**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

It may strike an amateur philosopher with surprise that we are studying Philosophy of Religion. The reason for this surprise is not that Philosophy of Religion is not a discipline much less a branch of philosophy, but because of the difficulty of finding the place of philosophy in religion and, perhaps vice versa. It is probable that such surprise is expressed because religion concerns itself with matters on the "realm of the holies", something concerning *tremenda mysterium Dei* (the tremendous mystery of God). That might be what prompted Mascall to advise: "Away with reason where faith is at stake."

But it is quite obvious that when reason is set aside because of the ostensible difficulty encountered in studying religion, then it would mean that we are merely considering Philosophy of Religion as a branch of theology, which it is not. John Hick attested to this position when he asserts, “Philosophy is, accordingly, not a branch of theology (meaning by ‘theology’ the systematic formulation of religious beliefs), but a branch of philosophy.”1 Unfortunately, some authors, like Gideon Adebandele Oshitelu, regard philosophy of religion as “both a branch of philosophy and a branch of theology”2,without offering any further explanation for such classification. If by philosophy of religion, they mean dogma, then philosophy of religion cannot be equipollent with a discipline that studies religion using the spectacle of faith and revelation.

Truly, philosophy of religion cannot stand to benefit the honour of dual categorization as philosophy and theology when the tasks, methods, and goals of the two disciplines are opposed to each other. Such amalgamation of Philosophy of Religion and Dogmatic Theology is not tenable as it is not, in the least, tolerable. Such amalgamation is ruinous to the quest for the meaning of the discipline as well as derails it from attaining to its goal.

But if one may ask: what is the essence of allowing faith to reign supreme in such areas where human reason can, at least, offer much help? To strictly adhere to Mascall’s advice is simply to undermine the power of reason. Supposedly, Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) knew the obvious implication of this total adherence to faith when he said in his homilies, “Faith has no merit where human reason supplies the proof.”

Sometimes, there seem to be the need to permit the interplay of faith and reason since none can ultimately lay claim to perseity. Besides, it is of less benefit to create a gulf between them even as we know each of them irresistibly compliments the other. Nicholas of Cusa (1401 1464) took note of this obvious fact as he said, “Understanding is therefore directed by faith, and faith is developed by understanding.”

However, in keeping with the Wittgensteinian advice: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"2 which in its most proximate interpretation means: "what cannot be explained, do not explain", it behoves us to preface this discourse by making some categorical statement, first, that Philosophy of Religion is not theology *in se*3 or a branch of theology or even *religionis revelatio* (revelation of religion)*.*" It is not philosophical theology in a sense in which a person examines the question of God with the tinted spectacle of faith albeit, of course, guided by reason, which ultimately ends in religious dogmatism. It is not even theogony or epiphany. It should not be considered as the religious aspect of philosophy. It is simply a rational inquiry (investigation) into religion. And so, we may allow our intellect to tower to any height provided that we memorize Wittgenstein’s pithy advice.

Once more, when viewed from a different wave length the overriding confusion existing between philosophy and religion stems from the conceptual distortion and putative misconception of people as to what mutually the two stand for. It may even be asked, if philosophy has relation with religion, what kind of relation exist between them? How does one influence the other? These are questions which must receive our careful attention in this course.

Not only that, philosophy like religion does not place any limit as to its quest. Both of them are involved in the totality of objects – not a specific object – to human intelligence but from a given angle. In other words, they are universal disciplines *simpliciter.* In the interim, it suffices to note that we shall consider hereunder the meaning of philosophy of religion, its goal, its method, its legitimacy, different traditional views of the origin of religion, and various forms of theistic beliefs and practices.

However**,** when we talk of Philosophy of Religion, what do we mean? For proper understanding of what it is, it is pertinent to critically examine the terms that form the component parts of the discipline – Philosophy of Religion. These are "philosophy and religion.” What is philosophy? What is religion? We shall address ourselves to these questions before exploring Philosophy of Religion.

**What is Philosophy?**

“Philosophy”, as Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll observe, is perhaps "the most abstruse and abstract of all subjects, for removed from the affairs of ordinary life"4 (Popkin, R. H. & Stroll, A., *Philosophy Made Simple*, London: Heinemann, p. iii). The reason for this abstruseness and abstractness is not farfetched. Philosophy like nature, loves to hide itself. Yet, paradoxically, in its hiddenness, its presence is evident.

The world "philosophy" is much used and little understood and this most is perhaps not  
very surprising because philosophers themselves disagree about its precise meaning as  
they do in many other terms. This point is even made clear by A. R. Lacey when he aptly  
notes: "on embarrassment for the professional philosopher is that he cannot produce any  
succinct or even agreed definitions of his profession."5 (Lacey, A. R. *A Dictionary of  
Philosophy*, p. 159). This uncertainty of meaning and the disagreement among the  
experts coupled with the technicality, are obscurity in the subject matter as well as its  
treatment, are characteristics which are bound not only to bewilder the beginner but also  
to repel him.

All he needs to note is that, there is no universally accepted definition of philosophy. This lack of universal consensus of the conception of philosophy should not be looked upon as unusual. It is part and parcel of its nature. Hence, he may find many questions, entertained by the ancients still recurring with much vividness and answers proffered to than simply remaining tentative and seldom meet with universal acceptance, and frequently giving rise to unending rise to unending controversy.

As a matter of fact, although philosophy has had a long standing history coupled with the enormous labour of thought and writing voted to it, there are few, if any, philosophers who would state with confidence, or at least without fear of contradiction, whatphilosophy is. The best and the only way, therefore, to discover what philosophy is**,** like the only way of learning to swim, is by studying it and by philosophizing.

**Etymological Meaning**

Philosophy comes, form two Greek words "*Philos*" or Philos (to love or love) and *sophia* (wisdom); both of which means the "Love of wisdom". But, what is wisdom? Wisdom is a word pregnant with ambiguities. It can mean "knowledge", "experience of life", "a discriminating sense of value", or all three together. But, what is knowledge? Which form or kind of knowledge qualifies as wisdom? Which form of knowledge is preferable to others? What sort of experience qualifies as wisdom? What criteria can on© choose between competing values? All those issues are left obscure and they provide material for unending controversy.

It is interesting to note that "the lover of wisdom” (philosophy) is not content with public opinion and received interpretation, but seeks a foundation he can point to with personal certainty. It is simply the urgent desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance to have a far more comprehensive understanding of life that is philosophy's distinguishing mark. Philosophy, as the search for comprehensive knowledge embraces every bit of human endeavours. It should jettison dogma, fanaticism and foreclosure of debate. It should be noted that a study of philosophy can give somebody information about what various philosophers have said and done in the past without making the person a lover of wisdom. One cannot, therefore love wisdom because one studies philosophy but it is possible that one can be made to love wisdom and aspire for it by studying philosophy.

**General Sense** *\*

In a general sense, a person's philosophy is the sum of his Fundamental beliefs and convictions. In this sense, everyone has a philosophy even though such knowledge may not be realized by the person. This is obvious because, oftentimes we involve ourselves into the discussion of topics that are traditionally categorized under the heading "philosophy". For example, man, the meaning of life, human freedom, right and wrong, death, existence etc.

Philosophy is the logical analysis of language and the clarification of the meaning of words and concepts. There are some philosophers who see this definition as the main task of philosophy and a few who claim that this is the only legitimate function of philosophy. Such persons consider philosophy a specialized field serving the sciences and adding in the clarification of language rather than a broad field reflecting upon all life's experience. Philosophy is a group of problem as well as theories about the solution of these problems. Philosophy expresses its inquiry into the deeper problem of human existence, beyond what the eye has seen or ear heard.

Socrates views philosophy as a reflective self-examination of the principles of the just and happy life. No wonder he said: "an unexamined life is not worth living". Aristotle in his Metaphysics defines philosophy as a speculative knowledge of the first principles of being and causes. It is the science of things in their ultimate causes, reasons and principles, acquired by the aid of human reason alone.

