

The Status of Purpose in Reality.

Frank Seraf Gredler.

Meadville Theological School.

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At the beginning, I think it is well for us, for the sake of clarity, and to avoid misunderstanding, to consider the meaning of the substantives in the title, "The Status of Purpose in Reality."

Definition of "Status"

First of all let us look at the word "status." I consulted two dictionaries, The Century and The New Oxford. The former tells us that "status" is from the Latin "statis," meaning "standing," "position," "attitude," "state." It then defines "status" as "standing or position as regards rank or condition." The latter stated things a bit differently, but with the same meaning. It told us that "sta" is from "stare," the Latin for "stand." "Status is there defined as "position or standing in society or professions, and the like." On the basis of these two definitions we may say that in this thesis we are speaking about the status, or position, or standing of purpose in reality. We might also say, "the idea of purpose in reality." I think we now have made clear enough what we mean by the word "status" as we are using it in this thesis.

Definition of "Reality"

Let us now see how we define the term "reality." A thesis could be written upon this word alone. At least, I feel so at present after having hunted in

the Century Dictionary, in the New Oxford, in Webster's, in Baldwin's "Dictionary of Philosophy" for a definition that really satisfied me. Besides these dictionaries I also consulted the books mentioned in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. Since the thought of purpose is to be stressed in this thesis I shall not enter upon any lengthy discussion of the meaning of the term "reality." On the other hand, I feel it would not make for clearness of thought did I pass it by completely. Therefore we shall content ourselves with just a few words about this term.

I think John Grier Hibben in his book entitled "The Problems of Philosophy" can be of help to us in giving us an idea of the meaning of the term "reality" (p.14 f.). Where in part he writes, "Let us examine more closely the significance of this vague word, reality. It may have several meanings, according to the different points of view which one takes. We may regard it as embodied in the physical world, the world of land and sea, of sky and trees, of sunshine and of storm. The real therefore will be that to us which we can touch and see, smell and taste, as one will say, 'I know that is real for I can see it with my eyes.' Seeing is believing, and the testimony of the senses is the superior court of appeal in controverted questions. But the world of reality may be regarded

from quite a different point of view, as the world of consciousness, the mind of man, the experiences of the inner self, the Ego. Here is a world of phenomena interrelated and reciprocally dependent. It is a realm of ideas, of memory images, of fancy, of will, and of desire. The verities in this world cannot be seen, or measured, or weighed, and yet we do not hesitate to speak of them as realities; they are real as the love of friends is real, or the anger of a foe. The passion of a Romeo, the will of a Napoleon, the genius of a Goethe, the conception of a united fatherland in the fancy of a Bismarck, these are realities. A deeper significance of the real, and still further removed from the sphere of sense-perception is that of the reality which lies behind the world of sight and of sound, of thought and of desire, the real as eternal, 'the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great, and the myriad world His shadow.' To some it may seem that we have here undertaken an excursion into the territory of the unreal; to others, however, such an idea appeals as the verity of verities."

The paragraph that follows the above contains thoughts that will perhaps make the foregoing clearer. "The subject matter of philosophy, 'that which is,' that sphere of reality which seemed at first so obscurely outlined, we have found to comprise three

definite divisions, nature, mind, and God. It is the province of philosophy not merely to consider reality under each one of these aspects separately, but also to consider the relations which obtain between them, that is, the relation between the world and man, between man and God, and between God and the world."

I have quoted the above, not with any interest at this time in a definition of philosophy, but because I thought the paragraph contained words making the previous citation clearer. Perhaps the above is made even clearer when in the discussion on P.23, "God, the world and man" are referred to as the "three aspects of reality."

I think these thoughts of Hibben's, which I find in general harmony with my own, will give us a clear enough idea of the term reality, that which has for its aspects, nature, mind, and God. This I believe to be true even though individuals are not in exact agreement as to the meaning of nature, or mind, or God. We are sure of this when we recall that for some God is identified with the world as nature, giving us what is called Pantheism. Then there are the Deists; also the Theists. Again, nature is a term that is used variously. By it some mean God; some man plus the subhuman and the suborganic; some the animal and plant life and the inorganic. Yet in spite of these

differences I think we have a good enough understanding of the term reality, - good enough for our purposes in this present thesis.

Definition
of
"Purpose"

We now come to the third term of the subject of this paper - "The Status of Purpose in Reality." How do we define "purpose?" Murray in the New Oxford Dictionary defined the word as "that which one sets before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; the object that one has in view; the action or fact of intending or meaning to do something; the object for which anything is done or made, or for which it exists; the result or effect intended or sought; end, aim." Let us turn to the Century Dictionary. We look up "purpose" and are directed to see "propose," of which "purpose" is a doublet. We find it derived from two Latin words "pro," meaning "forth," "before" and "ponere," meaning "set," "place." We discover that "Purpose" is defined as "a thing proposed or intended; an object to be kept in view or subserved to any operation or course of action; end proposed; aim; intended or desired effect; practical advantage or result; use; intention; design; resolve; resolution; import; meaning; purport; intent."

