

Bibliographical Postscript

For me, one very considerable advantage of having written a book intended only to describe the logic of the traditional understanding of God, rather than to defend every premise thereof as exhaustively as possible, is that I have been able with a clear conscience to proceed in a largely synoptic fashion, merely touching on many themes that by all rights deserve entire books to themselves. After all, my ambition in these pages has been only to show how certain classical religious and metaphysical understandings of God are grounded in the phenomenology of our experience of reality, in the hope of clarifying what the great theistic traditions truly claim regarding the divine nature. For this very reason I have not been motivated by any great desire for innovation. I might claim some originality for my particular synthesis of certain materials and ideas, or for a few of my critical assertions, or for a few distinctively personal inflections in my argument; but for the most part I have invoked philosophical principles along the way that have already enjoyed centuries—even millennia—of advocacy and comprehensive exposition by very formidable thinkers. So it seems sufficient to me to offer here a few suggestions for further reading, for those genuinely interested in these matters (though, of course, I can provide only a microscopic sampling of a vast literature).

Many of the clearest general treatments of traditional Christian metaphysics available in English, not surprisingly, have been produced by scholars of Thomas Aquinas's thought. For a lucid course of Christian metaphysical studies, for instance, I would recommend W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, 2001), supplemented by the various essays collected in the same author's *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being—God—Person* (Notre Dame, 1994). For an even clearer (and somewhat more tra-

ditional) treatment of the same ideas, I would recommend two books by the Anglican theologian E. L. Mascall, both of which have unfortunately been out of print since the 1970s, but used copies of which are easy to find: *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism* (Longman, Green, 1943) and its sequel *Existence and Analogy* (Longman, Green, 1949). There are some readers who, due to some peculiarity of temperament or the tragic privations of a misspent youth, prefer their metaphysics to come wrapped in the language of analytic philosophy; for them, happily, there exists Barry Miller's impressive trilogy: *From Existence to God: A Contemporary Philosophical Argument* (Routledge, 1992), *A Most Unlikely God: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature of God* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), and *The Fullness of Being: A New Paradigm for Existence* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002). For still more ambitious readers, with an appetite for contemporary attempts at creative philosophical retrievals and reinterpretations of the Christian metaphysical tradition, a few recent titles occur to me: Oliva Blanchette's *Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics* (Catholic University of America Press, 2003); Lorenz Bruno Puntel's *Structure and Being: A Theoretical Framework for a Systematic Philosophy* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000) and *Being and God: A Systematic Approach in Confrontation with Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-Luc Marion* (Northwestern University Press, 2011); and William Desmond's ecstatically original trilogy, *Being and the Between* (State University of New York Press, 1995), *Ethics and the Between* (State University of New York Press, 2001), and *God and the Between* (Blackwell, 2008). I would also recommend various volumes by Stephen R. L. Clark, a philosopher to whose style of thought I am perhaps inordinately partial: *From Athens to Jerusalem: The Love of Wisdom and the Love of God* (Clarendon, 1984), *The Mysteries of Religion: An Introduction to Philosophy Through Religion* (Basil Blackwell, 1986), and *God, Religion, and Reality* (SPCK, 1998). And, for an especially creative and careful attempt to produce newer arguments for the classical approach to God as the source of all being and intelligibility, see Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy* (Eerdmans, 2010).

There are fewer exhaustive treatments of the history of traditional Jewish metaphysics in English than there ought to be. The first volume of *The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: From Antiquity Through the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), edited by Steven Nadler and T. M. Rudavsky, is quite good (and quite expensive). *The Jewish Philosophy Reader* (Routledge, 2000), edited by Daniel H. Frank, Oliver Leaman, and Charles H. Manekin, is an excellent anthology, though it accomplishes only what an anthol-

ogy can. Frank and Leaman are also the editors of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), a very fine collection of essays, and Manekin is also the editor of *Medieval Jewish Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), a very good if all too brief selection of texts.

For an introduction to Islamic metaphysics, remarkably comprehensive for so moderately sized a volume, one should read Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (State University of New York Press, 2006). One might also consult Majid Fakhry's *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (Columbia University Press, 2004). Oliver Leaman's *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Polity, 2009) is another good survey of the topic. And there are many illuminating essays to be found in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor.