To avoid what seems to be an endless quest for the meaning of philosophy, it is better,  
for brevity sake, to examine the term "religion" at this juncture. Bearing in mind what is  
said above concerning the problem of having a universal definition of philosophy, it  
devolves on each person to formulate his own definition of philosophy since the  
question: what is philosophy? is a crucial question better left at the disposal of the  
questioner?

**What is Religion?**

In the first instance, it is not easy to define religion. This is because there are difficulties one encounters in a bid to define it. How does one limit its scope for easy grasp of its nature? One difficulty stems from “the diversity of forms that religion has assumed in different cultures.” [Mandelbaum, M., *Philosophic Problems: An Introductory Book of Readings, 2nd ed.,* New Jersey: The Macmillan & London: Collier Macmillan, 1967, p. 671]. This difficulty should not be understood in the sense that no one can define it, but rather whether any given definition of religion can equally and rightly express the belief-systems of say, Greek and Roman polytheism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Confucianism, etc. Another difficulty in defining religion hinges on the religious institutions and experience. It is not uncommon for people to compare a particular form of religion with another based on its institutions and ceremonies. For instance, consider Christianity alongside Islam. This is why we are in a position to speak of Christian attitudes and emotions as opposed to Islamic religious attitudes and emotions. The definition of religion that is adequate must pay attention to the great diversity in institutional forms of religion as well as to a wide range of individual religious experience.

It is obvious that no simple definition can describe the numerous religions in the world. For some people, religion is an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, practices, and worship that centre on one supreme God, or the Deity. Some however, view religion as involving a number of gods or deities.

Religion is the word generally used to describe man's relationship with divine or superhuman powers and the various organized systems of belief and worship in which this relationship has been expressed. The belief in such relationship is a general human phenomenon, common to all peoples and culture.

Suffice it to note that the term "religion" has no universally accepted definition. What, therefore, matters are that we present some definitions which will serve as our guide in the discussion. Primarily, religion can be viewed as "man's total reaction to God, and by reaction I mean all those acts, interior or exterior, personal or social, mystical or all but not mechanical, which he would not do were there no God or did he not believe in any"6 (Martindale, C.C., “The Practices of Religion” in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Vol XL, No. 2, p. 184). The Chambers 20th Century Dictionary defines religion as: "belief in, recognition of or an awakened sense of, a higher unseen controlling power or powers, with the emotion and mortality connected therewith.7 (Davidson, T., The *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary of the English Language*, London: W & R Chambers, 1983, p. 1093).

Etymologically, the word "religion" is derived from the Latin word "*religere*" which means " to go over" or "read again", "to consider" it very carefully. The belief, recognition and paying of homage to the Supreme Being is an on-going spiritual formation process. This is done with the intention of maintaining a harmonious relationship with the divine.

Another derivative of religion is from the Latin word *"religare*" which means "to bind," with a bond. It establishes a bond (*religare*) which attaches us before all also to God as the unceasing sources of our existence and as to our last end, the object of all our voluntary decisions. The idea behind this bond is to make us batter. That is why religion is a virtue. In religion, therefore, man binds himself entire to the Supreme Being whom he believes is the author and sustainer of his life. And as St. Paul would say, "For in him we live and move and have our being8."

**General Definition of Religion**

Religion is variously defined and recognized under natural religion as the relationship between God and man without revelation. But we know that without revelation, reason cannot explain why the Almighty exists or can we explain his nature. Our knowledge of him "gets its fulcrum from an inner certainty and not even from the logic of the intellect. Thomas Aquinas view religion as a virtue by which men give due worship and reverence to God. It is, in the ultimate sense, the recognition by an intelligent creature of his origin and his ordered progress in attaining to God.

Henry Bergson defines it as "that element which, in beings endowed with reason, is called upon to make good any deficiency of attachment to life.”9 According to James Martineau, "religion is the belief in an ever living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and will, railing the universe and holding moral relations with mankind." In religion, the referent may be God (monotheism) or deities (polytheism) or simply any ultimate ground of value. This view is clearly expressed by Prof. Geertz in his celebrated definition of religion as:

1. a system of symbols which act to

2. establish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by

3. formulating conceptions of general order of existence and

*4.* clothing these conception with such an aura f actuality that

5. The moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.10

By its very nature, religion is participant and involving such that man (*homo religiosus*) cannot do without it. When one, therefore, speaks of one's religion, one ordinarily refers to those beliefs which one is expected to hold or reject, those things which one does or omits to do simply because one is either, a Christian or Muslim, an African traditional religionist or a Buddhist, or what have you. It is in line with this view that Hans Kung defines religion as: "a believing view of life, approach to life, way of life, and therefore a fundamental pattern embracing the individual and society, man and the world, through which a person (though only partially conscious of this) sees and experiences, thinks and feels, acts and suffers everything."11

In addition, religion can also be viewed as the expression of the forces by which human groups maintain their solidarity and ensure their continuity. In the world of Herbert Spencer, it is "the attitude of individual in a community to the powers which they believe that have the ultimate control over their destinies and interest." Similarly, J. G. Frazer understands it as "a propitiation or conciliation of power superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of Nature and human life."12 W. H. Clark defines religion in his "The psychology of Religion: An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior" as follows: "Religion can be most characteristically described as the inner experience of the individual when he senses a beyond; especially as evidenced by the effect of this experience on his behaviour when he actively attempts to harmonize his life with the beyond."13 C. P. Tiele considers it as that pure and reverential disposition or frame of mind which we call piety" whereas F. H. Bradley views it as "the attempt to express the complete reality of goodness through every aspect of our being."

**Characteristics of Religion**

Religion has some, characteristics which are, to wit;

1. Belief in supernatural being (gods)

2. A distinction between sacred and profane objects

3. Ritual acts focused on-sacred objects.

4. A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods

5. Characteristically religious feeling and, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration, which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods.

6. Prayer and forms of communication with gods.

7. A world view or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the

individual therein.

We can expatiate on each of these characteristics for a better understanding of religion.

**1. Belief in supernatural being (gods)**

Almost every religion holds the belief that the object of worship is supernatural. This explains the sense of awe expressed by the worshippers and/or adherers as well as exclusive reverence given to it. There is always the feeling of supernaturalism pervading the ritual and practice of every religion. This is so even if the religion in question is said to be mundane in its outlook.

**2. A distinction between sacred and profane (non-sacred) objects**

It is obvious that in most religions of the world (if not all) there are objects that are said to be sacred and those that are non-sacred objects. The sacred objects are handled in a dignified way and are not meant to be handled by everybody except those who are delegated to do so according to the demands of the religion. These objects are usually kept and secured in the shrine, temple, altar etc., of the various gods. Some of these objects are used during the official worship, ceremony or sacrifice of the deity concerned.

**3. Ritual acts focused on-sacred objects**

The sacred objects are usually the focus of the ritual acts performed in the name of the supernatural Being. Although non-sacred objects are also used in the ritual acts, the importance attached to them is less than that of the sacred objects. It is, therefore, noteworthy that ritual acts are carried out by the use of sacred objects and they make the ritual itself to create the sense of awe.

**4. A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods**

There is found in every religion a moral code, which is believed to be sanctioned by the gods or the supernatural being. This moral code is meant to guide the conduct of the adherers of the religion. The implication of the moral code is that each adherer must abide by the norm in the moral code for him to remain a faithful adherer of the religion in question. Failure to keep tp the dictates of the moral code entails that one is not a faithful adherer of the religion. Sometimes, punishment may be meted out to those who fail to keep to the prescribed moral code.

**5. Religious feeling and, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration etc.**

Religious feeling is associated with the zeal to have deep spiritual contact with the supernatural being occasioned by the preoccupation of one’s thought with the things of the supernatural being – God. This is accompanied by the sense of mystery surrounding the supernatural being, which provokes in them the sense of awe, making the worshippers to worship and adore the supernatural being as well as expressing the sense of guilt when they derail from the laid precepts of that religion.

Having laid down those definitions of religion and its characteristics, which serve as foundational approach to this study, let us look at Philosophy of Religion.