It will be worth our while to consider not only these definitions from dictionaries but also those contained in the words of a few philosophers. McDougal in his "Social Psychology" (P.364 F.) speaks of the

"consciousness of striving towards an end which everyman has when he acts with deliberate purpose." Further down on the same page he writes of the commonly entertained notion of purposive activity, - that purpose "essentially implies on the part of the agent consciousness of the goal that he seeks to attain, of the end he pursues." He stands for this and a wider use of the word purpose. We shall discuss this broader application later on. Wright in "Self Realization" defines action from purpose or what is the same thing in other words, purposive action, as action in pursuit of a group of objects to be realized in the course of future time, rather than in pursuit of a single object to be realized now, which he calls desire. We shall recur to Wright's discussion further on. (Wright, p.142 f.) Leighton in "The Field of Philosophy" (p.288) writes, "Humanly, a purpose means the conscious striving for an end or value and the effectuation of a purpose signifies putting in train the means or mechanism that will achieve the end." Pringle-Pattison in his "Idea of God" (p.323) says, "The idea of purpose as we meet it in experience, appears to imply (1) desire for an as yet non-existent state of affairs, (2) the conception of a plan for bringing the desired state of affairs into existence by selection of appropriate means, (3) the act of

will proper, which realizes or carries out this plan." The following citation from J. Arthur Thomson in "The System of Animate Nature" will perhaps be of further help in defining the idea of purpose. He speaks first of purpose in the higher levels of life. Then he goes on to make clear this idea of purpose by illustrating from a slightly lower level of life. We prepare for months to build a rockery in our garden, collecting stones and tree-roots and such like in a way that perplexes our next-door neighbor, who is not in the secret, who shakes his head at the absence of purpose in our behavior. But all that we do is actuated by a purpose, so simple that we may call it perceptual, to form in the outer world an actual counterpart of a pleasing picture which has formed itself, as we say, in our mind. If this perceived purpose is not real, nothing is real. A mental anticipation with its associated desire determines our behavior." (p.332).

Finally, I quote just one more author on the definitions of "purpose." Hobhouse in his book on "Development and Purpose," on p. 319 writes, "Now if we look at the purposive state as we know it in ourselves, we say familiarly that it is guided by an idea of the end and of the way and means thereto. This idea is a forward-looking something; its relation to the future, to what is to come out of it, is an integral part of its being. It is, we will not say, determined ab

extra, but constituted by this relation, this element of movement which it contains. But the forward-looking idea is not the whole of the purpose. The idea must interest, arouse feeling, dominate impulse. The purposive state is an impulse-idea, a conative state, an *idée-force*. It is forward looking, but more than that. It is forward moving..... Generically then a purpose may be defined as a cause conditioned in its operation by its own tendency." I want to note just one more definition of purpose which I omitted through oversight. It is that of Sorley, to be found in his book on "Moral Values and the Idea of God," (p.397 f.). He writes, "What do we mean by Purpose? In our experience it always involves two things: first, that an idea of the end precedes the activity or attainment, and secondly, that the activity or attainment is determined by the idea."

I think I have made sufficiently clear what is generally meant by purpose. As we know it, the term purpose means an idea of some object or end which guides or shall guide our action in the realizing of that object or end.

Contrast
between
Purpose
and
Mechanism

As Sorley in "Moral Values and the Idea of God" (p.405) says, "Purpose is contrasted with mechanism." I think it is worth our while seeing just what this contrast involves. We shall in the next few pages content ourselves with comparing and con-

trasting these two terms, purpose and mechanism. Then when we use the terms later on in this thesis we shall know more definitely than we might otherwise what we are talking about. Of the authors whom I consulted only three dwell at any length upon the difference between the mechanical and teleological, or mechanism and purpose. These are Sorley, in "Moral Values and the Idea of God," Russell in the "First Course in Philosophy," and Hobhouse, in "Development and Purpose." The others say little or nothing in contrasting these two ideas.

First of all, what I have to say in the next two or three pages is largely suggested by my study of Russell. In his compendium of philosophy he has succeeded in putting clearly the difference between purpose and machanism, or as he calls it, the mechanical and teleological. After we have considered thoughts largely suggested by his treatment we will turn to Sorley and Hobhouse to see what they have to offer us in further clarification.

First, to explain mechanically is to find the explanation of a given event or phenomenon in some antecedent condition, or in agencies which operate with the regularity which we observe in the action of machines made by human beings. The result of these agencies is produced without prevision of this

result. The result is in accordance with a principle of determination which makes just this event or phenomenon certain, and excludes the possibility of a different result in existing conditions.

On the other hand, a fact or phenomenon is teleologically explained, when it is not only seen to be a result, an effect or terminus of a process of change, but is looked upon as an end. In relation to this end the antecedent conditions and changes have their meaning. In the teleological or purposive conception of an event or being, this being or event is conceived to control and direct the agencies or series of changes which issue in this result.

Now that we have defined what we mean by mechanism or the mechanical and by purpose or the teleological let us note the points of difference between mechanism and purpose. In the mechanical conception of an event or being the antecedent processes or events are the sole explainers of the given fact. In the teleological conception, or in purpose, the antecedent conditions are not the only explanation of the given fact; the fact is more than a result; it is also an end. Thus something more than an antecedent is necessary to explain. Again, in the mechanical explanation the agencies which effect a given result are in no manner influenced by the result; this resultant is not a goal or end. In the teleological explanation the resultant

is at the same time an end or goal. (See, Russell, "First Course in Philosophy" p.129 f.).

Let us look briefly at what Sorley has to say in his "Moral Values and the Idea of God" (p.405). After an introductory paragraph he really begins by saying what I have already quoted, "Purpose is contrasted with mechanism" (p.405). Yet every machine is purposive, - it fulfills a purpose. The machine is something constructed by an intelligent being, with purpose in mind. The purpose lies outside the machine and the work which it performs. It is called purposive because it has been constructed for a certain purpose. The machine itself does what it does simply as a result of the structure and the relation of its parts and the motor power with which it is supplied. On page 413 Sorley writes, "The term purpose has been used in describing the actions of a system when they cannot be understood through their antecedents alone, and without reference to the end which they tend to bring about." From this sentence and from what precedes it in his book I come to the conclusion that he and Russell are in agreement in their differentiation of purpose and mechanism.

