baffled by contradictions or absurdities. Kant admits that we necessarily aspire to think of such objects—“ God, the World, the Soul ”—possibly this alleged tendency of our thought is already implied in the dream of a “ perceptive understanding.” But speculative knowledge breaks down or breaks off at an earlier point. If we try to know the soul, we grasp at a phantom. The self is always subject in consciousness and never can be­come an object of knowledge (“ Paralogism of Pure Reason ”). If we try to know the real world, we find ourselves distracted by opposite arguments (“ Antithetic of Pure Reason ”), plausible and resistless in attack, helpless in defence. The only thing which the “ Ideas ” of “ Reason ” can do for theoretic know­ledge is to exert a “ regulative ” function. They teach the in­ferior but working part of our intellect, the “ Understanding,” that its picture of sensuous reality envisaged in time and space must be as fully articulated as is possible—as much differentiated into detail, and as perfectly integrated again into unity and, system. God, for Pure Reason, is an illegitimate personifica­tion of the idea of perfected experience (“ Ideal of Pure Reason ”). Fifthly, there are fixed limits to the possibility of improving the quality of experience. Sense-knowledge is an endless process, inconsistent with the requirements of thought. We can by no means regard the physical world as the real world. But we possess knowledge of the physical world and of it alone. “ Things in themselves ”—whether defined by Kant, illogically enough, as causes of sensations, or again defined by him as the ultimate realities towards which thought vaguely points—in either case, “ things in themselves ” are unattainable by any definite knowledge. Our “ reach ” exceeds our “ grasp ” with a vengeance.

So far as a remedy for scepticism is found at all, Kant places it, not within theoretic knowledge, but in moral or “ practical ” experience. Pure knowledge, for man, moves among a world of shadows ; duty is certain. Mansel charged Kant with inconsistency in this preferential treatment of the moral consciousness; all our knowledge, even in moral things, was “ relative ” and was “ regulative.”@@1 But, whether con­sistent or inconsistent, Kant was deliberate in differentiating between the ethical and the theoretic knowledge of man. “ Ana­lytic ” or tautological thought does not become “ synthetic ” or capable of embracing a real content except under the sting of sensation; why sensation should thus help it is obscure, yet the fact is plain. But analytic thinking is victorious in morals, where the test of *formal self-consistency* distinguishes virtue from vice. The good man is the perfectly rational or perfect self-consistent man; and that is a full account of virtue, though Kant pro­fesses to re-interpret it still further in a much more positive sense as implying the service of humanity. True, at a later stage, the opposition of sense and thought reasserts itself strongly with Kant even in ethics. We are allowed moral certainty, but arc forbidden the hope of genuine moral victory. Just as our knowledge never can finish its task of reducing world-experience to an intelli­gible system, so our will is never once able perfectly to obey the law of reason. There is always a taint of feeling in man’s goodness. This portion of the ethical theory does curious service in Kant’s doctrine of religion. That doctrine runs, briefly, as follows. Duty must be accepted as a given certainty, or it is vindicated—unsatis­factorily enough, perhaps—in the way just explained. Next, from the certainty of duty' we infer as our first moral postulate free will—“ I can because I ought ”; which, primarily at least, means “ I know I can because I know I ought.” But this strong asser­tion is greatly qualified when Kant recurs to what he considers the least discredited portion of our theoretical knowledge. In the world of phenomena, not freedom rules but determinism. Causality is one of the “ categories ” which our mind uses in building up orderly experience. So we are left with a see-saw. Will is noumenally free; but phenomenally, in all real exercises of will, we are determined by the past. Secondly: from the discrepancy between the pure abstract law of self-consistent reason and the pleasure- tinged nature of man, we infer or postulate Immortality. As we never can hit the bull’s eye, we must have literally endless oppor­tunities of aiming at it, so as to get indefinitely nearer the central spot. If we did hit the exact mark, apparently we need no longer be immortal. Lastly, God. We must not, we dare not, aim at happiness. It is an eternal weakness in our moral being which makes us constantly squint aside from the thought of duty towards the forbidden motive—wincing under pain, or hungering after joy.

