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Whitehead's Metaphysics of God

Christopher Cornish
Carroll College

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Whitehead's Metaphysics of God

By

Christopher T. Cornish

A Thesis submitted to Carroll College in partial fulfillment of the requirement for academic honors with a B.A. Degree.

Department of Philosophy

Helena, Montana

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This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Philosophy.

[Signature]
Director

Reader

W. M. Thompson
Reader

March 22, 1983
Date
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Introduction

A. Biography of Alfred North Whitehead.

Alfred North Whitehead had three careers, two in England and one in America. Born in the village of Kent in 1861, he was educated at Sherborn School and at Trinity College in Cambridge. For twenty-five years he taught mathematics at Trinity. It was here, too, that Whitehead collaborated with Bertrand Russell on their famed Principia Mathematica, which went to press in 1910. From Trinity he moved to London, eventually becoming associated with the University of London as a member of its faculty of science and later as the dean of this faculty. During these thirteen years at London, he also developed a strong interest in the problems of higher education, being concerned particularly with the impact of modern industrial civilization upon the enterprise of learning. But his major writings while at London represented an attempt to replace Isaac Newton's concept of nature with his own empirically grounded theory. These works on the philosophy of science include his Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Science (1919), The Concept of Nature (1920), and The Principle of Relativity (1922).

When Whitehead was sixty-three years old and nearing retirement, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Harvard and embarked upon the third and, in many ways, most important of his careers. To his achievements as a logician, mathematician, and philosopher of science he added his works as a metaphysician, writing at this time his Science and the Modern World (1925), Process and Reality (1929), and Adventures of Ideas (1933). In 1937 Whitehead retired, but continued to live near Harvard Yard until his death in 1947 at the age of eighty-seven.
What motivated Whitehead to write his later works was his conviction that scientific knowledge had arrived at a point in its history that called for a new scheme of ideas to reflect more adequately the new developments in science. Since scientific thought always relies upon some scheme of ideas, he said, the importance of philosophy is to make such schemes explicit so that they can be criticized and improved.

The central aim in Whitehead's chief work, Process and Reality, was to replace the traditional philosophy of substance with a philosophy of organism. The thesis was that only a philosophy of organism can provide clarification of a universe in which process, dynamic actualization, interdependence, and creativity are disclosed as the primary data of immediate experience. Whitehead expressed some traditional modes of thought, and formulates his philosophy of organism through a dialogue with the great logicians, scientists, metaphysicians, and theologians of the past. He found the thought of Plato more decisive than that of Kant; he considered Bergson more suggestive than Hegel; he contended that Locke was closer to a philosophy of organism than Descartes; and he was ready to choose Leibniz over Aristotle. Whitehead's philosophy was a speculative philosophy formulated into a coherent and logical system of general concepts which were intended to provide the categorial interpretation for any and all elements of human experience.

Though his chief work, Process and Reality, was a massive and intricate statement, Whitehead acknowledged in the preface that "There remains the final reflection, how shallow, puny, and imperfect are efforts to sound the depths in the nature of things. In philosophical discussion, the merest hint of dogmatic certainty as to finality of statement is an exhibition of folly." His metaphysical writings combined,
then, a bold and creative mind tempered with a sensitive humility.

B. Importance of Whitehead's Philosophy of God.

Whitehead once said that Buddhism is a metaphysics generating a religion while Christianity is a religion in search of a metaphysics. Down through its history Christianity has been wed to a number of metaphysical grammars, prominent partners being Platonism, Aristotelianism, Hegelianism and existentialism. In particular the creeds of the Church and much classical theology show the use of Platonic and Aristotelian categories. But, so the proponents of a new mate argue, Christianity has outlived these partners, or, at least, needs a new partner for a new time.

Why does Christianity need a new metaphysics? The followers of Whitehead argue that the classical metaphysics is no longer viable; the new physics has changed our conception of the world. But there are also theological reasons. The nature of God as defined in this metaphysics makes it difficult to speak of God acting in the world. The problem of evil is also inadequately treated.

