I am grateful to the editor of this volume being published to honor Professor Charles Hartshorne for inviting me to contribute to it. It is my privilege to join this chorus of tributes to a thinker and writer who is justly considered a leading luminary in the world of philosophy of religion. Anyone who is acquainted with Professor Hartshorne’s writings does not have to be convinced of his earnestness in thinking out ways and means of stating philosophically the nature of God, in relation to man and the world. He is a seeker of the truth and even if he is not a mystic, it is certain his intelligence has that clarity which is capable of reflecting the truth in his mind.

Professor Hartshorne is a humble man whose humility is genuine in that though he is full of confidence in his philosophical ability, he is never dogmatic. I know from personal experience that he very patiently hears out other people’s comments on his ideas and arguments even when these are attempts to demolish them. This, to my mind, is a great quality in a philosopher.

This article will be a brief exposition of Professor Hartshorne’s concepts of religion and God. It is well known that religion does not mean the same thing to everybody. Professor Hartshorne has a distinct idea of the nature of religion. Whether that idea is comprehensive enough to include the great religions of the world will be critically examined. I will also briefly look at Professor Hartshorne’s concepts of God and review it in the light of a few strands of Indian thought on the ultimate reality. If I may anticipate a little, it will be found that his concept of God is not absent in some Indian philosophies of religion. It must however be pointed out that the Indians’ ideas do not completely agree with those of Professor Hartshorne’s. The difference is not so much one of substance as one of emphasis. It will be seen that except for one extreme philosophy of the supreme reality in India, most other doctrines will be found to agree with Professor Hartshorne’s stress on the presence of God in the world though Indian thought emphasizes the transcendence of the Deity.

Professor Hartshorne himself has said that his fundamental ideas on religion have been shaped by his upbringing in a family in his younger days.
which was deeply Christian. In his philosophy of religion, as it is well known, he has rejected what he considers as limitations of the concept of God in classical theism. It will not be wrong to say that his idea of religion is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but that his philosophy of religion has been nurtured by his deep and life-long study of the great systems of the doctrine of God current in the Western world. He is primarily a philosopher and despite his many references to God and other topics in certain Indian philosophies of religion, he is not a comparative religionist. Nevertheless, his concept of God cannot be dissociated from his idea of the essence of religion. Indeed it is true to say that what he thinks is the nature of religion has influenced his concept of God. A comparative review of his thought on some Indian doctrines of religion and of God as indicated above will show that his own thinking on the subject is not unknown to Indian philosophers of religion and theologists.

This is not to deny his originality but is an attempt to show that serious and earnest philosophical thinking runs on parallel lines in different countries and climes and ages. Philosophy is one fundamentally though extremely varied even as God is One with many aspects. On this idea that God though One has many aspects we shall say little more later.

Professor Hartshorne has said that in order to find out the religious idea of God we must go to religion itself. Whatever philosophical formulation is made of the concept of God, religion is the primary source for discovering that idea. Religion is experiential and intuitive. There are such things as religious experience and religious intuition. Experience and intuition of a religious kind are pre-philosophical. Professor Hartshorne believes that religion and philosophy have influenced each other, a fact which is recognised but not yet admitted. It is difficult to disentangle the pre-philosophical elements of religion. Indeed Professor Hartshorne holds that religion becomes mature after the development of philosophy. Nevertheless, he states that religion still has to be the source of our knowledge of the idea of God.

What does maturity of religion mean? Is it that religion becomes intellectually mature or that religious experience and intuition become deeper and more capable of knowing more of the mystery of the Divine Being? Religious experience is a developing process and with the progressive practice of psychological disciplines, a religious seeker can have a deeper, clearer and more comprehensive experience of the truth of the Spirit and its relation with the world and man. It can also give us a wider and maturer knowledge of morals, both individual and collective and of the destiny of man. A religious aspirant *qua* religious aspirant does not need to formulate his experiences and intuitions logically. This raises the difficult question of the nature of religious experience, whether or not it has any truth-claim. Professor Hartshorne says that religious experience does not *prove* (emphasis mine) the existence of God. To prove is an intellectual exercise. Religious experience, according to those who have them, carries its own evidence. In fact, it may be said that all experience does so. I do not have to prove to myself logically that I am