Let us see what Hobhouse can do, or at any rate, what we can get from him that will help us to understand fully the difference between mechanical and teleological, or mechanism and purpose. In section eight of chapter

four of part two he reviews some of what he has previously discussed before proceeding with his argument. To explain an event or process may mean two things. First, it may mean to find for it an antecedent event or process which passes into it, proceeding without any reference to concomitant processes or events. This is the mechanical cause. Secondly, it may mean for the event an explanation here and now, "a reason why it holds its place in this particular collocation." Explanation here cannot be mechanical, but may be teleological. These are two ways in which purpose may operate, -two kinds of teleology. It may operate externally, as in the case of a machine made by a human being. It may operate internally, in an organic whole. The distinction of these two kinds of causes I remember is also made by Cunningham. He calls the external, abstract teleology, and the other as seen in organic whole, concrete teleology. (The Philosophy of Bergson, p.146).

I think the differentiation between mechanism and purpose has been made clear enough by a consideration of the views of these writers. Mechanism looks to antecedents and purpose to ends.

At this time I think it is well for us to consider whether this that we have been calling purpose can ultimately be resolved into the mechanical, or into

mechanism. Russell believes that it cannot be so resolved. (p.133 of First Course in Philosophy). Hobhouse is also of the opinion that there is a real difference between purpose and mechanism and that purpose can not be "boiled down" into mechanism. I think it is worth our while to consider at least an outline of his argument, which takes up a number of pages in his chapter on "Mechanism and Teleology" in the book on "Development and Purpose." (See p.316 f.)

We have already seen how Hobhouse views mechanism and purpose. He then proceeds to ask the question whether there is any possible sense in which a process can be conceived as determined by relation to its result. To help him in this argument he makes use of illustration. He hails a cab to get him home to his dinner. The dinner and all that pertains thereto is the governing fact.

One dissolving purpose into mechanism would say that here is a mind animated by an idea which projects itself into the future and guides events in accordance with the lines of projection, but as an operating force in the disposal of events, is an ever present agent, acting by its presence alone. There is no such thing as determination by the future or by relation to the future. A formed purpose may be a cause, but it is also

an effect. It is something that grew out of the past and acts now just as any mechanical configuration arose out of the past and acts now. The past wholly determines the future and is in no sense determined by it.

What have we to say in answer to this mechanical explanation of teleology? In the words of Hobhouse, "It sets out to exclude the future from caused operation, yet it can explain the action of Mind only by speaking of a projection into the future." There is here a contradiction which we must resolve if we are to understand teleology and its distinction from mechanism. Hobhouse puts the question in this way;- "Can anything causal, be it mind or be it what it may, be conceived as in any literal sense determined by relation to its result? The point is fundamental because if there exists anything of this kind, there also exists a mode of causation differing fundamentally from the mechanical, and if not, mental or purposive operation is itself ultimately mechanical." Now we know that mechanical causation is a continuous process in which each phase is determined wholly by that out of which it issues and in nowise by that into which it will pass. Purposive causation is something other than this, which Hobhouse refers to as "going around to get to a goal." Then in illustration of his answer to the question whether it is possible that the tendency to the result determines the act he makes mention of a tool which has been

made by an intelligent artisan because of its efficacy for his end. Act or instrument, it is explained, owe their existence to something pre-existent, a purposeful intelligence, but their link is their causal efficacy.

What holds of the means applies also to the mind, which uses the means. We look to our own experience and say that the purposive state is guided by an idea of the end and of the way and means thereto. The purposive state is forward looking and forward moving and the movement is controlled point by point by what is to come out of it. Thus Hobhouse comes to define purpose, as I have already noted, as a cause conditioned in its operation by its own tendency. He ends by saying that there is thus a sense in which events or processes may be regarded as determined by their relation to results which are to come out of them in the future.

I found this chapter, at least in parts, somewhat difficult. I have outlined the argument as I believed it applied to our problem and I find myself in agreement with Hobhouse, for I think he puts the matter as it really is.

It may be well that we sum up briefly this argument, or rather the results of it. A purposive process is one determined by its tendency to produce

a certain result, purpose itself being an act determined in its character by that which it tends to bring about. As such it differs fundamentally from a mechanical cause, which is determined by that from which it issues and not by that into which it will pass. Intelligent action, especially as we experience it in our own lives is truly purposive and not resolvable into mechanical laws.

I think I have made clear the distinction between purpose and mechanism and what we mean by purpose. Let us repeat what we mean by purpose so that we may have a definition in mind as we consider what immediately follows. As we know it, purpose means an idea of some object or end which guides or shall guide our actions in the realizing of that object or end.

Purpose
in
Human
Experience
or
Life

Let us consider now the status of purpose as it is found in human life. What I have said so far in defining the term purpose gives us at least a general idea of purpose as it is found in the experience of man. Let us dwell at greater length upon the idea of purpose in human life.

Let us look first at purpose from a psychological point of view. Gustavus Watts Cunningham in his book entitled "A Study in the Philosophy of Bergson, (p.118) writes, "We must say that every conscious present is

nothing more than an act of attention and that the whole process of conscious experience consists in a series of such acts of attention. And from this it would seem to follow that the psychological problem of consciousness, so far as its persistence in time is concerned, reduces to the problem of attentive consciousness."

Pillsbury in his book on "Attention" has written a good deal concerning the attentive consciousness. Among the conditions of attention he mentions and emphasizes purposes, both particular and general, both immediate and remote. Of course he admits that the past plays its part in attention, but he stresses the fact that these purposes, these anticipatory tendencies, play their part. Every act of attention is the expression of a purpose, immediate or remote, either as a clearly conceived end or as a subconscious tendency. Apart from purpose in this wide sense, we cannot understand the attentive act. In illustration of this Cunningham in the "Philosophy of Bergson" writes, "The artist and the artisan, the sportsman and the man of affairs do not observe the same objects in the museum or at the seashore."

These purposes involved in the attentive consciousness are future, in the sense that they anticipate the future, "set their face forward rather than backward." (Cunningham in "The Philosophy of Bergson, p.121.)