This thesis deals with Whitehead's metaphysics and philosophy of God, in order to determine whether Whitehead's thought provides an adequate way to talk about God, his relation to the world, and the reality of evil in the world.
Chapter I. The World in Whitehead's Philosophy

A. The Motivation of Whitehead's Thinking.

There are numerous motivations behind Whitehead's philosophy. One is the theory of evolution; his system could be presented as an attempt to state in philosophical terms an evolutionary view of the universe. Another is the theory of relativity; in that case his work might also be seen as a philosophical statement of the perspectival and relational character of things. But still another motivation—the one from which we shall begin our consideration—is Whitehead's conviction that human experience is a fundamental reality, such that any adequate account of things must not end up explaining experience away. We see colors and hear sounds; we feel compassion, indignation, and obligation; we love and hate; we are moved by music, poetry, and paintings; we touch; we decide. The statements call to mind that which we know best—our own process of experiencing. Whitehead's contention is that this is a fundamental part of the world. Human experiences are not mere chimeras; feelings are not mere psychic additions with which we somehow clothe a more real world of atoms without qualities moving mechanically in a void without value. Our experiences—moral, aesthetic, religious, sensory—belong as much to 'the nature of things' as do the phenomena investigated by the physicist, chemist, or biologist. An adequate account of things has no more license to explain away the felt qualities of human experience than it has to dismiss the relativity of space-time or the evolutionary origins of the species. This, at least, is what Whitehead believes. Our instinctive conviction is that our experiences are as real as anything could possibly be. Without compelling evidence
to the contrary, a philosophy that diverges from this conviction is simply not being empirical—it is not talking about our world.

Reductivism, to be sure, is often pursued because it does seem required by some compelling evidence. In those instances its pursuit, even if misguided, is an admirable expression of intellectual honesty. Whitehead is convinced, however, that faithfulness to the data of science—for example, the predictability of the physical correlates to human emotion, or the regularity of human behavior patterns—does not require the dismissal of experience. The 'flux of energy' and the 'red glow of the sunset' may each be viewed on its own terms as an element of the same world. Without rejecting the standpoint of science, the world of experienced emotion may be affirmed as fully real. This is Whitehead's contention. But how this intuitively evident affirmation can be maintained must now be shown.

The place to begin is with Whitehead's account of the nature of human experience. Then we will discuss Whitehead's concept of the natural world. This background will enable us to consider how Whitehead proposes to relate physical nature and human experience, that is, to examine Whitehead's philosophical understanding of the world.

B. An Analysis of Experience.

Whitehead believes that some of our most common assumptions are somewhat superficial. One such superficiality is manifest, Whitehead thinks, in our habit of equating experience with conscious sensations such as seeing trees and hearing voices. To understand Whitehead's viewpoint let us follow his analysis of human experience.

Consider the present moment of your experience. What is there?
The most prominent factor in the present is the immediate past moment of experience. The ideas entertained and emotions enjoyed in that experience of, say, a quarter of a second ago have now moved vaguely but massively into the present. So pervasive is the past's ingredient in the present, indeed, that we commonly think of the present as continuing its preceding moments. The continuity cannot be denied. We are what we were. Even so, that is only part of the story; there also is a degree of discontinuity. New elements insinuate themselves, and elements of the past moment disappear into irrelevance as new purposes reorganize the contents of the present. We are what we were, but also we are more and less than what we were. There is continuity and discontinuity. Present and past experiences seem to be a kind of unity of diverse moments. The past is in, yet somehow other than, the present.

But the present moment of experience, as the element of discontinuity implies, is not simply what is inherited from the past. There is also sense perception—the conscious apprehension of the external world. Yet to move directly to sense perception, says Whitehead, is to ignore the important factor of our bodiedness. We feel with our fingers and see with our eyes. When called to our attention, this dependence of our perceptual experience upon bodily functionings is obvious. Yet the body is more than a mere medium enabling perception of the outside world. Some elements of our experience are more or less directly dependent upon the body itself, the proper or improper functioning of bodily organs. Like the past moment(s) of experience, the just-past activities of the body contribute massively to the experienced present. So fully indeed, and yet with such vagueness, that we are unable to distinguish clearly events of the body from those of the mind. Consider, for example, our
perception of a hard surface. The initial phase is the sensation registered by the nerve endings in our finger tips; the final phase might be the idea of hardness in what we call mental reflection. But at what point does physical sensation become mental apprehension? To be sure, one might arbitrarily select such a dividing point, and for certain purposes that division might be useful. But experience disavows clear delineations. Body and mind seem different, yet their boundary eludes us. They are discontinuous, yet continuous. The relationship of mental experience and bodily events is not unlike that of present and past experiences—there is some sort of unity among distinct elements.

The same can be said, so far as the empirical evidence is concerned, with respect to the relationship of our present experience to the world. Just as it is impossible to separate with microscopic finality our bodies and their immediately outlying world, so the ingredients of our extra-bodily world in our experience can be denied only gratuitously. In fact, we know immediately that somehow the world 'out there' is not purely out there; to know the world is to have it given over to us, to have it become ingredient in our experience. Once again sharp divisions, so abundantly useful for certain purposes, do not stand firm under scrutiny.