**What is Philosophy of Religion?**

Philosophy of religion is the branch of philosophy that examines “the intellectual questions that arise in considering religious views.”13 Indeed, there are numerous intellectual questions concerning various religions, especially in this modern age, that border the philosophers, making the quest for meaning into these issues worthwhile. It is not in any way concerned either with justifying or disparaging any particular claims of any religion. Rather, in the words of Stumpf and Abel, it “examines the truth of religious claims. It tries to determine whether we can prove by argumentation that these claims are true, or that they are false. It also examines the possibility that we are unable to determine whether religious claims are either true or false.”14 [Stumpf, S. E., & Abel, D. C., *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction,* 4th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001,p. 99]

Philosophy of religion also examines the essence of religion and what it ought to be. In doing this, it treasures the various religions which have arisen in the past with its developed concept of religion. The questions which it deals with are either problem connected with the theory of knowledge as applied to religious knowledge, or metaphysical problems involved in efforts to construct a satisfactory and confident explanation of certain concepts employed by various religions.

Philosophy of religion is the investigation into religion. It explores the relationship of philosophy and theology, religion and science, nature and grace; faith and reason. Even though it is a branch of philosophy, it is not easy to restrict its investigation within the province of philosophy. Being mindful of the fact that philosophy cannot restrict its activities to a given object as such, philosophy of religion transcends the boundaries of philosophy, and sometimes probe into purely religious matters. It can, therefore, be said to be an interloper, neither quite religion nor philosophy. Thus, if we accept the dictionary meaning of "theology" according to Funk and Wagnal's dictionary which explains it as the study of religion, culminating in philosophy of religion, we can even by extension define philosophy of religion (theology) as “a rational study of ideas, principles and precepts associated with different types of theism."15 [Funk and Wagnal, p. ]

In studying philosophy of religion, these questions are usually asked: what are we? Where didwecome from? Where are we heading to? Or what is the final end of man? It should be noted*in terrorem* (as a warning) that in this study, no consideration is given to traditional dogmatism, fanaticism**,** and overwhelming nonsense about being in possession of special revelations.

The discipline “Philosophy of religion” is the same as natural theology. In some questions, natural theology is differentiated from philosophy of religion or viewed as an aspect of it. Philosophy of religion is an aspect of metaphysics. Metaphysics, as we know, deals with the question of being (*ens qua ens*) so long as such being is abstracted from all intelligible (knowable) matter. That is why the issue of God is not outside the province of metaphysics.

**Natural Theology and Theodicy**

The use of the title “natural theology” or “philosophical theology” is not a misnomer. The idea behind the use of such title is to emphasize that the study is not simply theological but philosophical, that is to say, based on human reason. Theology is a derivative of two Greek words “*theos*” meaning God and “*logos*” meaning discourse. The combination of these two words simply implies “discourse on God. It can also be defined as “a rational study of ideas, principles and precepts associated with different types of theism.”14 The use of the term “natural” is to indicate that such knowledge is arrived at through the light of purely human reason.

Natural theology is, therefore, discourse on God that is simply based on the light of human reason. It is defined as *scientia de Deo naturali rationis lumine comparata”* which means knowledge of God furnished by the natural light of reason. It is, therefore, different from sacred or dogmatic theology because dogmatic theology, though concerns itself with God, examines the God-question as knowable through supernatural revelation, that is, by the light of faith. Dogmatic theology does not simply rely on evidence given by reason but goes beyond this to depend on data from revealed truths. In proving the existence of God, it has its final court of appeal as the authority of revelation.

Interestingly, natural theology depends on human reason and relies on the existence of God and other God-talks. This explains why it is often called “philosophical theology” because it follows the spirit of philosophical enquiry, that is, to follow reason as long as reason can furnish us with relevant information on religion and guide us in the study of its subject matter. Natural theology is related to theodicy or, what some authors prefer to call, “Philosophy of God”15 [Onyeocha, I. M., *Introfil*: *A First Encounter with Philosophy*, p. 109]

Theodicy is the study of the problem of evil in the world. Alvin Plantinga defines it as the “answer to the question of why God permits evil.” That is to say, it is the defence of God’s goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil. The core issue is how to explain the sovereignty of God, who is holy, loving, and omnipotence and the fact that there is evil in the world. It is obvious that God is sovereign and that he has willed the existence of both good and evil, and all this is for his own glory. The scripture says, “The Lord made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble” (Prov. 16:4). Elsewhere, he manifests his sovereignty as the scripture says, “I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things” (Isaiah 45: 4).

**Method of Philosophy of Religion**

The first question to be asked is whether philosophy of" religion is a science. Well, by the virtue of the fact that philosophy is a science (which consisting of speculative and practical sciences), and philosophy of religion being part of it, it follows logically that philosophy of religion is a science. For what is science if not an organized body of truth regarding some special object of thought.

Philosophy of religion as a science, applies the scientific method even though it does not rely solely on it because the claims of religion cannot all be subject critical scientific scrutinization. Like the natural science philosophy of religion uses empirical method. This may be surprising but the very fact that it) religion, man tends toward the supreme being, subjects himself Lo him as transcendent and provident, pays homage to him, expresses his inner feelings in theory and practices suffices that it makes use of empirical methods since all these activities mentioned are easily observable, man derives a sense of satisfaction in observing such bond between him and deity, God transcendence. It is then the onus of philosophy of religion to probe into such bond to find the authenticity of man's emotional and relational attitude to the Supreme Being. Philosophy of religion applies mainly the intellectual method. It makes use of discursive reasoning in trying to find out the nature of the Supreme Being, its existence, its place in our world, the meaning of human existence, the problem of evil etc.. As philosophy of religion is not committed to developing evidence either for atheism or for religious belief, its preoccupation is to examine the knowledge- claims that are made in this area to see if there are standard in relation to which they can be justified, and to evaluate and interpret these claims within the framework of rational understanding. There is no doubt that the conclusion of such enquiry will end up exposing the shallowness of reason in matters of religion, thus ushering one into fideism or scepticism -a view which held that no defensible rational comprehension can be gained in the area of religious knowledge and that no satisfactory rational interpretation or explanation can be made. Fideism rejects the rational proofs of the existence of God on the count that objective reason is simply inappropriate for religious belief. Here we can talk of two version of fideism, the first states that religion is bound to appear absurd when judged by the standards of theoretical reason; the second merely says that religion is an activity in which reason is properly inoperative.

This should not be a source of worry for a philosopher of religion since it is not even  
expected that everything be known through mere reasoning in matters of religion. But  
that does not mean that nothing, at least, can he known by rational enquiry. So long as  
such knowledge is possible, intellectual methods can still be maintained as one of the  
methods of philosophy of religion – a very important method indeed.  
Another method which can be applied of religion is the phenomenological method. In  
the world of today, as it was in the past, so many phenomena seem to expose the reality  
;of certain religious claims and beliefs. For example, apparitions, miracles, healings etc.  
All these are left for the philosopher of religion to examine and come up with findings  
whether they are really authentic or not.   
 Once more, it is the belief of most theologians that religious truths can be gained only by faith or revelation. This being the case, all the methods aforementioned, inasmuch as  
they can assist us to some extent in acquiring some religious knowledge, is not sufficient  
since religion includes both the internal and external manifestation of man. Not only  
that, man ought to realize that when his reasoning cannot help any longer, there is need  
to subject the rest to faith. This is not to say that faith satisfies the conditions required by  
the discipline, but simply to avoid failing into the ocean of heresies. Small wonder  
Wittgenstein warned: "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must keep silent.1 Such  
silence is not to be understood as merely exposing one's ignorance but it is silence filled  
with the over whelming mystery of God which has its solution in faith in God".

**The Different Views of the Origin of Religion**

It is generally believed that religion originated out of deep and unspecified psychological fear. Truly, fear stands as the sources of all religion, and according to the ancient theory, *Timor fecit deos* (fear creates gods). In religion, one approaches the Supreme Being with a sense of fear which finds its expression in the special feeling of an awe-reverence. This disposition is possible because God is an awe-inspiring being.

Some thinkers opined that religion derived its origin from man's dread of solitude. It is to be noted that man is a social being (*ens socialis*) and not an isolated being. He needs the company of others like himself in order to attain sell-fulfilment. One school of thought views religion as having a psychogenetic origin. Freud, who is the father of all clinical judgment about man's mental behaviour, said that religion is an aberration of the human psyche. He considered religion as being unhealthy, a sign of unreality, as a factor to be eradicated forthwith from the psyche if the person was to remain strictly sane.