Let us now consider purpose as seen in the differentiations of the attentive consciousness. First, we note the presence of purpose in the cognitive consciousness. Purpose is found in the very process of knowledge itself. In our experience we have a demand for meaning. In this connection, Cunningham writes, "If there is no problem, certainly there is no thought, and a problem is nothing more or less than a directing end or ideal. A satisfactory theory of knowledge must be written in teleological terms." In illustration of this point, that purpose is found in the very process of knowledge itself, let me use the following. The suggestion of the professor of philosophy was that I write on "The Status of Purpose in Reality." The end in this instance was to understand more completely and fully than I did before the idea of purpose as found in all the aspects of Reality. That end had to be realized, or in other words, that problem could only be better understood at some future time, after considerable reading and studying had been done. I think that this makes clear that in our human life purpose is involved in the process of knowledge and in cognition.

Again, in the ethical consciousness is purpose operative. Perhaps in our human experience this is the best illustration of purpose; at least

it is one of the best. Cunningham on this point says, (p.124) "The basic characteristic of moral experience, the very spring of morality itself, namely, the feeling of moral obligation, is in the last analysis nothing but the discrepancy which exists between the self that now is and the self that ought to be. And this means that moral experience is through and through teleological."

Wright in his book on "Self-Realization" (p.141 f.) devotes quite a few pages to the discussion of purpose as found in the ethical consciousness. I think it worth while to consider what he has to say on this matter for he helps us to see clearly purpose in human life. He speaks of three kinds of action. The first is action from desire, the second action from purpose, and the third action from idea. Action from desire is defined as action whose end is the attainment of a single object. An idea of the object in question has been produced by past experience in the mind of the individual. That idea has become an end of action which the individual now consciously seeks to realize. The object in mind may, for example, be an apple, a flower, a rare book, a picture, a mansion. Action from purpose is defined as action which has for its ends the attainment of classes of objects,

which consist of single objects grouped into more or less comprehensive classes. The ends now are, for example, "something to eat", "something to play with," to stand well in school, to gather birds' eggs or stamps, to do the morning's work well, to preserve one's health, etc. Now we ask what is meant by action from ideal. On this point he writes, "But thought can go beyond the ideation that yields the object of desire and the generalization that furnishes the object of purpose. It can take the material of experience, analyze it into its elements, and thus by synthesis construct from it a new and significant conception. It is this constructive activity of thought, more or less freely exercised, that produces the Ideal, which constitutes the object of the next and higher form of volition." In illustration of this are the following;- the period of youth when the young man sees himself serving humanity as patriot or explorer, author or inventor, physician, lawyer, minister, etc.

I think Wright has pointed out to us, at least fairly clearly, purpose as it is in the ethical consciousness. In criticism of what he writes, I would say that I believe he restricts the use of the term purpose. Certainly, from our point of view it is all purpose,- what he calls desire, purpose and

ideal. Is it not merely a matter of degree of purpose,- desire being lower than what he terms purpose and ideal being higher? I believe he admits this himself, at least to a degree, when he says, in distinguishing action from desire and action from purpose, "As a matter of fact, however, no hard and fast distinction can be made between actions whose object is particular and those whose object is general. Since it is a case of development the difference is always one of degree." Certainly in all the three kinds of action of which he speaks there is an idea of an object or end which guides or shall guide our actions in the realizing of that object or end. And this is purpose.

The idea of purpose is also to be found in our aesthetic and religious consciousness. I shall later on in the thesis deal with the latter when I discuss the idea of purpose and the idea of God. Since I believe I have pointed out sufficiently that purpose is to be found throughout all our human life I shall be brief in speaking of purpose as manifested in the aesthetic consciousness. Fletcher in his "Introduction to Philosophy" in his chapter on Finalism on this point in part writes (p.341 f.), "Works of art - musical compositions, paintings, statues, dramas, finished style in literature - derive their aesthetic character from a desire to give expression to the

beautiful. Those who create our works of art seek more or less consciously to give that character to their work. They purpose to embody their conceptions of beauty."

Purpose, we have seen, is discovered throughout human experience. In my reading, none of the writers have denied that this is so. Therefore we have seen that among those who hold that there is purpose in our human life are Cunningham, in his "The Philosophy of Bergson," Fletcher in his "Introduction to Philosophy" in his chapter on "Finality," Pillsbury in his book on "Attention," and Wright in his "Self-Realization."

Let us make sure just what some of the others whom I have consulted have to say in agreement or disagreement with the proposition that purpose is found in human life. Russell, in his "First Course in Philosophy" (p.134) writes, "Teleological explanation is undeniably valid in the realm of human action and productions; teleology is at home in our human world; History is teleological or meaningless; to eliminate ideas and purposes from human productions were to destroy the moral, the historical and political sciences altogether, in short were to make the study of mankind a meaningless undertaking." Hobhouse holds there is purpose in human life. I have already quoted him and shown at least some of

his argument on this point. McDougall in his "Social Psychology," shows that he agrees with us. (p.364). He here makes reference to his book on "Body and Mind" where he demonstrates that the view that there is not a purpose in human life is untenable. Leighton in his "Problems of Philosophy" shows that he holds there is purpose in human experience. So does Pringle-Pattison in his "Idea of God." (p.322). Witness what he says, "Purposive activity, is, indeed the central feature of our human experience; reason seems to operate in that experience characteristically under the form of End." So does Burroughs, in "Accepting the Universe." There he writes, "Namable purpose and designs rule our lives." (p.219). Finally Thomson in his two volumes entitled "The System of Animate Nature" says, (p.331) "If this conceived purpose is not real, 'with hands and feet,' we may abandon the possibility of either philosophy or science." On another page he writes, "We see then, that in the human realm of ends the concept of purpose is essential." (p.333). Thus I feel, at least in the present stage of philosophical development, certain that there is purpose in human life. It is what the experience of each one of us shows.

Purpose in
Sub-human
Life.