In view of the foregoing analysis, what are we to conclude about experience? Human experience is a stream of moments or occasions occurring in rapid succession. Each moment is essentially related to the past, and is so heavily indebted to its immediate predecessors that clear divisions between it and its mental, bodily, and natural background are quite impossible. The present experience does not appear as something in itself which in addition is merely related to things outside itself;
it is the coming together into one of manifold givens. The factor of relatedness with the past, then, is integral to the constitution of the present reality. Even so, present experience is not simply the sum of convergent influences. The paths of givenness (the-bodily-feelings-for-me, the-voices-in-the-dim-background-for-me, the-purposes-of-the-past-moment-for-me) are actively received. In the emergent synthesis they are simplified and modified, and they are emphasized or de-emphasized under the duress of the present's purpose. Indeed, even the purpose acclaimed supreme in the immediate past, e.g. my aim at the completion of this line of thought, must now stand before the emergent purpose of the present in some uncertainty, however minute, awaiting its own disposition. As paradoxical as it sounds, the present experience is the self-directed creator of itself; it is the artist of its own becoming.

C. Experience and Nature: A Comparison.

When we compare experience, so conceived, to nature, it is at first hard to see what the two have in common. What has a fleeting momentary synthesis of feeling to do with relatively enduring stones and billiard balls? What can essentially relational events share with static, self-contained bits of matter? How can dynamic experience and lifeless nature be conceived as part of the same world?

The alternative, Whitehead believes, lies in a full awareness of the nature of the physical world according to modern physics. He writes:

The modern point of view is expressed in terms of energy, activity, and the vibratory differentiations of space-time...The fundamental fact, according to the physics of the present day, is that the environment with its peculiarities seeps into the group-agitation which we term matter, and the group-agitations extend their character to the environment.
Because the categories of Newtonian physics are so firmly embedded in our thinking and forms of speech, we are prone to overlook the very striking similarities between 'mind' and 'matter'—between, that is, the moments of activity constituting experience and the quanta of energy constituting the physical world. The members of each emerge under the influence of the past, and they project their own characters into succeeding becomings. Both the mental and physical are essentially relational. Yet, too, each type of entity is something for itself, that particular synthesis and no other.

An absolute distinction between mind and matter, for Whitehead, is no longer possible. And because of this, those strategies which, in the interest of a cosmic unity, reduce one to the other are no longer necessary. Ultimately, the world is not composed of substantial things; it is a single, though fantastically complex, web of happenings. Each such event is a unity that flows from its past and into its future. The variations of complexity presented in these events are utterly extraordinary—for instance the occasions constituting empty space, and those constituting the richness of human experience. Still the variations are not absolute. Dynamic mentality and inert matter represent not two entirely different modes of being, but two extremes in the one continuum that is reality.

To say that things are one, however, is not to describe how that oneness is to be conceived. What we now require is a philosophical understanding of the world that incorporates both the theories of the physical scientist and the data of human experience.

D. Experience and Nature: A Philosophical Understanding.

According to Whitehead, "the key notion from which ...
construction should start is that energetic activity considered in physics is the emotional intensity entertained in life."² This point is crucial, and it is easily misunderstood. Whitehead is not saying that physical things are composed of little minds, or are conscious, or have emotions. It is not a question of there being consciousness at non-living levels of reality, for even in human experience consciousness is flickering and often absent. Even on the human level some postulate unconscious feelings, though by definition none of us has ever witnessed such a feeling. He is suggesting that reality even at its so-called lowest levels exhibits modes of functioning remotely similar to those patterns of activity characteristic of human experience. Whitehead's point is simply that human feelings, divorced from the accompaniment of consciousness, furnish us with the most adequate model for understanding those events that constitute the energetic activities of the physical world.

1. Actual Entities and Societies of Actual Entities.

Whitehead calls the ultimate units or events, of which all things are constituted, "actual entities" or "actual occasions." They are microcosmic pulses existing momentarily, summing up anew patterns of synthesis inherited from the past, then giving themselves as data for succeeding momentary becomings. Overwhelmingly, passage from actual occasion to occasion is characterized by simple repetition. Repetition means the reenactment of possibilities (or, as Whitehead often calls them, "eternal objects"). In successive moments of my experience, for example, the possibility of anger or sympathy is the predominating realization in syntheses that actualize manifold other possibilities as
well. Similarly there is the repetition of, say, grayness in the actual entities constituting the atoms of a stone. At all levels, repetition predominates. Occasionally however, even if very rarely, repetition is joined by significant novelty. Mutations occur in nature; novel emotions or new ideas emerge in experience. The cosmic process is enriched or impoverished.