In Freudian viewpoint religion lacks objective content, it is *fictio mentis* (fiction of the mind), the creation of God by human mind. It is the expression of man's helplessness in the face of the force of nature. It is a sign of man's superiority over the brutes since, according to Freud. "Man's superiority over other animals is his capacity for neurosis". Some thinkers opined that religion originated out of the need for man to apotheosize himself. Ludwig Feuerbach, being one of the proponents of this view, said that as soon as man realizes that God is himself, he ceases to the religious. After all, "this divine being" according to him, "is nothing else than the human being, or rather the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man....All the attributes of the: living nature are, therefore attributes of the human nature."

Other thinkers, for instance, Karl, Marx, held that religion originated out of the conscious desire of man to adopt il as a palliative for his oppressive condition-especially the condition in which the workers, the proletariats were being marginalized by the bourgeoisies. In his words "religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." Once more, some thinkers suppose the purpose of religion as simply evoking or expressing certain emotion just for the joy of being creative.

**The Various Forms of Theistic Beliefs and Practices**

It is difficult to create a clear and sharp distinction between beliefs and practices that are religious and those that are not usually called religious. For instance, there has been a signing argument as to whether Confucianism or even Marxism is a religion. Without doing into this hair-splitting distinction, it is enough For us to know that religion has its specific characteristics without which it cannot be said to be purely religious.

However, .in order to appreciate various forms of theistic beliefs and practices, it is pertinent to examine what we mean by theism, as opposed to pantheism and atheism. A religion is said to be theistic if it teaches the belief that God is a definite personal being separate from the rest of the universe. Under theistic belief arc subsumed polytheistic and monotheistic beliefs. It is polytheistic if it teaches that there are many gods and monotheistic if it emphasizes the existence of only one and eternal God.

However, the theistic belief has to be distinguished from pantheistic view in which God and the universe are considered in some number as one and the same, and from atheistic views in which there no gods. Having given this explanation, let us examine the theistic belief.

**1. Tribal Polytheism**

Generally, polytheism is the belief in and worship of many gods. It allows for plurality of worship depending on which deity one chooses to pay homage to and the manner one prefers to perform the ritual. Tribal polytheism is very common in many communities in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa.

Tribal polytheism concerns itself with ritual practices that take place among various communities. Here, every community has its own way of worshipping its own god. For example- *Amadiora*, *Aro*, Ogwugwu, *Ugwu* deities etc.

**2. Henotheism**

This is a belief in a god which is supreme or specially venerated by a group of people. It is the recognition and exclusive worship and devotion to a particular deity in the midst of other deities. The adherer or devotee is aware of other deities, but prefers to focus on a particular one of his choice.

The term “Henotheism” was originally coined in 1860 by Friedrich Max Mȕller, a German indologist, philologist, and historian of comparative religion. He applied the term to the temporary ritual and liturgical worship of one single God at a time, especially in *Vedas.* (Oldenberg, H., *The Religion of the Veda*, Delhi: Motital Barnasidass, 1993, p. 59).

It is a form of polytheism which centres on personification in which priestly dignity is conferred on certain outstanding people in the society. It is a stage between polytheism and monotheism. Sometimes, it reaches the stage in which the people in question are apotheosized. For example, Zeus in Greece, Caesar in Rome, etc.

**3. Monotheism**

This is the belief in the existence of only one God. It reflects God as having defeated the smaller gods. Hence, God is held to be Alpha and Omega. It should be noted that in monotheism, the prophetic God rules not only at a particular time but at all time. He is, therefore, regarded as “the God of the whole earth.”

**4. Pantheism**

Pantheism is the view that God is everything and everyone, and that everyone and everything is God. Pantheism, as we observed hereinbefore, is not to be regarded as a theistic belief in a strict sense, but its position as a belief (though, unfortunately, having its referent as all reality) requires that we examine it alongside other theistic belief and practices.

Pantheism is the view that God is not a separate being, but is either the entire natural order or an aspect of the entire natural order. Either the universe as a whole is God, or the power or force that pervades the whole of the cosmos is God. God is everywhere, and is everything or is in everything. This idea is recognized in Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism), in Spinoza, Hegel etc.

The implication of this belief is that God is being looked as a matter – contingent. For if there is no difference between God and creation, then God is simply viewed as all reality and as such, there is nothing like revelation.

**5. Deism**

This theory maintains that there is a Divine Being or Divine power separate from the physical world which it has created. It holds that the divine being or power exercises no direct influence or force on events occurring within the universe as it now exists. The idea portrayed in this religious belief is that God, having created the universe, established rationally comprehensible moral and natural laws and does not interfere or intervene in human affairs through miracles or supernatural revelation. The implication of this belief system is that there is no need for worship since God is entirely removed from involvement in the world he created.

6. **Humanism**

This is a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centred on human interests or values. It rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual’s dignity and worth, and capacity for self-realisation through reason. Humanism is a belief that human needs and values are more important than religious beliefs. As such, humanism denies God completely, and replaces God with humanity. Humanism is a philosophy that believes in human effort and ingenuity rather than on religious or supernatural agency. It upholds that we can live good lives without religious or supernatural beliefs. Some philosophers like Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804 – 1872) conceive God as the projection of the human mind. For them, the question of God is merely the question of man. Man is the God we worship. Theology is nothing more than anthropology.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**THE TRADITIONAL PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

The idea of proving the existence of God or its non-existence is an age-old issue in philosophy of religion, and it is no doubt a herculean task which philosophy of religion has to contend with. Can we ever be sure that God exists? Are there traces of God in the world with which we can ascertain that it actually exists?

There are varied views either in support of or in rejection of the existence of God. It is traditionally held by Catholic Church that the existence of God is demonstrable by the light of human reason. For instance, the First Vatican Council (1870) strongly held that human reason is adequate to prove the existence of God, but then declares: “If anyone says that the one and true God, our creator and Lord cannot be known with certainty with the natural light of human reason by means of things that have been made: let him be anathema.”

The argument that God does not exist because it cannot be subjected to human categories of thought or the category of existence is unfounded. Rather, what the argument has succeeded in establishing is that the existence of God transcends or goes beyond the category of existing things. It cannot be used to deny the existence of God simply because God’s existence is not real. It is interesting to note that inability to explain what a thing is or demonstrate its existence does not mean that that thing does not exist or that the knowledge of it is forever set beyond human comprehension.

The argument for the existence of God is split into two major bits, namely, a priori and *a* *posteriori* argument. An a priori argument is based on the premises that can be known to be true independent of experience of the world. That is to say, it does not rely, in its premises, on any empirical or alleged empirical fact that is experiential. Besides, it is prior to and totally devoid of experience. the ontological argument is the only a prior argument which is considered in this book. Arguments of this kind usually begin with a particular definition of God and concludes that based on the definition, God must exist. All that is required is to look at the proposition in order to ascertain that it is true.

However, an *a posteriori* argument is predicated upon the premises that can be known only by means of experience of the world. For instance, that there is a world, events have causes, things in the world are in a continuous flux. *A* *posteriori* argument is, however, divided into two types which are, namely, the cosmological and teleological arguments or what is ordinarily called physic-theological arguments or simply arguments from design. In what follows, we shall examine these forms of arguments and the criticisms levelled against them.

**The Cosmological Argument of St. Thomas Aquinas (Quinque Viae)**

These proofs take for granted or begin with the following posterior assumptions:

1. The principle of causality, for instance, the universe exists and that something outside the universe is required to explain its existence. That is, the universe is contingent depending on something outside of itself for its existence.

*2.* The impossibility under certain condition of an infinite regress (*regressus ad infinitum*) in the causal chain. That is to say; the chain of causes and effects cannot go on indefinitely, but must have a beginning.