Let us now, after having considered purpose in human life, concern ourselves with purpose in the

animal world. First we shall glance at a few facts which lead us to claim or suspect that there is a purpose here. A dog hides away a bone in a very unusual place. Rooks take fresh-water mussels to a great height and let them fall on the shingles beneath so that they are broken. A mother weasel accompanied by her offspring, about to be over-taken, dashes on ahead and lays the offspring in a sandy hole. Mares, some past foaling, have been known to unite in lifting up between them a number of foals on the occasion of a great flood. Birds build nests in which to protect the eggs and the young which have proceeded out of them. (See Thomson, "The System of Animate Nature, p.335 f.).

The forgoing are just a few examples of behavior as we see it in animal life and which at first glance at any rate make us claim or suspect that there is purpose in animal life. Now, we ask ourselves if on the basis of these and similar observations we are prepared to hold that there is purpose in this realm of existence.

In human life, as we know from our own experience and that of others, what McDougall says is true, "We are accustomed to accept as the type of purposive action our own most decidedly volitional efforts, in which we deliberately choose, and self-consciously

strive, to bring about some state of affairs that we clearly foresee and desire. And it has been the practice of many writers, accepting such volitional effort as the type of purposive activity, to refuse to admit to the same category any actions that do not seem to be prompted and guided by clear foresight of the end desired and willed." (See McDougall's "Social Psychology" p.362).

If we conceive purpose in this very restricted way and set it over against mechanical processes, as process of a radically different type, we have the difficulty of assigning the place of lower forms of behavior.

The difficulty thus created was solved by Descartes by assigning all the lower forms of behavior to the mechanical category. We find this unsatisfactory for two reasons. (1) Behavior everywhere has the outward marks which are common to the lower forms of behavior and to human conduct and which set it so far apart from mechanical processes. (2) This way of trying to solve the difficulty creates another difficulty, that is, it sets up an absolute breach between men and animals, thus ignoring the unmistakable indication of a common nature and evolutionary continuity between the higher and lower forms of life.

We can solve the difficulties involved in a

narrow conception of purpose by broadening the narrow notion of purpose, which I have quoted McDougall as saying is a common one. The idea of purpose must be viewed broadly to include the lower forms of behavior as well as the higher forms which constitute human conduct.

What objection can there be to broadening the notion of the term purpose? There are those who will contend that the word "purpose" essentially implies on the part of the agent consciousness of the goal he seeks to attain, of the end he pursues. They may say that only in so far as the agent may be regarded as clearly conscious of the end can we claim to understand how the end determines the course of action.

What can we say in reply to this objection? Mental process seems to be a process of striving (conation) initiated by a process or act of knowing (cognition). This knowing is always "a becoming aware of something, or some state of affairs, as given or present, together with an anticipation of some change. That is to say, mental life does not consist in a succession of different states of the subject, called states of consciousness or ideas or what not; but it consists always in an activity of a subject in respect of an object apprehended, an activity which constantly changes or modifies the relation between subject and object." This change, which is to^{be} brought about,

and which is the goal or end of action, is anticipated with different degrees of clearness. In some of our human experience the ends of action are anticipated with great clearness. The agent is clearly conscious of the end in some actions. Yet in some of our actions the end is anticipated or foreseen in the most general manner only. McDougall in illustration of this point gives the following. "You cough in order to clear your throat; or experience a slight irritation in your throat, you put out your hand, take a glass of water, and drink in order to allay it." We know from our experience that the thought of the end of the action may be very "sketchy and ill defined." Again when we execute our most carefully thought out, our most purposeful, actions, our idea of the end to be achieved falls far short of its actual fulness of concrete detail. Witness the experience of one deciding to become a professor, a lawyer, a teacher, a minister, etc. See what different views there are now that one has passed years since the day of the decision, and is now in one of these activities. The anticipation of the end, it would seem from what we have thus far said, is always more or less incomplete. It would thus seem that we have a right to look upon this idea of purpose broadly. In order to have

purpose, as we have learned to understand the term, we must have an idea of the end. But anticipating an end clearly is not the only idea of an end. The end may be anticipated vaguely and still be considered enough of an idea of an end for our definition of purpose.

I have said that in our experience we have anticipation of ends varying from that of the most clear and detailed nature through all degrees of incompleteness down to the most vague and shadowy, a mere anticipation of change of some sort. From this we are able to form some idea of purpose in animals, from the highest to the lowest.

Thomson in his book on "The System of Animate Nature" holds with McDougall that there is purpose in the animal world. He says that when we mention such examples of animal behavior as I spoke of on page 24, "we say, with probable accuracy, that the creature was actuated by a definite purpose, by some sort of intention, by some anticipation of an end." If the creature has a fine brain at a high structural level, - for examples dogs, horses, elephants, and the like we are all the more sure of an actuating purpose. Of course, the animal purpose may not be of such a grade as ours. It may be that the animal's purpose is only a concrete picture with an associated desire, - a cognitive

disposition at a perceptual level and an associated conative disposition. It is at this point that Thomson reminds us of the definition of purpose, saying, "For we mean by purpose an intention of the organism involving a perceptual or conceptual anticipation of a desired end."

When we pass to the smaller brained animals, like the bird, we question ourselves more closely on the problem of purpose. How far are we warranted in saying that the bird building its nest and laying its eggs therein is actuated by Purpose? Thomson suggests that since we are not sure just how far the end is in view that we call the activity that we find here "purposive", and make use of the term "purposiveness." Now we pass to what he calls "the field of purely or predominantly instinctive behavior among animals 'of the little brain type'," such as ants and bees. Here he suggests we employ the term "instinctive purposiveness." Then when we pass to animals in which there are no nerve-ganglia at all, as for instance, the starfish and the sea-urchin, it is suggested that the phrase "organic purposiveness" be used. Purposefulness, shown in its conceptual form in man's conduct, in its perceptual form in the behavior of man and at least some animals, he holds is a specialization of organic purposiveness, as the other kinds of purposiveness are specializations to

a lesser degree. It is suggested that the term purposefulness be applied only to cases where there is "conscious anticipation of the constraining end." It is also pointed out that activities originally dominated by more or less clearly perceived purpose may sink to a level of organized purposiveness. This may apply, for instance to our instincts and those of animals. Finally, Thomson points out that in regard to the smooth working of the organs of a complex animal the proper term is "adaptive" and not "purposive."