Yet, if the motive is forbidden us, it is plain from another point of view that good persons ought to be happy. And, as nature reveals no great care for this postulate, we must appeal away beyond nature to a power who shall make good men at the last as happy as they deserve to be. And this power is God. Such is the train of thought as stated for us in the *Critique of Practical Reason.*

In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant restates his new type of theistic argument in a way which has had great subsequent influence. We must conceive nature as overruled by God not so much for the sake of man’s happiness as for the sake of his moral development. Or, to state this as a theistic argu­ment: we are bound to postulate a God who overrules nature for moral ends. This new statement has at least the merit of bringing God into touch with man’s good­ness as well as with his happiness. But the train of thought is deeply embedded among characteristic sceptical hesitations. In spite of the various details of the *Judgment* Critique (as to beauty; and as to the “ internal ” or as Hegel subsequently phrased it “ immanent ” adaptations seen in living organisms) Kant regards as extremely precarious all these hints of a higher view of nature. Nature as a machine, governed by changeless causal law, is neces­sary to thought. Were no such machine recognized, the thread of consciousness would be cut and orderly experience impossible; we must all go mad.@@2 But nature breathing of life, or of beauty, or, however faintly, of a God immanent in the whole process, and shaping it towards moral purposes—that is or may be no better than a subjective dream. It is doubly uncertain. It has inferior guarantees, as compared with our knowledge of the mechanism of nature. And, after all, not even our knowledge of the mechanism of nature is a knowledge of reality. Things as they truly are lie wholly beyond our poor human vision.

Kant then has broken away from intuitionalism by sub­stituting *one system of necessity* for the many necessary truths or given experiences from which intuitionalism takes its start. But there are gaps in Kant’s system—a gap between sensation and the sense-forms of time and space; a gap between sense-forms and thought; a gap between the lower but practicable processes of the Under­standing and the higher but unrealizable ideas of Reason. And thus Kant’s idealism is incomplete. On one side, the world we know by valid processes of thinking cannot, we are told, be the real world. Or, beginning from the other side; neither the reality which ideal thought reaches after, nor yet the reality which our conscience postulates, is the valid world of orderly thinking. The great critic of scepticism has diverged from idealism toward scepticism again, or has given his idealism a sceptical colour, mitigated—but only mitigated—by faith in the moral consciousness. If there arises a system of philosophy in which all truths are grasped in unity, and it is seen that the principles of things *must* be what they *are,* such a philosophy will give us in perfection the idealistic conception of reality and the idealistic guarantees of truth which Kant gave brokenly. The Absolute Idealism of G. W. F. Hegel was such a system. It ranks, up to our own day, as the last of the great philosophies, and the boldest of all. Kant had fewer isolated points of departure than intuitionalists; yet gaps and isolation recurred in Kant, and helped to make him the father of modern agnosticism. In the later intuitionalism of Hamilton, recoiling from Hegel, the many subjective necessities of the intuitionalist scheme were made to breathe the new agnostic suggestions. We *necessarily* think as we do—but only because of our entangling faculties. It is a mental “ impotence ” that makes us believe in such a law as Cause and Effect. Kant had substituted one great necessity, sprung from an ideal source. Reason—under conditions of sensation—created the world of (valid) knowledge; Reason created the practical world of duty. But, having said this, Kant went on to repeat the sceptical suggestion. The whole coherent necessary world of his philo­sophy became “ our world,” *as we necessarily think it,* but not by any means of necessity the world *as it is.* Hegel brushes aside all these hesitations. His *Philosophy of Nature*—one of the least admired parts of his system—is the answer from his point of view to Kant’s assertion that a “ perceptive understanding ” is for us impossible. Hegel offers a supposed proof that Time and Space, Matter, Nature, are ascertainable and definable

@@@1 Mansel's term for Kant’s "practical.” It must be carefully distinguished from Kant's “ regulative,” which refers to know­ledge—regulative in contrast to *constitutive* of knowledge—not to practice.

@@@2 This is Kant’s positive refutation of Hume’s scepticism.