The abiding, macroscopic entities of ordinary experience, e.g. men, flowers, and buildings, are groupings or societies of actual entities. In such a society each "generation"—that is, the actual entities existing at a given instant—exhibits characteristics or common elements of form derived from previous generations. Societies of actual entities are structured in radically different ways. Some are "inorganic," which means that their members exhibit neither diversity of characteristics nor functional hierarchies of importance. Some are "living," which means that at least some of their members are significantly characterized by novel adjustment to their environment. In lower organisms, e.g. the flower turning toward the sunlight, the adjustment is devoid of conceptual awareness. In higher organisms, e.g. the student turning his attention back to the textbook, the adjustment emerges out of a conceptual awareness of contrasting possibilities, such as reading and staring out the window.

Some living societies, most of whose members are virtually equal in their influence on the whole, do however sustain within themselves a society of peculiarly dominating occasions. This dominant strand, no two members of which are temporally overlapping, is a society of "presiding occasions." A tomato and a human body, for example, are both more or less egalitarian in organization, but the latter also includes a hierarchical society which maintains significant control over the subordinate democracy.
This society of presiding occasions in the human body is what we may refer to as the psyche.


The psyche is fundamentally mental; that is, it is distinguished by the degree to which it generates and entertains novel contrasts in response to environmental givens. It inherits dominant patterns of order; it conceives novel alternatives; it contrasts the alternatives to the inherited options; it chooses. Sometimes significant novelty is chosen, but even repetition at the level of higher mentality is never simply repetition, for conceptual novelty is now inevitably present as the awareness of other paths of becoming. Whitehead writes:

Mental experience is the organ of novelty, the urge beyond. It seeks to vivify the massive physical fact, which is repetitive, with novelties which beckon. Thus mental experience contains in itself a factor of anarchy...

But sheer anarchy means the nothingness of experience. We enjoy the contrasts of our own variety in virtue of the order which removes the incompatibility of mere diversity. Thus mental experience must itself be canalized into order...Reason civilizes the brute force of anarchic appetition...Reason is the special embodiment in us of the disciplined counter-agency which saves the world.3

Actual entities and their social organizations at every level exhibit certain factors: there is the past with its resources and limitations, the self-creativity of the present over and above inherited preferences, and the element of novel possibility. At the simplest level novelty is minuscule, the barest possibility. But complexity increases with increase of novel appetite, i.e. with mentality. Mentality--again, not to be simply equated with consciousness--is thus the agent of richness, diversity, and complexity. And, at its broadest reaches, mentality begets civilization.

Civilized life is not devoid of a strong tie to the past or to the sustenance of surrounding stability. But its special quality is the degree to which self-creativity cherishes the integration of newness. "Apart from some transcendent aim," says Whitehead, "the civilized life either wallows in pleasure or relapses slowly into a barren repetition with waning intensities of feeling." It should be absolutely clear that civilization requires the full satisfaction of basic necessities--

"Prometheus did not bring to mankind freedom of the press. He procured fire, which...cooks and gives warmth." Whitehead's sense of transcendence implies no diminution of natural needs and functionings. But the satisfied body requires for its enrichment the adventurous soul. Whitehead writes:

The world dreams of things to come, and then in due season arouses itself to their realization...

Sometimes adventure is acting within limits...Such adventures are the ripples of change within one type of civilization, by which an epoch of a given type preserves its freshness. But, given the vigor of adventure, sooner or later the leap of imagination reaches beyond the safe limits of the learned rules of taste. It then produces the dislocations and confusions marking the advent of new ideals for civilized effort.

A race preserves its vigor so long as it harbors a real contrast between what has been and what may be; and so long as it is nerved by the vigor to adventure beyond the safeties of the past. Without adventure civilization is in full decay.

Thus adventure, embryonically present even in the most rudimentary forms of reality, emerges with power only in the life of the human mind. Even here, though, its assertiveness is sporadic. And here, too, its accomplishments are subject to temporal decay. No levels of fine achievement are immune to subsequent loss. But neither are there limits set in advance to what, eventually, may be achieved.

What are the requisites of adventure? One condition, as Whitehead's concept of mentality makes clear, is freedom—freedom from total bondage to the dictates of the past. "It is for this reason that the notion of freedom haunts the higher civilizations." Thus, integral to Whitehead's philosophy is a doctrine of freedom in some ways far more radical than that of any existentialist. Whitehead—convinced that freedom is an essential element of human experience, and that experience is our model of reality—postulates some measure of freedom, however primitive, in every actual entity at every level of the universe. But Whitehead's concept of freedom is also more limited than that of most existentialists. Freedom, though in some sense universal, is always operative within a context of effective influences. The past is influentially present. The past is presently felt heavy with preferences for modes of present becoming. But the role of the past, at the basic level of actual entities, is persuasive and not coercive. In the final analysis, however forceful the imprint of the past upon each becoming actual entity, there still lurks within the present an element of self-creativity.