Let us see what Sorely has to offer us on this question of purpose in the animal world. During the course of his discussion he writes, "In almost every region of life we can observe processes which fulfil a purpose without there being any evidence of the presence of an idea of the purpose fulfilled. The growth of the plant, the working of animal instinct, the normal vital processes of the human organism, imply no volition, no idea even of the end, as when the heart beats or food is digested; the more normal the process is, the less is its operation accompanied by any consciousness of it; an idea of its end or purpose is only to be superadded by reflection." Then he spends some time discussing "unconscious purpose." As I understand the phrase it is identifiable with

Thomson's "purposiveness." Further on in his discussion he speaks of the clear and vague ideas or anticipations of the ends even as the others, especially McDougall, have done. And I would follow out the argument and say that we thus have at least some idea of purpose as it may be found in subhuman life. We are certain of purpose, sometimes with clear, sometimes with vague ideas of the end, in our own life. We look at the behavior of our fellow human beings and infer the same. We observe the behavior of life below our own and we infer purposes like some of our own in the higher animals. In lower life we are not sure just how much of an idea or anticipation of an end there may be, if any. It seems to me, from my study so far, that I am bound to say that there may be purpose in lower animal life, but as yet we cannot affirm it with absolute confidence, for we do not know that there is any idea of end, though we may suspect, especially in animal life, something like our vague purposes. We suspect this for the reason that man and animals have something in common, even as these forms of life have something in common with plants, - for instance, life itself, and growth,

Is there
Purpose
in the
Inorganic?_

Let us now, after having considered purpose in human life and in sub-human life ask ourselves the question if there is purpose in the inorganic

domain. In this realm of reality we see the river carving its way in the rock and the soil, the wind blowing snow into various shapes, the frost making what we call beautiful pictures, etc. Is there purpose in these and similar events of inorganic nature? Has the river an idea of an end, - say, to carve a winding path, oftentimes deep, as in the Rocky Mountains, through rock and soil? Is its course actuated by such an idea of an end. Does the wind act in accordance with purpose when it blows snow and sand into various shapes, when it tares down houses and trees, when it cools human beings and other animal life in hot summer days such as we are experiencing now? Is there an idea of the end held by the wind, and does it allow this end to govern its activities? Is there purpose here? Has the moon some sort of consciousness or awareness of an end when it goes on its monthly path around the earth? Has it an idea of an end in mind to shine dimly upon couples walking by the water's edge? Does it govern its activities in accordance with these and similar ends? Is there purpose here?

What answer does Thomson give to such questions? In his book called "The System of animate Nature" we read in reply, "The concept of purpose is irrelevant in the domain of the inorganic where there are no individualities and no alternatives, but rigorous concatenation and mechanical necessitation everywhere." (p.330). I have been thus impressed in my

own experience for a long time, and my study of the problem of purpose leads me to keep in agreement with what Thomson has written.

The hylozoist looking upon the stream, for example, may point to its enduring purpose. It sweeps some obstacles away and patiently undermines others; it is patient and overflows where it cannot go about or around; it is willing to wander about and wait its time until the day of a flood to cut off a large piece of land; it is willing to go underground if thus it can accomplish its end of reaching the sea. But this view of the hylozoist to us seems fanciful and unconvincing. "The stream is not a very long snake nor an individuality in any sense; it has no individuality in anything it does; it is not in the true sense an agent." (Thomson, "System of Animate Nature," p.330.).

Thomson makes mention of two saving clauses that we must bear in mind. First, it is obvious that the inorganic domain is not chaotic, nor incoherent, nor ineffective. It is orderly, stable, for all we can see, made to last, able to assume forms of great beauty (for instance, the different kinds of rocks), but it does not reveal any resident operative purpose. By purpose, of course, we mean, "intention, conative endeavor, anticipation of an end." We are not using the term purpose to denote use or efficiency, as when people say the purpose of the elephant's trunk is to

be a hand, or that a man worked to good purpose."

The second saving clause is that we are not at this time raising "the question of the part that the inorganic has played in the world wide genetic process in making organism possible, and still plays in affording a basis for, and an opposition to the activities of organisms and personalities." But as we know it, we can see no resident operative purpose in inorganic transformations.

In my study I have found two other men who have expressed themselves upon this point of purpose in the inorganic realm. They are Fletcher and Russell. The latter has but little to say on the subject, even as has the former. Russell explains that in nature we find that processes go on with machine-like regularity. There we find that any particular phenomenon which we may single out has certain antecedent conditions on which it invariably follows; these being given we feel certain that this consequence and no other could follow. We are never disappointed in this expectation when we have become certain of the antecedent conditions; given these and the event in question seems to follow by the same kind of necessity as that which we recognize in the working of a machine. In a machine, when a movement of a definite kind takes place in one part of the mechanism a definite movement necessarily results

-in some other part of the mechanism and just that particular motion and no other is possible at that time. He ends this explanation by saying, "Now inorganic nature at least presents this mechanical aspect." (p.130, "The First Course in Philosophy").

Fletcher on this point is very brief. In part he says, "In mechanical and chemical activity, change is towards an end, but the end is not the idea of the individuum. This is obviously true of inorganic bodies: e.g. the rolling of a stone down hill, the gathering of rust on iron, or the burning of wood." (Fletcher, "Introduction to Philosophy," p.145.f.).

In conclusion to this discussion of purpose in the inorganic realm, I would say that as I apply the term purpose to the inorganic, as I understand purpose, I cannot find that the inorganic has any idea of an end, and an end which guides and makes a difference in the action.

