.

5:5.12 The experience of God-consciousness remains the same from generation to generation,

The Christian conception of God is not fixed and complete, not a doctrine fully thought out and settled, so that a reopening of the question would be a mere impertinence.... Every generation has the duty and opportunity of contributing to the work of thinking out the Christian idea of God in the light of its own special point of view (M 42).

but with each advancing epoch in human knowledge the philosophic concept and the theologic definitions of God *must* change.

God-knowingness, religious consciousness, is a universe reality, but no matter how valid (real) religious experience is, it must be willing to subject itself to intelligent criticism and reasonable philosophic interpretation; it must not seek to be a thing apart in the totality of human experience.

5:5.13 Eternal survival of personality is wholly dependent on the choosing of the mortal mind, whose decisions determine the survival potential of the immortal soul. When the mind believes God and the soul knows God, and when, with the fostering Adjuster, they all desire God, then is survival assured. Limitations of intellect, curtailment of education, deprivation of culture, impoverishment of social status, even inferiority of the human standards of morality resulting from the unfortunate lack of educational, cultural, and social advantages, cannot invalidate the presence of the divine spirit in such unfortunate and humanly handicapped but believing individuals. The indwelling of the Mystery Monitor constitutes the inception and insures the possibility of the potential of growth and survival of the immortal soul.

5:5.14 The ability of mortal parents to procreate is not predicated on their educational, cultural, social, or economic status. The union of the parental factors under natural conditions is quite sufficient to initiate offspring. A human mind discerning right and wrong and possessing the capacity to worship God, in union with a divine Adjuster, is all that is required in that mortal to initiate and foster the production of his immortal soul of survival qualities if such a spirit-endowed individual seeks God and sincerely desires to become like him, honestly elects to do the will of the Father in heaven.