One naturally asks what sense can be given to the claim that freedom in some form is present throughout nature, that the past influences but does not determine the present. The answer is no sense at all, if we approach the matter from the standpoint of a Newtonian conception of causal relationships. So long as the interaction of billiard balls or the movement of machine parts is retained as our basic model of causal relationships, these relationships must be viewed either as strictly determined or as strictly undetermined. Whitehead frankly sees a middle course between these two options. He believes that the universe exhibits
too much order for the latter and too little for the former to be true. He further believes that neither conforms to our actual experience. In experience, the past pervades the present, luring it toward repetition. And the present must receive, must take account of, the past. But what ensues is scarcely analogous to the crisp movements of a balance scale responding automatically to the heaviest weight—nor would we be attracted to a mechanistic model were its authoritative character not already assumed. Experientially, causal relatedness appears as the efficacy of persuasion. Even repetition is acquiescence to persuasion. Hence, assuming the reality of experienced freedom, and assuming, even as determinists have contended, the unity of nature, the conclusion seems apparent: neither "determinism" nor "indeterminism" is absolute; each is an extreme in the single continuum of persuasive causality. The capacity for freedom, which is itself a form of freedom, is pervasive.

Whitehead thus roots civilization in nature. The minuscule freedom of non-human nature begets the fuller freedom of man, and human freedom gives rise to that form of adventure which is the distinguishing mark of civilization. Adventure is the adventure of the free.

5. Good and Evil.

In his philosophy of value, Whitehead subordinates goodness to beauty, and thus has been accused of a general aestheticism which fails to take seriously the tragic conflict between good and evil. His own motives are quite different, however; he does not seek to trivialize the good but to enhance it by placing it in relation to an all-embracing value which would not be restricted to the limited context of human conduct. Beauty, which is this all-embracing value, cannot be interpreted
simply in terms of aesthetic categories. It is present in natural occurrences and in works of art, to be sure, but also in conduct, action, virtue, ideas, and in truth.

Goodness is essentially subordinated to beauty for two reasons. As Whitehead uses these terms, goodness is primarily instrumental while beauty is intrinsically valuable, actualized in experience for its own sake. Beauty is a quality of experience itself, while experiences are themselves neither good nor bad; good and evil are occasions that produce experiences which may be evaluated as beautiful. Moreover, goodness is rooted in Reality, the totality of particular finite actualizations achieved in the world, while beauty pertains also to Appearance, our interpretative experience of Reality:

For Goodness is a qualification belonging to the constitution of reality, which in any of its individual actualizations is better or worse. Good and evil lie in depths and distances below and beyond appearance. They solely concern inter-relations within the real world. The real world is good when it is beautiful. Some are apt to dismiss appearance as unimportant in contrast to reality, regarding it as largely illusory. Appearance need be neither unimportant nor illusory. It is presupposed by truth, which is "the conformation of Appearance to Reality." It is the basis for the intelligibility of our experience. In any event, whether experience is significant or trivial, that value which includes it in reality is clearly the more inclusive.

The good, therefore, is to be understood in terms of its contribution to beauty. Beauty, in turn, is described as "the internal conformation of the various items of experience with each other, for the production of maximum effectiveness." This effectiveness is achieved by the conjoint operation of harmony and intensity. Harmony is the mutual adaptation of several items for joint inclusion within experience, while
intensity refers to the wealth and variety of factors jointly experienced, particularly in terms of the degree of contrast manifest. In effect, then, actuality is good insofar as it occasions an intrinsic experience of harmonious intensity.

By the same token, evil is the experience of discord, attesting to the presence of destruction. "The experience of destruction is in itself evil."\textsuperscript{11} This definition is serviceable, once we realize that what is destroyed is not what is, but what might have been. We tend to think of existence only in terms of continued persistence of being, but whatever has once achieved actual existence remains indestructible as determinate fact, regardless of the precariousness of its future continuation. In like manner, we ordinarily restrict destruction to the loss of anticipated continuing existence. Such continuing existence, however, if destroyed, never was but only might have been. As such it is merely a special case of what might have been, along with lost opportunities, thwarted experiences, disappointed anticipations. Whenever what is is less than what might have been, there is destruction, no matter how slight.