The long and varied history of Hindu metaphysics and religion has been recounted in many books, either in whole or in part, and really there is such an embarrassment of bibliographical riches here that it is difficult to choose one or two exemplary texts. That said, I still think it is very hard to find a better survey—either for scholarly range or expository felicity—than Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's classic *Indian Philosophy*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1929). Radhakrishnan is also editor, along with Charles A. Moore, of *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1957), which is about as judicious a selection of texts as one could desire. And, providing yet further evidence of my predilection for books on Indian religion that were still influential when I was very young, I cannot resist recommending the somewhat “evangelical” treatment of Hindu thought (from a distinctly neo-Vedantic perspective) written by Swami Prabhavananda with the assistance of Frederick Manchester, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Doubleday Anchor, 1963). For a largely topical rather than philosophically sectarian survey of Indian metaphysical tradition, there is much to be said for J. N. Mohanty's brief but illuminating *Classical Indian Philosophy: An Introductory Text* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000). It is of course all but impossible to understand the development of Hindu metaphysics and religion, at least in the main, without some familiarity with the Upanishads; among currently available English translations of the major texts, I think I would recommend Patrick Olivelle's *Upaniṣads* (Oxford University Press, 2008), if only for its general accuracy and clear diction. For those with a special interest in the mediaeval Vedantic systems, it is worth reading, on the one hand, *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana* with Shankara's commentary, of which the complete English

translation by George Thibaut appeared in two of the volumes of the old Sacred Books of the East series (1890, 1896) and then was reprinted by Dover Press in 1962, still in two volumes; and, on the other, the Sutras with the commentary of Ramanuja, also translated by Thibaut and published in the Sacred Books of the East (1904). And, chiefly on account of my own deep interest in and affection for the thought of Ramanuja, I would also recommend Julius J. Lipner's *The Face of Truth: A Study of Meaning and Metaphysics in the Vedāntic Theology of Rāmānuja* (State University of New York Press, 1986).

For a religious tradition of such beauty and nobility, Sikhism has received curiously inadequate treatment in English. There are many books on the history of Sikhism and a number of brief introductions to its spiritual practices and teachings, but very few treatments in depth. Among general introductory texts, W. Owen Cole's *Understanding Sikhism* (Dunedin, 2004) is quite trustworthy. For a good concise historical treatment, often delightfully opinionated in tone, see Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs* (Doubleday, 1999).

On the "question of consciousness" and the philosophy of mind (a field that generates a great deal of print but not, alas, a great deal of cogent theory), I would certainly urge interested readers to make their way through a collection of essays edited by Robert C. Koons and George Bealer entitled *The Waning of Materialism* (Oxford University Press, 2010), which contains an impressive variety of arguments against the reduction of consciousness to purely physical processes (though not all of the alternatives proposed strike me as plausible). William Hasker's *The Emergent Self* (Cornell University Press, 1999) is a frequently devastating critique of the materialist account of mind; and I say this even though I do not believe that Hasker's own solution to the mind-body problem—which he calls "emergent dualism"—can possibly be correct. Similarly, I can recommend Edward Feser's *Philosophy of Mind* (One World, 2005) as an excellent introduction to the discipline, requiring no specialized knowledge from its readers, but cannot wholly endorse his ultimate preference for the Aristotelian-Thomistic hylomorphic account of the relation of soul and body (to which I am sympathetic but which I regard as ultimately inadequate). And while I am recommending books with which I am not in perfect agreement, I might mention that the books of the great brain scientist (and confirmed dualist, of a fairly Cartesian variety) Sir John C. Eccles are well worth reading, if only because they tend to be so infuriating to doctrinaire materialists of the sort who believe that neurobiology will one day discover the physiological springs of consciousness; a good volume with which to begin might be *Evolution of the Brain: Creation of the Self* (Routledge, 1989). For a particularly thorough and robust defense of conscious-