Purpose
in
God.

So far we have concerned ourselves with purpose in human beings, purpose in sub-human life, and purpose in the inorganic realm. Let us now consider purpose in God. We have so far seen that there is purpose in the lives of individuals and groups of individuals of the human race. That is, that ideas and anticipations of ends are entertained, and that these govern actions. We have pointed out that there is purpose

also to be found in the sub-human life, feeling quite sure of it in the higher animals and not being quite as certain, perhaps even doubtful in some of the lower regions of life. Then in the inorganic realm we saw that we should not say that there was purpose, that there ~~wax~~ ideas of, and anticipations of, ends entertained, and that these ideas and anticipations thus held made a difference in the action.

Of course, holding that there is not purpose in the inorganic realm is not saying that it has nothing to do with purpose, or that purpose has no dealing with it. The purpose that we know most intimately, that is the purpose found in human individuals and groups, does make use of the inorganic constantly. For instance, I have the purpose of going down town this evening. The idea of that end will have its effect upon my actions. I shall try to do my work well this afternoon in order that I may conscientiously take the time off. I shall make use of the inorganic to realize my end, i.e., I shall take an electric car. One could vastly multiply illustrations similar to this, - illustrations showing that the inorganic is employed to realize our purposes.

Since we thus make use of the inorganic in realizing our purposes, the question comes to many, -

Is the inorganic and the organic, - the world - something used by One greater than we are, - God, - to realize His purposes? We see a man riding upon a car, thus using the inorganic, we see a building in the process of construction or already created, and we sometimes ask when we see these and similar things, "What is the purpose in, - or of - these things?" Looking at the matter more deeply we mean, what was or is the purpose in a human being in riding in this car, or in constructing this edifice, - what end is there in mind that thus affects activities? Similarly there are those who when they look about upon the lives of men, upon sub-human life, upon inorganic nature, ask, "Are these subservient to a purpose, that is, to One who has a purpose for the realization of which he uses these?" Especially there are those who when they look at the fact of evolution, cosmic, terrestrial, biological, social, say that it is in this way that God works in human and sub-human life and in the inorganic to realize his purpose or purposes. All is in accord with some great end of the Deity, - whether that term or some other is used.

Let us dwell a little upon this idea of God having a purpose or purposes and that the world and the life in it as we know it is in accordance with this purpose. In his book on "The Problems of Philosophy", Hibben points out how those holding various views of

God look upon purpose. He shows how the **Deist** regards the **Diety** as existing outside the world which he once created, sustaining to it a relation similar to that which the artisan sustains to the work which his hands and brain have fashioned. (p.65). Then further on he tells (p.73) how the teleological ideas of the deists may be most adequately represented by an analogy which they insist exists between the products of a mechanic's labor, such as a watch, and the world, which is similarly conceived as the handiwork of God. As the watch contains within its mechanism evidence of a designer and maker, so the orderly adjustments and purposeful contrivances in nature indicate a great and wise **Designer**.

Then Hibben goes on to show how this conception of purpose, which the Deist holds to be external and mechanical is by the pantheist looked upon as an immanent teleology, a force within molding and adapting. "Instead of the conception of an architect planning and fashioning organism from without, there is the conception of an architectonic principle operative within the organism, fulfilling its own ends. The immanent finality reaches its most perfect development and highest realization in the purposive activities of man."

Then he goes on to explain, (p.74) that this doctrine of immanent **finality** appeals also to the

theist. The theist, however, he points out, "takes exception to what the pantheist denies or ignores, - the transcendence of God." He does not care "to equate God with the universe without remainder."

So far in the problem of purpose in God, I have shown that some come to this conclusion as they look upon the adaptations in the world, the world itself, and the fact of evolution. Yet there are those who feel that we do not need to speak of a purpose in a God conceived in a theistic fashion, and if we do hold to purpose in God we must make sure just what we mean by the term God.

Let us, therefore, for a moment consider the pros and cons of the problem of purpose in God. This, to my way of thinking is a big subject. As I study it, I feel it would be well worth the while studying more deeply, and writing more fully upon it than I can at present. Under the circumstances I shall content myself with stating pros and cons and let the reader decide for himself what he holds to be the truth.

As they look upon the adaptations to be found in the world there are those who say that all this must be the work of some Intelligence, who is thus in these adaptations, whether we conceive of them as evolved or not, realizing his purpose. Here is

where use is made of argument of analogy. Paley's famous parable is here frequently employed. "A watch is discovered upon a desert island; though there be no other trace of human life, the finder knows that a complex mechanism of that sort, adapted to a rational use, must have been made by an intelligent being. How much more surely, can we infer that the universe, so much more complex, and attaining so much more glorious ends, was created by a greater Intelligence!" (Drake in "Problems of Religion, stating the argument: p.303). Blowne, a theist, would hold this argument as valid to prove God's existance and to show that there is purpose in Him.

There are on the other hand, those who feel differently about the matter, as, for instance, Drake. Those who object to this argument remind us that the argument from analogy is precarious. They point out that it may be that some kinds of complex mechanism, like the watch, as created by intelligence, while other kinds, like flowers and animals, and the universe as a whole, have come into existance in other ways. They hold that we should not say that the watch is a product of intelligence on any such inferential grounds. We know watches are made by human beings, and do not grow like flowers and animals. They argue that we have no such empirical knowledge of intelligence

as concerned with the creation of flowers, animals, etc.

There is a way of dealing with this purpose in God, other than arguing from analogy. It is to make us of the causal argument. This argument says that to conceive of the cooperation between thousands of unintelligent factors to produce a valuable adjustment as a mere matter of chance is not possible. Democritus, for example, asserted that eyes and ears and all other delicately adjusted organs were the result of the "blind whirl of chance." Drake points out (p.304) that this is as grotesque a supposition as to hold that a keg of printers type, flung down ever so many million times, would eventually happen to fall into just the right order to form the text of a book. Now, there are those who hold that all this cannot be the result of chance and must be the work of some Intelligence ruled by a purpose of his own.