Whitehead is emphatic in insisting upon the finitude of actuality which in its exclusiveness affords the opportunity for evil.

There is no totality which is the harmony of all perfections. Whatever is realized in any one occasion of experience necessarily excludes the unbounded welter of contrary possibilities. There are always 'others', which might have been and are not. This finiteness is not the result of evil, or of imperfection. It results from the fact that there are possibilities of harmony which either produce evil in joint realization, or are incapable of such conjunction.\textsuperscript{12}

This conflict of values in attempted actualization is experienced as discord, and engenders destruction. "There is evil when things are at
cross.\textsuperscript{13} "The nature of evil is that the characters of things are mutually obstructive."\textsuperscript{14}

While evil is the disruption of harmony, it need not detract from intensity. In fact, the intensity of evil may be preferred to the triviality of some dead-level achievement of harmony, for the intense clash may be capable of resolution at a much higher level of complexity. The unrelieved 'good life' may be rather dull, yielding no more zest of value than the perfectly harmonious repetition of dominant fifth chords in C major. "Evil is the half-way house between perfection and triviality. It is the violence of strength against strength."\textsuperscript{15}

We have now completed an account of Whitehead's general metaphysics culminating in his explanation of good and evil. In the next chapter we shall set forth his philosophy of God concluding with his exposition of the relation of God to evil.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., pp. 231-232.


5 Ibid., p. 84.

6 Ibid., pp. 359-360.

7 Ibid., p. 362.

8 Ibid., p. 345.

9 Ibid., p. 309.

10 Ibid., p. 341.

11 Ibid., p. 333.

12 Ibid., p. 356.


15 Adventures of Ideas, p. 355.
Chapter II. Whitehead's Philosophy of God

Whitehead has made a serious attempt to outline a view of God based on the most penetrating and accurate insights concerning the divine nature. Whitehead contends that any valid view of God must take seriously these profound religious insights: that 'redemption comes through suffering'; that 'values found in the temporal world must be preserved'; that 'God's power is persuasive love, not the outpouring of brute force'. There is the further insight that 'the order, reality, and value of the world depend ultimately on God', and also the related insight that 'life is zestful, evil is conquered, peace of mind is attained as the result of the activity of the divine being'. These insights have been expressed by many great-souled men: Plato, the later Hebrew prophets, and Jesus of Nazareth.

Whitehead's detailed discussion of God is based on these and similar insights. In general, the qualities which Whitehead attributes to God are those illustrated in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, as reported in the Gospels.

Whitehead remarks that his suggestions concerning the nature of God may be regarded as the addition of another speaker to Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. In the Dialogues, as written by Hume, three views of God are presented. God is portrayed (a) as imperial ruler; (b) as a personification of merciless moral energy (formalistic in emphasis, lacking in 'spirit'); and (c) as an ultimate philosophical principle. But Hume neglects another view of God which, in the judgment of Whitehead, is the correct view. Whitehead, therefore, proceeds to provide the necessary "fourth speaker" in the sense that he states the theory of God which Hume neglected. As Whitehead himself expresses it:
There is, however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love...Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved.¹

In working out the details of his theory of God, Whitehead does not often refer specifically to the teachings and example of Jesus. Yet he is implementing the imperative implied in his statement that "Christ gave his life. It is for Christians to discern the doctrine."²

The Gospel record is clear that Jesus stressed the efficacy of persuasive love rather than overwhelming brute force. Hence, he was patient and tender in his dealings with others. He was concerned with high ideals and with their realization in the ordinary affairs of life. He had great respect for individual human beings, recognizing qualities which others overlooked. He shared the good and evil experiences of his fellow men. He was an ideal companion. He faced the evils of life, and used them as steppingstones to good. He "grew", using in his self-development the wisdom of the past as well as the data presented by the present. In this activity he preserved what was of value and discarded what was unsuitable. These, then, are some of the major characteristics of Jesus as portrayed by the earliest Christian writers. These characteristics are attributed to God by Whitehead. An examination of his discussion of God will substantiate this statement.

Whitehead proposes to think of God as, like any other actual entity, one individual among others in the universe. He grows, like any actual entity, by creative interaction with other centers of energy. God selects, from available possibilities, his characteristic pattern of
behavior. There is, however, a fundamental difference between God and other, i.e. ordinary, actual entities. God endures; every ordinary entity dies.

What then are the specific characteristics of God? What are his relations to the rest of the world?