3. The beginning of the causal chain must be an infinite, necessary being; that is. God.'

**The First Way: Proof from Motion (or Change)**

It is certain that there is motion in the world and our senses even corroborate it. But everything which is in motion is moved by something else. Nothing indeed is moved except if it is in potency with regard to that towards which it is moved. Nothing moves on the contrary, except in so far as it is in act. For to move a thing is to make it pass from potency into act. Now a thing cannot be brought from potency into act except by a being in act. For example, that which is hot in actuality, like fire, makes wood, which is only hot in potentiality, to be hot in actuality) thereby moves it and alters it.

But it is implausible for a thing to be in act and in potency at the same time under the same relationship. Thus, what is hot in ac4 cannot be at the same time cold in act, but cold only in potency. It is, therefore, impossible that a thing be in the same manner and under the same relationship mover and moved, that is that it moves itself. From this we see that whatever moves, is moved by something else. If, however, that by which a thing is moved in its turn by same other mover, which mover is moved by another, and so on But this cannot proceed to infinity, for there would be then no first mover and, consequently, no mover at all, because the second mover only moved because the first moves it, even as a stick only moves because the hand moves it. Therefore, it is necessary to stop at some first mover which is moved by nothing else. And this is what we all understand God to be.

**The Second Way: Proof by Efficient Cause**

The second way is taken from the idea of the efficient cause. For we find that there is  
among material things a regular order of the efficient causes. But we do not find, nor  
indeed is it possible, that anything is the efficient cause of itself, for in that case it would  
be prior to itself which is impossible and absurd. Now it is not possible to proceed to  
infinity in efficient cause. For if we arrange in order all efficient causes, the firsts the  
cause of the last, whether the intermediate be many or only one. But if we removed a  
cause, the effect is removed. Therefore, if there is no first among efficient causes, the  
effect is removed, whether will (here neither be a last or an intermediate. But if we  
proceed to infinity in efficient cause there will be no first efficient cause, and there will  
be no ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient cause, which is clearly false.  
Therefore, it is necessary to suppose the existence of same first efficient cause, and this  
we call God.

**The Third Way: The Proof from Contingency**

The third way rests on the idea of the "contingent" and the necessary and is as follow: we find that there are certain things in the universe which are capable of existing and of not existing for we find that some things are brought into existence and then destroyed, and consequently are capable of being or not being. But it is impossible for all things which exist to be of this kind, because anything which is capable of not existing, at same time or other does not exist.

If, therefore, all things are capable of not existence, there was a time when nothing existed in the universe. But if this is true there would also be nothing in existence now; because anything that does not exist cannot begin to exist except, by the agency of something which has existence. If therefore there was once nothing which existed, it would have been impossible for anything in begin lo exist, and so nothing would exist now. This is clearly false. Therefore all things are not contingent, and there must be something which is necessary inthe universe. But everything which is necessary either has or has not the cause of its necessity from an outside source. Now it is not possible to proceed lo infinity in necessary things which have a cause of their necessity as has been proved in the case of efficient causes. Therefore it is necessary to suppose existence of something which is necessary in itself, not having the cause if its necessity from any outside source, but which is the cause of necessity in others. And this "Something" we call God.

**The Fourth Way: The Proof from the Degrees of Being**

The fourth way is taken from the degrees which are found in things. We find among different things that one is more or able, and likewise in the case of these things of this kind. But the words "more" and "less" are used of different things in proportion as they approximate, in their different ways to something which has the particular quality in the highest degree, e.g., we call a thing better when it approximates more nearly to that which is hot in the highest degree. There is, therefore, something which is true in the highest, degree, and none in the highest degrees, and consequently there must be also something which has being in the highest degree. For things which are true in the highest degree also have being in the highest degree (see Aristotle, Metaphysics, 2).

But anything which has a certain quality of any kind, the highest degree is also the cause of all the things of that kind, as for example, fire which is hot in the highest degree is the cause of all hot things. Therefore, there exists something, which is the cause of being and goodness, and of every perfection in all existing things, and this we call God.

**The Fifth Way: The Proof from the Final Cause**

The fifth way is taken from the way in which nature is governed. We observe that certain things which lack knowledge, such as natural bodies, work for an end. This is obvious, because they always, or at any rate may frequently, operate in the same way so as to attain the best possible result. Hence, it is clear that they do not arrive at their goal by. Chance, but by purpose. But those things which have no knowledge do not move towards a goal unless they are guided by someone or something which does possess knowledge and intelligence e.g., an arrow by an archer. Therefore, there does exist something which possess intelligence by which all natural things are directed to their goal; and this we call God.

**The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God**

Unlike the cosmological argument by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275), the ontological

argument was formulated by St. Anselm (1033-1109), Archbishop of Canterbury. This argument which is the most intriguing of all arguments for theism is found in the second chapter of his *Proslogion.*

The argument is important not because it claims to be a prior proof for the existence of God but also because it is the primary locus of such philosophical problem as whether existence is a property and whether the notion of necessary existence is intelligible. Furthermore, it has special religious significance because it is the only one of the traditional arguments that clearly concludes to the necessary properties of God; that is, his Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omni-benevolence, and other great-making properties.

**St. Anselm's Presentation of the Argument**

We believe that God is “a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Or can it be that there is no such being since the fool has said in his heart, there is no God? (Ps. 13:1. vide Ps. 53:1). But at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak- a being than which nothing greater can be conceived understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding although he does not understand it to exist.

For it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform; he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.

Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood exists in the understanding. Obviously, that than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose, it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.

Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived, but obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

God cannot be conceived not to exist. God is that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. That which can be conceived not to exist is not God. And it assuredly exists so truly, that it cannot be conceived not to exist. For, it is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist; and this is greater than one which can be conceived not to exist, it is not that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. But this is an irreconcilable contradiction. There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being is no other than God.

**Criticisms on the Theistic Arguments**

Criticism is the art of making judgments. Criticism, especially constructive one, has almost always being a sin of mental or intellectual alertness. It helps to develop an idea, makes for purity of work and reduces ambiguity in thinking.

These theistic arguments or proofs didn't go uncriticized. Their great critics were Hume and Kant and other philosophers.

**David Hume:**

He criticized the Cosmological Argument. If there exist "contingent being" it is argued, there must also exist "necessary being." Necessary in what sense? To this logical necessity has been a tempting option, but against it the criticism of Hume, Kant and their successors have been 'particularly crushing. "Necessity in the Logical sense is a characteristic not of beings but of propositions. To speak of a necessary being is as crude a category mistake as to speak of a "contradictory sheep" or a "self-evident frying pan" - and for exactly the same reasons.

Hume pithily stated that "there is no being; whose existence is demonstrable and that whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as nonexistent" (Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Sec. IX).

On causality, the critics led by Hume and Kant argue that if we are talking of causality, then our discourse must remain within the sphere in which alone the concept of cause has been given its meaning and role, that is to say, the relating of event to event in the spatio-temporal world of experience. If the concept is used outside that context which confers meaning upon it, we shall utter mystifying nonsense. But exactly this occurs when the causal process is said to require an initiator or maintainer which is not itself an event or events in the world of experience. Even if all events in nature do have causes that do not entitle us to demand a non-natural cause for nature as a whole or for any event in nature.

If one wishes to be consistently empiricist, one has to admit that the universe, the sum of things, has not been examined and found to have, or not to have; a first cause. I n this sense of "universal" there is necessarily only one universe and no possibility of inductive arguments based on observations of universe other than our own. (Hume, Enquiry concerning Human understanding, See XI).

Arguing against the line of Ontological Argument though not explicitly stated, he said that every idea is the idea of a beirtg. Existence must therefore be either a special idea that accompanies every other idea or the very same with the idea of the object we think of. However, he chooses the later.

Therefore, he concluded, that: "Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form." This has several important consequences: firstly, we cannot form on idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions. Secondly, since to conceive of God or any other being and to conceive to say that the idea of God has the peculiar characteristic of also entailing the idea of existence.

