

theism, ...in some sense a Supreme Individual...who can be described by the categories that apply to finite individuals, ...who is strong in his weakness and weak in his strength, who judges us in his affirmation of our humanness and who affirms us in his judgment of our conditions of worth. And finally, the revolutionary God...of social change is the God of the atonement, "entering "into our experiencing with positive regard and empathy," thus providing our "capacity to affirm and empathize with the suffering of others....liberation."

Voltaire's bromide that we returned the compliment of God's making us in his image, viz. that we have made him in our image, points to a psychosocio-inevitability, viz. that intimate relationships are two-way osmotic, the dynamics of the relationship producing mutual shaping. Loree and I, "cleaving alone to each other," have been shaping each other for 30 years [and, paradoxically, are in consequence both more alike and more different]....all of which leads up to the question *To what extent, and how, does our religion/occupation shape [our image of] God?* Schweitzer's "He comes to us as one unknown" is true in its meaning that Jesus should have the initiative in the shaping process, but it does not affect the fact that a good PhD thesis could be written on the doctrine of God in Schweitzer (i.e., how Schweitzer's genes and commitments shaped his vision of God)....all of which leads up to the question, So what? I might conclude for (1) a little more humility in theology and theologies, or (2) a little more kindness in dealing with others' visions-images of God, or (3) a little more assiduity in theologizing proper, i.e. in shaping our doctrine(s) of God, or (4) a little more listening to those outside the marriage (God/devotee, man/woman) as to the realities inside the marriage. It's the 4th that I'm up to in this thinksheet--specifically, finding correctives, in biblical-theological history and from other traditions and disciplines, to the tendency of therapists who refer to God, innerly and outerly, to see him only as the Great Therapist on High [or in "the Depths"], the Asclepius of therapeutic cults, the Great Physician who narrowly, almost mindlessly, wills the defeat of sickness, disease, illness, crippling, and ultimately all of life's untowardnesses. In Gordon Allport's terms, the God of "extrinsic" religion [i.e., of the person who uses his/her religion] instead of the God of "intrinsic" religion [i.e., of the person who lives his/her religion].

EXERCISE: Use the other side of this sheet to critique, in the light of the above in general and existentially [i.e., your own experience], the God-picture of the University of Chicago's R&P ["Religion and Personality"] Don S. Browning as it appears in his ATONEMENT AND PSYCHOTHERAPY (Westm.66, in NYTS Library RR80.B82). Don competently interfaces traditional atonement theories (Irenaeus, Anselm, all Bushnell's major relevant works) with modern therapies, and I here summarize his "God":....I reject the God who robs us of our autonomy, the God [of Greek metaphysics] who is removed from our agony, the God whom we can contain in our systems [such as Latin scholasticism], the God who prefers me and my tribe [confirming personal and national idolatries], the God who meets one's neurotic demands [confirming our values and commitments], "the God beyond God" [Tillich] who in being "being itself" accepts me but without warmth and intimacy and personality, the deus ex machina who intervenes to save us on our own demonic conditions without repentance--the God who delivers us from confronting (259) "our inability to cope with reality in terms of our own parochial perceptions."....I accept the God who (259) "affirms us and...enters into our lives with unconditional emphatic acceptance," thus furthering our autonomous growth toward maturity. "The God of the atonement, the God of suffering and weakness of the cross, does not take over the executive functions of our lives," but helps us master our present and future, not infantilizing us by doing for us what we can and should do for ourselves. He supports our "responsible autonomy," being "an invariant source of affirmation and love." God's supportive love gives us the courage to face our experiences, ourselves, honestly, and provides the foundation "for all growth into maturity by communicating...that inner sense of validity upon which all development depends." "All human relationships that facilitate growth operate in analogy to his atoning love for mankind." Encouraging us to devise and act on "symbolic hunches about the world," God gives us "the confident poise" to "undergo their correction and refinement by subsequent experience."....Mine, then, is (262) "a God of