Yet there are those who argue that we do not have just these two alternatives, - chance or a Being who has caused them in accordance with some purpose or plan of His. They point to the evolutionary theory which Darwin made famous, - natural selection. In the words of Drake, those who from natural selection point out or rather point to "the fact that - better-and-better-eyes (or approximations-to-eyes)-conduce-better-to survival." It is noted, that in the

reproductive process, through ^{which} all organisms come into existence, innumerable obscure physical forces are at work producing slight variations. In the struggle for existence between members of a given generation those will tend to outlive the others, and so reproduce their particular type, whose variation has given them any sort of advantage over their rivals. Moreover, it is also pointed out in this connection that the apparent adjustments of inorganic nature to the needs of the organic forms can be explained in terms of the adjustment of the organisms to inorganic nature. For instance, instead of marveling that the earth's atmosphere should have just the right proportions of oxygen, carbonic acid gas, etc., to maintain the organic life which exists upon its surface, it is pointed out that organic life has come to be of such a nature as to utilize such proportions of gasses because it has come into existence under those circumstances.

Speaking of natural selection reminds me of what Sorley says in his book on "Moral Values and the Idea of God." (p.426 f.). There he expresses the opinion that natural selection could not favor the transition from the inorganic to the organic. He and Drake thus look upon the matter differently.

Sorley also holds that there is good reason to postulate that the process which leads to the organic and purposive is animated by a purpose which must be

universal, since it is neither individual or racial. Yet there are, as Russell Points out (First Course in Philosophy," p.141 f.) those who argue that a teleological principle or agency need not be assumed to exist in inorganic nature, because it exists in a more advanced stage of evolution.

Now we come to form of the argument which rests upon the presence of values in the world. They who hold this to be valid argue that though we may not need to assume a supernatural agency to account for the mutual adaptation of organism and environment considered merely as physical facts, we are irresistibly led, when we see precious values emerge here at the end of what to some is an apparently blind process, to suppose that "God in his infinite goodness and wisdom planned and initiated the whole process."

On the other hand there are those who ask it it is a mark of infinite goodness and wisdom to "make a thousand useless forms for every one that is of use, to kill off a thousand young creatures, equally endowed with the craving for life, for every one that can survive." (Drake, "Problems of Religion," p.306 f.). It is Drake's opinion that the more one studies the evolutionary process the more it seems a blind struggle, and the less it suggests an

intelligent creator. He points out how that millions of ill adapted creatures have prematurely perished for one that was lucky enough to reproduce its type. He also writes about "the very partial nature of success attained even with us, 'human beings,' who have survived."

Those who hold the contrary view also ask what seems to be the end designed, asking if it is human happiness, or virtue, or the "happiness of the whole sentient creation." They point to the presence of both pleasure and pain. It is here also that Drake in this discussion writes, "Nothing seems more clearly designed than rattlesnake's fangs, tiger's claws, the suctorial organs of bed bugs and mosquitoes and fleas.

Above I have quoted Drake as saying that the more one studies the evolutionary process the more it seems a blind struggle, and the less it suggests an intelligent creator. Of course, I suppose that he would grant that evolution as we find it in human society is not such, or at least, not so much of a blind affair as he seems to think evolution on lower levels is. His statement brought to my mind the attitude of Hobhouse in his book "Development and Purpose." For instance, in his introduction, (p.xxvi) he writes, "Many difficulties remain, which will be found freely admitted in the text,

but it is submitted, not in the least as a matter of faith, but as sound working hypothesis, that the evolutionary process can be best understood as the effect of a purpose slowly working itself out under limiting conditions which it brings successively under control." Again he writes, "Further, an impulse to an end implies something in the Nature of Mind." (p.350). Once more, he says, "The existence of a Purpose implies a Mind commensurate with that Purpose." Some, like Browne, would believe this to be true; but others, like Drake, would say that evolution does not show the purpose that some think it does.

After considering the above mentioned facts and statements and arguments, what have we to say about purpose in God? There will be those who with Browne will conclude that we must believe in design or purpose of God to explain things. The Deists and Theists will agree to an extent at least in this. Then there will be the pantheists, who, if they are personal pantheists will say about the same, if not the same, as the others. Again we shall find pantheists who will hold that we can say that there is purpose in God only in so far as we find it in life, human and sub-human. In the human life we find purpose and since human life is in, or of God, expression, or part of God, we can thus say there is

purpose in God. It's best manifestation is found in the life of human individuals of the best sort and in groups of these individuals. Again, those who look to Humanity as God will say purpose is in God in the same sense as do the latter sort of pantheists. It will thus depend on what your conception of God is, as to what you mean by saying there is purpose in God. The conception of God and the idea of purpose in Him will be influenced by what you consider the correct interpretation of the arguments that I have stated and also by other arguments which we used concerning God. In this paper, however, I cannot argue the pros and cons of this or that conception of God.

Summary.

What, in part at least, have I accomplished in this study of the "Status of Purpose in Reality"? First of all I have considered definitions of the substantives in the title, especially the terms reality and purpose. We agreed in defining purpose as signifying an idea of some object or end which guides or shall guide our actions in the realizing of that object or end. We also differentiated purpose from mechanism, seeing that it cannot be stated in terms of mechanism. Then on examination of our own human experience we find purpose of varying degrees. We concluded that in the sub-human life,

especially in the higher and possibly in the lower, there was purpose, -probably. We came to this conclusion on the basis of things held in common in the behavior of human and sub-human life. We then looked at inorganic nature and saw that in the inorganic process we could not see purpose. Finally, we considered the problem of purpose in God, and came to the conclusion that it depended on what sort of an idea of God your argumentation led you to; that in all the conceptions you might say that there is purpose in God, but you would not mean the same in all the different ideas of God.

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