ness as a reality formally distinct from mere brain processes, see Edward F. Kelly, Emily Williams Kelly, et al., *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). I also highly recommend the seventh chapter of Stephen R. L. Clark's *From Athens to Jerusalem* (see above), "Could Consciousness Evolve?" In Thomas Nagel's recent *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (Oxford University Press, 2012) one encounters the fascinating phenomenon of an intellectually honest atheist who recognizes the logical deficiencies of the mechanistic materialist account of (in particular) consciousness, and who finds himself irresistibly drawn toward a picture of nature to which teleology (the final causality that the mechanical philosophy exorcised from the physical realm) has been restored. The book has been reviewed poorly by a number of critics who have, without exception, failed to understand its central arguments (which are very clearly stated, to be honest), and as far as I can tell it has been well received only by theists. And it is hard not to feel that Nagel is able to maintain his own atheism consistently only because the picture of God with which he is familiar is that of a deistic demiurge who constructs a cosmos out of otherwise mindless elements external to himself; thus he sees cosmic teleology as somehow an alternative to the idea of divine creation rather than (as it is) an essential feature of any classical picture of God's relation to the world. For those interested in questions regarding the status of mind in light of quantum physics, and specifically whether the consciousness of an observing mind must stand somehow outside the probability wave of the physical events it observes, I suppose I might recommend Henry P. Stapp, *Mindful Universe: Quantum Mechanics and the Participating Observer*, 2nd ed. (Springer-Verlag, 2011); it is an issue I raise nowhere in this book, but it is quite fascinating.

For a more general treatment of the true relationship between modern science and traditional metaphysics, and of the distinction between their proper spheres of inquiry, I earnestly recommend Stephen M. Barr's *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame University Press, 2003); unlike so many physicists (Victor Stenger, Lawrence Krauss, and so on) who have attempted (blunderingly) to write about such matters as the metaphysics of creation ex nihilo and the contingency of the physical universe upon God, Barr actually understands the philosophical ideas with which he engages. Equally admirable is Conor Cunningham's splendid and sprawling *Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong* (Eerdmans, 2010), which contains a great deal of material relevant to topics raised in chapter five of this book. Cunningham's book is also a splendid riposte to Richard Dawkins, simply in providing an ex-

ample of how a genuine scholar goes about arguing across disciplinary lines; whereas Dawkins has repeatedly flung himself into philosophical disputes whose most elementary principles he has never managed to learn, Cunningham devoted considerable time and effort to the study of modern molecular and evolutionary biology before presuming to enter these debates, and as a result produced a book that does far more than merely embarrass its author (though also, admittedly, a book unlikely to become a bestseller). While we are at it, incidentally, for approaches to evolutionary biology and genetic inheritance somewhat richer and more sophisticated than those provided by the metaphor of genetic selfishness, see Denis Noble, *The Music of Life: Biology Beyond Genes* (Oxford University Press, 2006) as well as two books by Michael Morange: *The Misunderstood Gene* (Harvard University Press, 2001) and *Life Explained* (Yale University Press, 2008). No more recent account of the rise of modern science and of the metaphysical revolution that accompanied it has surpassed—or for that matter equaled—E. A. Burt's classic *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, 2nd ed. (Kegan Paul, 1932), currently available from Dover Books.

For larger surveys of the rise of modernity, from a variety of perspectives, I also recommend Michael J. Buckley's *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (Yale University Press, 1990), Michael Allen Gillespie's *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), Stephen Toulmin's *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 1990), Louis Dupré's *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (Yale University Press, 2004), and Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (Belknap Harvard, 2007).

On the matter of the relative authority and credibility of personal religious experience, the interested reader should probably consult William P. Alston's *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Cornell University Press, 1993). I would also recommend chapter twelve of Stephen R. L. Clark's *The Mysteries of Religion* (see above).

