

we believe they are also categories of being. Why then shall we make an exception in the case of moral obligation and hold that it has only psychological significance, and that there is nothing in the ultimate nature of being which corresponds to it? This argument for a metaphysical basis of moral obligation certainly places moral obligation on an equal footing with the conceptions of cause and substance and if one is purely subjective, why not the others, leaving us in absolute solipsism?

Another argument for the grounding of moral obligation in reality may be found by analogy in the treatment of natural laws. What do we do with natural laws when we treat them from the standpoint of a philosophy of nature? We do not erect these laws like a scaffolding over things and command obedience. Natural laws are instead our thought-representatives of certain fixed, orderly ways of behavior on the part of the reality we know. "Laws of Nature" are so many abstractions made by the thinking mind in presence of the natural world. Reality in its changing activity founds law, gives a basis for this subjective interpretation, called natural law, by the observing mind. Now, if the natural world is the manifestation of some ultimate Being, must not the so-called natural laws be only our thought-representatives of the ways of energizing on the part of that ultimate Being?

Just so, I believe, must moral obligation in the shape of moral law, revealed by the functioning of reason, be carried over from ourselves to some ultimate ground. What I have already said supports this belief. In addition, I may appeal to Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence" as the deepest factor of our inner life. We do not regard ourselves as self-sufficient but believe that we are real yet somehow dependent upon the one ground of all reality. If we did not have this consciousness of dependence, we might be satisfied to view the moral law as entirely subjective. Instead, as we ground the laws of the dependent natural world in the one ultimate Being, so we who are likewise dependent are impelled to ground our moral law in that supreme Being.

Another argument in favor of going beyond the mere psychological aspect of ethics is the relation of ethics to being. As Newman Smyth says: "All ethics involves some metaphysics;