A. God as Source of Order.

Whitehead's basic insight concerning the divine is that God is a source of order in the universe. In developing the implications of this insight, he points out that all the sorts of possibilities there are—possibilities of action, possible ways of organizing the elements of experience, possible values—must be present in the experience of some enduring entity when they are not being contemplated by any transient, i.e. ordinary entity. Thus, Whitehead suggests that these possibilities must exist eternally in the experience of an enduring being, God. Further, Whitehead believes that if one possibility is carried out, certain other possibilities follow, and others are precluded. For example, if you wish to be an effective runner, you must possess "X" characteristics, follow training pattern "Y", for "Z" period of time. By this choice other possible kinds of behavior are ruled out. In short, there seems to be a vast system of relationships between possibilities. Whitehead refers to God as the organizer of these possibilities. God provides for other individuals a complex organized pattern of possibilities from which selection can be made.

By making possible organized patterns of behavior, God is acting as a 'principle of concretion'. That is to say, God provides the patterns which are used to guide the selective process of appropriating data
whereby an individual becomes a definite, i.e. concrete being. Since this process is selective, and many available data are rejected as unsuitable, to this extent God may be termed a 'principle of limitation.' The term is also applicable because God arranges the realm of possibility in a definite fashion. Certain patterns are excluded, hence there is limitation in this sense.

The possible patterns of action are available to any individual which cares to use them. Since these possibilities are made available to all, God does not focus his attention exclusively on any one actual entity. God's general purpose is that all actual entities will achieve the highest possible type of individuality. However, as a particular individual begins to develop, God is deeply concerned with it. "His tenderness is directed towards each actual occasion, as it arises."³

God organizes possible patterns of action and makes them available for the use of men in their process of self-development. Because these possibilities are presented in patterned arrangement, God obviously is concerned with order in the universe. This foundation of order in the actual world, this pattern of possibilities which God establishes and makes available, is order of an aesthetic sort. That is to say, it is a type of order which makes possible the development of experience rich in depth and complexity, its intensity heightened by patterned contrast.

In stating that God sets up a pattern which makes possible aesthetic experience, and in remarking that moral value is "merely certain aspects of aesthetic order",⁴ Whitehead may seem to be assigning undue priority to aesthetic experience and relegating morals to a secondary position. However, it should be realized that he tends to use the term "aesthetic"
as a synonym for value in general. He is saying that value experience depends on the expression of a complex order of possibilities. In suggesting that morality is merely an aspect of aesthetic order, he is only stating that goodness is one type of value.

In so far as God provides an orderly pattern of possibilities, in logical interrelation, he establishes reason. That is to say, he lays the foundations for rational deliberation. Since God is concerned with higher value ideals (as well as other types of possibility), he can be said to distinguish good from evil. Thus, God wishes to focus attention on values as well as facts. In so far as any individual has some value, and any individual follows a pattern provided by God, in that sense God is concerned not only with ideals and genuine values (such as truth, beauty, and goodness), but also with the values of individual self-development.

God confronts the individual with the vast realm of ideals beyond the range of narrowly selfish interests. He attempts to convey the idea that by going beyond oneself and being interested in a wider good (including the welfare of others), a person may develop a higher type of self. In so far as an individual responds to this idea, or to any other possibility provided by God, God becomes an object of desire, a lure for feeling.

B. God's Purpose and Power.

Whitehead suggests that God is interested in the development of individuals as an intermediate step "towards the fulfillment of his own (God's) being". As has been noted, Whitehead regards God as one individual among many interacting individuals, each deriving from the others much of benefit. It is, therefore, obvious that God should be interested in
the development of other individuals who will be of assistance to him in carrying out his purposes. After all, the purposes of God are of the highest.

It will be clear from the foregoing paragraphs that God may be said to have a purpose. He is concerned with order and novelty, the rise of individuals who will express the value ideals which God envisages. God also aims at the achievement of the full development of his own (divine) possibilities.

The question naturally arises: Does God force any human mind to accept a specific possibility? Does God force any individual to translate into action any specific possibility? Whitehead's answer is in the negative. God insures that possibilities are available for use by others; in this fashion he persuades. But he does not 'force' these ideals on any other individual. This is a supreme insight of Jesus of Nazareth. God makes available the complex realm of possibilities; he is thus interested in the self-development of the other individuals in the universe. But, to repeat, he does not impose his will. Every individual selects his own path. God is not a transcendent power creating, and then controlling, everything in the universe. God can only lead men to higher values by confronting them with the lure of these higher value ideals. Thus God is "the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness." However, the fact remains that he cannot lead if men will not follow. It is only in this context that one can, legitimately, speak of the "power" of God. "The power of God is the worship He inspires."7

God's 'love' is expressed by his action in making possible our visualization of infinite possibilities, his tenderness in leading, not
forcing. However, his love is not a sedative; it is a stimulus. Whitehead's remark that divine love is "a little oblivious as to morals" should not be interpreted to mean that God is indifferent to morality. Rather, the implication is that love will temper justice with mercy. The strict letter of a moral law, the rigorous applications of a provincial moral code, may well be set aside in the interests of the ultimate well-being of an individual. After all, Jesus disregarded many of the petty details of the moral codes of his day, thus furthering the true spirit of moral goodness. In this connection, it is well to remember Whitehead's suggestion that the reformed way to think of God is in terms of goodness rather than (arbitrary and all-powerful) will.