Ours is something of a golden age for the publication of the primary texts of the world's great contemplative traditions. When Aldous Huxley wrote *The Perennial Philosophy: An Interpretation of the Great Mystics, East and West* (Harper, 1945)—a seminal anthology of the mystical literature of both the East and the West, as well as an extraordinarily interesting analysis of contemplative tradition—the number of texts at his disposal was remarkably small, at least by current standards. It is still something of an indispensable text in the field, despite a few small eccentricities; but were Huxley writing it today he would have a vastly larger reservoir of good translations of the world's mystical literature upon which to draw. For instance—and this is my chief recommendation for further reading—

Paulist Press has been issuing volumes in its Classics of Western Spirituality series for decades now, and so far has produced over a hundred volumes of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Native American texts in English critical editions, whose scholarly apparatus are never either inadequate or excessive, all obtainable at exceedingly reasonable prices. No comparable series of Eastern texts exists in English, unfortunately, but those too are more widely and readily available than was the case not long ago. For a sound popular introduction to Indian contemplative tradition one might read Arvind Sharma's concise *A Guide to Hindu Spirituality* (World Wisdom, 2006). Readers interested in Sufi tradition should read Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (Harper One, 2007). Nasr is also editor of *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations* (Crossroad, 1991) and *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations* (Crossroad, 1997), which are as comprehensive an introduction to their topic as can be found in English. Some particularly good anthologies of Christian spiritual writings would be Olivier Clément's *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Texts from the Patristic Era with Commentary* (New City, 1996), Harvey D. Egan's *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Liturgical Press, 1991), and James S. Cutsinger's *Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism* (World Wisdom, 2003). There are a number of general anthologies of mystical literature out there, among which I am rather partial to F. C. Happold's *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (Penguin, 1963). For anthologies of a more devotional cast, those compiled by the remarkable Eknath Easwaran are all quite good, especially *God Makes the Rivers to Flow: Sacred Literature of the World* (Nilgiri, 1982).

And, for any atheist readers of this book who are earnestly committed to their unbelief, I hope it will not seem presumptuous of me if I make this earnest plea. If you truly wish to reject entirely all belief in God, and to do so with real intellectual integrity and consistency, have enough respect for your own powers of reason to read atheist philosophers of genuine stature and ability. If you have cluttered your shelves or (God forbid) your mind with the arguments of the New Atheists or similarly slapdash polemicists, then you have done yourself a profound disservice. The books these writers produce and the arguments they advance, without exception, fall below even the most minimal standards of intelligent and informed debate. This is true even in the case of the academically certified philosophers in their ranks; you may find it possible to take some pleasure in, say, the dainty poisoned pastries confectioned by A. C. Grayling or the laboriously wheezing engines of confusion constructed by Daniel Dennett, but it is a pleasure purchased at the price of mental indolence. For recent atheist texts that require a genuine engagement of the thinking mind, I would recommend,

before any other, J. L. Mackie's *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and Against the Existence of God* (Oxford University Press, 1982); and I would also suggest reading his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Viking, 1977) for a wonderfully candid approach to moral questions in the absence of any belief in God. Perhaps the second-best book in this line would be Jordan Howard Sobel's *Logic and Theism: Arguments for and Against Belief in God* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). And, perhaps a rank or two below both of these but still very thoughtful, stands Graham Oppy's *Arguing About Gods* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). I admit that I believe that all of the arguments in these books can be defeated by the better arguments to be found on the side of belief in God, but not without a real effort of thought; and, while all of these books contain certain misconceptions regarding traditional metaphysical claims, none of them is a exercise in casual ignorance in the way that all the recent texts in popular atheism are. If nothing else, these texts invite one to think, rather than merely to think one is thinking, and so allow for genuine debate, of the kind in which it is possible for truth actually to appear as the governing ideal to which all parties are answerable. Since I believe, as I have argued above, that "truth" is one of the names of God, I cannot help but admire anyone willing to enter into such debates honestly for his or her piety.

Finally, however, when all arguments have subsided and one must decide what it is one truly believes regarding God—or, at least, how one understands one's experience of the world in relation to the question of God—there are very few books that can properly prepare one for the contemplative task of making that decision. So, for my last recommendation, principally as an expression of my own sensibility, I think I should like to suggest Thomas Traherne's *Centuries*, which I regard as one of the most compelling and beautiful descriptions of seeing reality as it truly is, in both its immanent and transcendent dimensions. I might on another day have chosen another book, I confess; but I doubt I could choose a better one.