On the argument iron the marvels of creation, u> a designing mind, he also criticized. In his work, "Dialogues concerning natural Religion'1 he said: The existence of God is a matter of fact. Therefore, it cannot be proved a prior only Iro experience by an argument from effect to cause. But we have no experience of the origins of worlds. We must therefore rely on analogy, comparing the world to things of whose origin we have experience. But the World is like an animal or a vegetable as it is like a machine. So it arose as likely from insemination as from design. Moreover, if God is known only as (.he cause of the world, we can know nothing of him except that he is such as to create the world we find. We can draw no inferences from his existence except such as are already warranted by our knowledge of the world. He is an empty hypothesis, (fin Enquiry Sec. XI). Now we shall turn to Kant and look at his criticisms which are on Ontological Argument, Cosmological and Physico-theological Arguments.

**Immanuel** **Kant**

There are, Kant argues, only three ways of proving God's existence on the speculative plane. First, we can precede entirely a priori and maintain that the very idea of God is such that God could not not exist, this is the method of the Ontological argument. Second, we can move from the bare fact that the world exists to the position that God is its ultimate cause, as in the first cause, or cosmological

Argument. Finally, we can base our contention on the particular constitution of the \ world, as in the "physic cotheological proof (The Argument from Design). In this case, it begins from definite experience relying on our senses and goes from these through the law (principle of causality) to the highest cause which is outside the mundane world.

The Ontological Argument which was Kant's first consideration goes out for (i.e. takes r for granted) the "concept of a highest being". It says that this being is "something whose non-existence is impossible" - and who therefore possesses a necessary existence." To prove this stand-point, the Ontological argument sets off from the "concept of the most real being" i.e." Entis realissimi." Kant calls it the all-reality (omniludo realitatis). It contains in itself the entire possibility- includes the entire predicates of all Lhings-whereby Kant of course in order to avoid a pantheistic misunderstanding interprets the highest reality as "ground" for other things -not as included in the other things.

From this, Kant goes on to say-in the concept of "all reality," "existence" must be included. This thought makes it possible to go from the highest reality to the necessity of the existence of the reality." A metaphysically most perfect being must exist necessarily, because if it didn't exist, then some perfection would be lacking to it namely: that of existence. Therefore the existence of God allows itself to be deduced necessarily from the concept of God.

Kant shows the short coming of this proof by pointing out that existence does not belong to the realities or perfection which constitutes the most real being. This is so because "Reality" means the same thing as content of a thing. Being is, however, not something which is found in something as content. "Being is therefore no real predicate" i.e. a concept of something-which belong to the concept of a thing. It is simply the position of a thing. In this connection, Kant introduces the famous example of the Hundred Dollars-the concept of existence of real Hundred Dollars cannot contain anything more than predicates, it does not become that thing because I think about it in terms of so many predicates.

Therefore in the concept of the all real being -most real being- the concept of necessary existence is not included. So the famous ontological Argument or Cartesian Argument of the existence of the highest being from mere concepts has not achieved its air.

The second argument which Kant examined was the Cosmological Argument.

It takes for granted some indefinite experience about the existent things that are empirically observable. This is because the object of all possible experience is the world; and it is from this that the Cosmological Argument got its name-proving existence of God from the mundane world.

Kant developed this argument in 2 steps. First, is from the experience of empirical phenomena or real, to the concept of an absolute necessary being. Then, secondly, from this concept of a necessary being to the establishment of the most real being. Then, secondly, from this concept of a necessary being to the establishment of the most real being.

The first step as Kant formulated it was: If something exists, therefore there must be a necessary being. 1 exist myself; therefore there must be a necessary being.

It is the second step which is the actual place the proof of" existence of a necessary being lies. There is in the concept of a necessary existent being, the concept of the highest reality; therefore, it is the concept of the most real being through which the concept of a necessary being can be though about-there must necessarily exist a highest being.

This second proof is better than the Ontological Argument because ft takes off from experience, and as such gives enough room for closer examination because in this cosmological argument a lot of reasoning is taken into account.

Kant had it easy to demolish, the second step of the proof because the relationship between the absolute necessary being to that of all real being is not established. The cosmological Argument should take off from the world but it settles now on conceptual level because there is no where you can .meet absolute necessary being in the world.

Therefore, the same criticism which Kant levelled on the ontological Argument apples to this also. A close examination of the second1 step as Kant marshals it is nothing but a re-introduction of ontological argument and that is way Kant says that just as ontological argument was full of mere concepts the same approach has been re-introduced in the cosmological Argument. It is, therefore, not allowed to go from the concept of an absolute necessary being to that of a being that contains all realities, because the concept of a necessary being is not in any sense the concept of a definite existent thing.

For Kant, the Cosmological Argument needs a more close examination. He observes in the first step that it is from experience that his conclusion of the absolute necessary being is arrived at. Here, he thinks that the intellect gels itself involved in same contradiction because it takes a problem that contains two opposing sentences and thinks that these can be proved in a similar manner.

The first thesis says there belongs to the world something that is either part of it or its cause -a necessary being. The other -antithesis- says there exists everywhere no being that is all necessary being neither in this world. This thesis -is what that first stage of the Cosmological Argument according to Kant concentrates. He shows the logical inconclusiveness of this part -if this sentence is divided into two pails.

A. If something exists, therefore there is something that necessarily exists.

B. What necessarily exists, therefore, as a necessary being. \*

Kant then turns his critique on this second part. It is not a necessary consequence because that which must be something; that is necessary can be necessary for a given group but itself and the group can be something accidental. Therefore one cannot go from the existence of something accidental to the logical acceptance of an absolute necessary being; even if we were to accept the existence of a necessary being. The conclusion that goes from contingent to necessary being takes off from the category of causality which can only be valid in the world of experience like this. The same applies also to the concept of cause and effect. The cosmological argument then because

of its approach of cause and effect sets itself in the cause regress infinitum because the contingent things exist on the condition that something exists which is its cause, and this continues until a cause which is itself uncaused. But this is not possible says Kant, because to the dialectical conditions of cosmological Argument belong the conclusion of the impossibility of causes in the sensory world and from there then to concluded to the existence of a first cause. Also the Cosmological Argument which is not very much different from ontological Argument does not stand the critical examination of Kant,

The next is Kant's criticism of the physico-theological Argument. This proof unlike the Cosmological argument, does not speak about an existing being, but rather bases itself on some definite quality of Nature -i.e. the fact that there is purpose, in Nature. The physical-theology is the trial which the intellect makes to infer the existence of a highest being and the qualities proper to him, from purpose in Nature.

Kant exposes the physico-theological proof in four points:

1. In every aspect of the world, there is order towards some definite aim -and this has been done with great intelligence.

2. This purpose and order is something foreign to the things of the world -this order in

Natural is something accidental to the things of nature themselves i.e. the things of nature could not through any means come on their own to any purpose, if they were never ordered to be how they are by an intelligent principle.

3. There exists a sublime and wise cause (or many) of them, which as intelligence must freely have caused the world.

4. The unity of the same being is deduced from the unity in the world -i.e. some degree of unity even though there are some diversities.

From the physico-theological proof with whose help one does not only hope to arrive at an absolute necessary and all real being, as we saw above in the Cosmological proof; but to a being that is all-powerful, omniscient, in other words, a being that possesses all perfections. Kant says that this proof deserves everywhere and every time respect because it is the oldest and the clearest, and the proof that is most common in all human endeavour. It is the proof that is most proper to the nature of the human intellect. This judgment, notwithstanding, Kant sees this proof as insufficient. He first, marshals out against the physio-theological argument almost the criticism against Cosmological that all laws going from effect to cause are based on possible experience. It is this type of going from sensory to the beyond sensory with the help of the category of causality (the approach of physic-theological argument) that Kant rejects.

The second Argument against the physico-theological has to do with the validity of the conclusion from purpose in nature to that concluding immediately that of the intelligent originator (cause). Kant accepts that it is possible to allow (unavoidably so) that certain natural occurrences, seen as they are to come from some purpose-oriented caused. According to him, this is a very subjective argument because this can only be ascribed to the reflective subjective intellect, it cannot be an objective principle. With regard to the sentence, whether there is a being who acts with intention and consciousness and which is regarded as the cause of the world (basis for the purpose in the world); whether such a being lies behind the finality in Nature. This question can objectively neither be judged with yes or no.

The third argument against the physico-theological proof goes from the insufficiency of this argument in itself with regard to what the argument intends to achieve. The proof could be explained better at best as that of a world architect whom through the material which he works upon is always limited but it cannot be taken as that of the world creator, according to whose idea everything in the world is made. And this cannot serve for the proof of a being that possesses all perfections and moreover, there remains also the question whether this proof is in the position to tell us whether the concept of the highest being i.e. an independent and intelligent being, whether we can go from there to concluded to a God who is the cause of the world. From the concept methodology of physico-theological proof, "one cannot come to a concept of a being which could serve as something helpful for theology. The most important, the last criticism is decisive against physico-theological. What completely knocks this argument off is the fact that this proof has no argument of its own but rather appropriates that of cosmological and ontological proofs which on their own are questionable. The argument runs further, after man has shown his wonderment with the extent of wisdom and power of the originator of the world and cannot go beyond this, he leaves this argument which he is getting from empirical phenomena and concludes automatically or immediately from the order and purpose in the world to the being of the world originator. This argument physico-theological remains grounded in its effort, because it is going in the Cosmological Argument way, which has been proved. And Cosmological argument, according to him, is a hidden Ontological Argument. So, to Kant this physico-theological Argument does not hold, and we cannot from mere theoretical intellectual reflection (the basis of this physico-theological Argument) work out the concept of the Divine or God Head.

Some philosophers followed the footsteps of David Hume and Immanuel Kant to criticizeo the theistic proofs. One cannot forget one of such people like Bertrand Russell which can be seen in his "Debate on the Existence of God" with Fr. F.C. Copleston found in his book "*Why I am not a Christian*1' (London, George Alien & Unwin Ltd, 1957).

Gaunilo’s Criticism of Ontological Argument

**CHAPTER THREE**

**THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

The existence of evil both in the world and within man has ceaselessly caused human miseries and anguish. In the ancient period through the medieval to the modern period, the problem of evil has continued to be asked by Epicurus, David Hume, Gary E. Kessler, John Hick to mention but a few. Suffice it to note that the existence of evil questions the existence of God who is, by definition, omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good. By "Omniscient" we mean "one who knows all true propositions1; by omnipotent, is understood his being "able to do anything logically possible" and by "perfectly good" we mean "one who does no morally bad action" and by extension, often who never omits doing morally good action.

The problem of evil is put in the following ways: (a) Is God willing to prevent evil but not able, then he is not omnipotent, (b) Is he able but not willing, then he is malevolent, (c) Is he both able and willing then whence comes evil?

David Hume puts the argument in a form of a dilemma. According to him, "evil can exist only if God wills or allows it. But if he wills or allows it, this means either that He cannot prevent it, because He is not omnipotent, or that He does not want to prevent it because He is not infinitely good" (Donceel, T. F., *Natural Theology*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962, p. 149).

**What is Evil?**

Generally, evil is considered as what is not good – as the opposite of good. It is simply defined as the absence of good (*privatio boni*). Some scholars believe that evil is a positive reality that exists like any other being. This position has not been consistently held or sustained as it lacks strong reason to support and is basically not based on experience. It is the belief of most thinkers that evil is not a positive reality; it is rather a privation, an absence of a good which is missing but ought to be in something. According to Augustine,

Evil is nothing but the corruption of natural measure, form, order, what is called an evil nature is a corrupt nature. But when it is corrupted, so far as it remains a natural thing, it is good, it is bad only so far as it is corrupted.

(Hick, J., *Evil and the God of Love*, Britain: Collins & Co., 1996, p. 48).

**Kinds of Evil**

There are three kinds of evil, to wit,

i. Metaphysical evil

ii. Physical evil

iii. Moral evil

**i. Metaphysical Evil**

This is no evil in the strictest sense of it. It is a limitation or lack of perfection not due to a given nature. It results from a mere finitude of created beings, i.e., from the absence of a perfection not required for the natural integrity of creatures.

**ii. Physical Evil**

This is that evil affecting a nature, that is, a being defined by an essence or by an ensemble of properties. It includes^both corporeal and spiritual nature whose integrity it changes. Moral pain or sorrow is a physical evil in that it deprives the soul of its natural equilibrium (happiness) just as blindness or dumbness deprives the body its natural integrity. The same holds true for all psychological ills affecting spiritual powers such as psychosis and neurosis. Physical evil is, therefore, a look of finite perfection that is due to a creature.

**iii.** **Moral Evil**

This consists essentially in the disorder of the will. Moral evil envelops all the bad things for which human beings are morally responsible. It is evil inflicted by men upon other men such as mental physical torture, killing, war etc. it can simply be said to be evil actions of men. Mainly actions having foreseeable consequence of painful emotions, sensations or even the states of mind of hatred and envy. Small wonder it is called fault or sin. And as a saying goes, "the only true evil is moral evil and that is sin1'.

**St. Augustine and the Problem of Evil**

Augustine (354-430 AD) argues that evil is the absence or privation of a good, but he never means by that, that it is a simple lack of goodness in the sense in which a tree, for example, lacks the spiritual qualities of an angel. He presents this point in this manner:

Evil in a substance consists in its lack of something which it is naturally apt to have and ought to have. It is no evil to a man not to have wings because he is only by nature not apt to have them... but it is an evil to him not to have hands because he is by nature apt to have them, and ought to have them, if he is to be.

Evil is negative, it is a lack, a loss, a privation. The whole of creation is good. Evil is the absence of goodness that prevails when anything has defected from the mode of being that is proper to it in God's creative intention. And so, Augustine accordingly stresses the secondary and dependent as well as the negative and the privatize character of evil. Hence, he says: "Evils therefore, have their source in the good, and unless they are parasitic on something good, they are not anything at all." In using blindness as an example, Augustine said that blindness is not a “thing.” Here, the only thing involved is the eye, which is in itself good. Blindness is said to be evil because of the lack of a proper functioning of the eye. In generalizing the principle, Augustine holds that evil always consists of the malfunctioning of something that is not in itself good.

All evil both moral and natural is due directly or indirectly to the wrong choices of free rational being. John Hick sees the route of St. Augustine's theodicy in the statement that: "Freewill is the cause of our doing evil and that just judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequence."

The origin of evil lies for ever hidden within the mystery of finite freedom. The primary sin which makes angels and men evil and brings upon them the further punitive evils of pain and sorrow, is what we can call an *aversio a Deo creatura* – a creature’s wilful turning of the self in desire from the brightest good, which is God himself, to some lesser good. When the will abandons what is above itself and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil, not because that to which it turns is evil, but because the turning itself is wicked and senseless or stupid. It is this that occurred both in the pre-mundane fall of the angel and in the primeval fall of man, and this is the continuing nature of man's sinfulness today.

In summary, the cause of evil is the perverse misuse of God-given freedom. To the question: Why, when God made all things, did he not make all equal? Augustine offered two outstanding replies. He says: from things earthly to things heavenly, from the visible to the invisible there are some things better than others and for this purpose are they unequal in order that they might all exist.'1

Again, "if all things were equal, all things would not be for the multiplicity of kinds of things of which the universe is constituted -first, second etc. down to the creature of the lowest grade -would not exist." Therefore, God considered it better to produce all possible forms of being, lower as well as higher beings, poorer as well as richer than to produce only a society of blessed Archangels. Seen in its totality from the ultimate standpoint of the creator, the universe is wholly good for even the evil within it is made to contribute to the complex perfection of the whole. Each being is in its own way good, and in its proper place in the system, contribute to the perfection of the whole.

St. Augustine applies this principle to human also. It is not allowed to spoil the perfection of the universe because the balance of the moral order is preserved by the infliction of appropriate punishment. God can use sinners to further his own good purposes. In the words of St. Augustine, "God judges it better to bring good out of evil, than to suffer no evil to exist."

**Synthetic Analysis of the Problem of Evil**

The problem of evil would not exist if there is no God. The problem is how to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinite existence of God. Put differently, the problem of evil arises from the paradox of an omni-benevolent, omnipotent deity's allowing the existence of evil. The agnostics and atheists who question seriously the existence of God often use this problem to demonstrate the unreasonableness of believing in God. They argue that if God is perfectly good, why does he allow evil to exist? Why didn't he create a better world, if not one without evil, at least one with substantially less evil than this world? Thus, many contend that Epicurus paradox is not just a paradox but an implicit contradiction, for it contains premises that are inconsistent with one another. Their objection is presented thus:

1. If God (an all-powerful, omniscient, omni-benevolent being) exists there would  
be no evil (or no unnecessary evil) in the world.

2. There is evil (or Unnecessary evil) in the world.

3. Therefore God does not exist.

The main defence or thesis; in the light of evil in the world finds its expression in the free will defence which dates back to St. Augustine (354-430), and derives its modern treatment in the work of John Hick, Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne. The free will dense adds a fourth premise to Epicurean paradox to make the premises consistent and non-contradictory. It says: it is logically impossible for God to create free creatures and guarantee that they will never do evil. Since it is a good thing to create free creatures who are morally responsible agents, there is no assurance that they will not also do evil. Evil exists because of man's misuse of his free will.

Christianity teaches that we are mere pilgrims and so, we cannot find ultimate joy here on earth. It is only in the next world that salvation is assured -there justice prevails. Thus, to suffer is to purify and that was why Christ accepted the cross not for any sin of his since He committed no sin, but for our sake who are sinner

Suffering is no evil. Evil is evil only as it is opposed to good. If evil is "de facto" evil, how can God then be good?

**Historical Solutions to the Problem of Evil**

There is the doctrine of persons which holds that the problem of evil is not real. Rationalism, for instance, denies entirely the existence of evil. Alongside rationalism in its denial of the existence of evil is pantheism. But there is no way to deny outright the existence of evil. Evil is an existential reality, one that destroys innocent humans and causes unspeakable suffering.

Dualism and Manichaeism hold that goodness is generated by God while evil is generated by (gyil principles. Augustine is always associated with dualism. Without freedom, man cannot be held responsible Tor any evil in the world. Man's responsibility commences at the level of freedom.

God created everything good and all things must go back to God, and so, the solution to t the problem of evil is in "faith in God". Evil is basically considered as the opposite of good. Physical evil is pain, moral evil is sin, while metaphysical evil results from a mere finitude of created things, i.e., from the absence of perfection not required for the natural integrity of creatures. Evil is something both subjective and objective. It is simply the antithesis of good. It exists in virtue of good and not vice versa. In evil, the negation of good becomes perspicuous. This is why we often say that evil is more than simply what is morally bad.

Evil is a contradiction in itself. There is an intrinsic emptiness in evil. This is why it is a negation of the will. We cannot be evil without thinking that it is good to be evil. In a sense, it is a conflict of good with good inside good will. The real good is a tendency towards an objective good outside of me. The "bad goodness" which is evil is that I say, it is good because 1 want it (egoism).

In the final analysis, what comes from God is the beauty of free will. Evil does not come from God. As Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) observes, the fact of evil in no way refutes theism. He contends that God permitted evil to exist in order to bring about greater good and that Adam's fall was a "Felix Culpa" (happy sin) because it led to the incarnation of the son of God, raising humanity to a higher destiny than would otherwise have been the case.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**The Relationship of Philosophy and** **Religion**

Throughout the history of reflective thought, the relationship between philosophy and religion has always been marked by continuous dialogue and reciprocal interaction. Historically, speaking, philosophy began as a reflective criticism of religious and moral beliefs, and this characteristic has been an on-going critical concern of philosophy. Thus, Greek philosophy can be said to have both shaped and was shaped by Greek religion. It usually strikes one with surprise to read that philosophy and religion are related much more expressing, or conceiving of them as being inseparable. The reason for this obvious dubitation is not far-fetched. Philosophy has been conceived and is still being conceived (by some, anyway) as being totally opposed to the concept of religion. That is why philosophers have often times been terribly excoriated, and most often they are tagged, though wrongly, perhaps, "atheists", non- religious" or such like denigrate nomenclatures as if philosophy, or even philosophers, are totally against God, and the idea of religion.

Nonetheless, we are far from claiming that some philosophers are not atheists, But the fact that some philosophers, at least, are theists is enough reason to refute such afore stated, unfounded and mistaken conceptions. We can even claim that religion serves as a foundation for philosophical enquiry since philosophy arose partly as a rational enquiry into the claims of religion. Thus, the interplay between philosophy and religion, right from the inception of philosophy, is that of dialogical exchange and nothing more.

Once more, the "love of wisdom" epithet corned from the etymological viewpoint of philosophy brings philosophy and religion to close affinity, For if wisdom is God personified (at least in an elevated sense) religion has its object as God. A philosopher by philosophizing is seeking for God, consciously and unconsciously. Even Martin Heidegger once confessed: "My philosophy is awaiting for God"

However, these two concepts "philosophy" and "religion" are albeit fundamentally different when viewed from the perspective perspectival of what each of them treats, they point of confluence, hence their complementarities. Thus, to dissociate has philosophy entirely from religion or to think that philosophy has no close link or points of confluence with religion thereby, upholding and defending their non-complementarities is to be a victim of a clumsy paralogism.

Like philosophy, religion is radical. It is radical in the sense that it attempts to get underneath the surface of life and discover its meaning. It seeks to get the heart of things; to find the purpose of life and how best to live it. In carrying out these roles, religion is not solitary since philosophy enables it to critically find out what lies beneath the surface of things being the science of things in their ultimate causes. It is little wonder there is philosophy of religion as one of its branches.

Philosophy, being the science of the sciences and not even, strictly speaking, perhaps, one among the sciences, sets no limit to the field of its enquiries. It towers over the special sciences and appeals to the testimony of religion. Religion concerns itself with the issue of God, his knowability, while developing, rituals, creeds and moral codes based on its foundation of belief and faith. Sometimes because the object of religion is devoid of tangibility and equally because religion borders itself on the question of immortality of the soul, God, salvation, hell, heaven, angel etc., it is considered in the midst of its putative triumphs as dwelling in the empty breeze of speculation, notwithstanding its overwhelming influence on man.

Philosophy views God only as the first cause of the world and cannot offer us any insight into his inner life. It is however, revelation and faith that render such knowledge possible in so far as it is possible at all. It is questionable to introduce revelation as a positive element into the philosophical arena since philosophy, as it were, proceeds exclusively from natural experience and employs a purely rational method. Contrarily, philosophy offers no grounds for refuting .the possibility of revelation. It is to be noted that the content of revelation can never contradict the philosophical and scientific doctrines because both revelation and the world are the work of the same truthful, almighty and omniscient God. Nonetheless, philosophy can feasibly construct a theory of natural religion without having any recourse to revelation.

Philosophy and religion are indispensable for man. Without philosophy, for instance, man would develop synoptic theories without the sober guidance of understanding and reason". Philosophy sharpens the thought and since thought is abstract and philosophy has as its task the critique of abstractions, it enables us to think, understand, and appreciate, the reality of the invisible beings. Contrarily, religion stands as a huge pillar offering protection and solace to man in the world and hereafter based on its concept of salvation (blessedness).

Once again, it is the anus of philosophy to clarify the fundamental religious concepts the constructions and the claims which religion makes, and subject them to a through logical analysis. Since the main task of philosophy is a critical one, one has no doubt that the philosopher should work patiently and dispassionately with the intention of plunging deeper into minute investigations bordering on religion.

Philosophy enables can to know his place in the world the purpose of his life, and to enquire where he is going after this life. It keeps informing on reminding him that he is a religion animal- " homo religion" thus in creating man God did not first make him rational animals-only to make him a religion animal afterwards. Man was one and at the same time a rational and religion animal "above."

Religion which has its fundament as faith, being a belief in the existence of the supernatural being, the creator and controller of the universe who has given to man, the apex of creation, a spiritual nature, exposes man's intimate relationship with the Supreme Being. Man exercise an exclusive prerogative of reason, and it is with the ancillary of reason that he can philosophize. Man's rationality has also enabled him to known that he traces his origin from God as "terminus a quo" and his final end equally. In God as "terminus ad quern"

However, the major difference between philosophy and religion is that the former is simply a rational enquiry into human knowledge and experience whereas the latter concerns itself with man's realization of the Supreme Being and his response (internal and external) to it.