In the midst of this emphasis on tenderness and love, it must be noted that Whitehead finds a certain inexorability in God. God has arranged the patterns of possible behavior. And if one pattern is selected, its specific implications follow inevitably; there is no escape. Yet God does not exercise overruling force—even for constructive purposes. The only power that God can exert is the "worship he inspires." Thus, when Whitehead refers to "the overpowering rationality" of God's vision of the realm of possibilities, he is not deserting his main position. The individual is not influenced by the 'inexorable implications' of the divine order of possibilities (overwhelmed in this sense) unless the individual so wishes. In other words, unless an individual accepts on his own volition a specific pattern of possibilities, the implications of that pattern of possibilities will have no effect on him.

C. God in History.

For Whitehead, God does not impose any particular pattern on the
course of historical events. What happens in history is the result of the selective process going on in the experience of the individuals who exist during the historical period under discussion. God exercises a purely persuasive function. He confronts other individuals with ideal possibilities. He demonstrates the excellence of these ideals when realized. Thus, he persuades but he cannot coerce.

Whitehead refuses to account for the course of history by reference to one factor. Such is the importance of individual powers of selection that he consistently suggests that no law can be regarded as a permanent factor in history—not even a physical or chemical law. The basic physical and chemical elements illustrate the same selective process. The patterns of behavior stated in the so-called scientific laws of this age may be replaced by other patterns of behavior. Thus, there may be new laws.

There is, then, no inevitable process of history to be explained by fatalistically inflexible Divine Providence, or by eternal laws of nature or history. It may be said that the future is "open." We are not pre-determined to Utopia, or its opposite, or to the "recurrences" of the cyclical view. The future will be what individuals of all types—God of course included—make of the data of the past and present, and the ideal possibilities which confront us.

D. God's Growth.

So far only one phase of Whitehead's theory of God has been discussed, that which Whitehead terms God's primordial nature. It is now necessary to proceed to an examination of what are termed the consequent and superject natures of God. God not only provides possibilities to be contemplated by individuals. He also receives, from other individuals,
some data which they provide. God's contemplation of the infinite realm of eternal possibility is complete and unchanging. Those possibilities are there, once and for all. Yet God, like other individuals, is subject to change. He grows as the result of creative interaction with others.

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature as the years passed; the increase in stature was not merely physical. If one takes seriously Jesus' humanity, his life right up to the moments on the cross was a development in moral and spiritual grandeur. This development took place because of his reactions to the other individuals with whom he came in contact.

E. God's Tender Care.

Whitehead contends that one of the most important activities of God is that in his associations with other individuals, he preserves what otherwise would be neglected and lost. Moments of human experience are brief, their contents finite. Human memory is incomplete and not always wise in its selections. If human experience were all there is, much of value would be lost forever. One of the basic insights of religion is that some positive values are not lost; they are preserved by the divine being. Thus Whitehead suggests that as the individual's experience fades, values are preserved in God's experience. Within God's rich complexity of experience, guided by his characteristic pattern of behavior, harmonization of achieved value is obtained. Yet, it must be noted that 'God does not save everything which is valuable.' He exercises a tender care which loses nothing that "can be saved." With the passage of time, some elimination takes place. Jesus of Nazareth lost one of his chief disciples; many who offered themselves as disciples were not accepted.

By his reaction to other actual entities - more specifically, by
(either accepting or rejecting) the data which they provide, God passes judgment on the world of other individuals. In this sense, the day of judgment is ever with us; it is not a far-off event. Each present moment is important since God's evaluation takes place at each moment.

The question of personal immortality naturally arises at this point. In Religion in the Making, Whitehead states that he is entirely neutral on the question of personal immortality; he sees no reason why the question could not be settled, provided adequate evidence could be found. Later developments in his system of thought, however, seem to indicate that personal immortality is specifically ruled out. The human mind or soul is composed, according to Whitehead, of a large number of parallel and successive movements of experience. Each moment of experience has a brief duration and then passes out of existence, its inner life spent. Some part of its experiences may be preserved in God's experience, but there is not a complete immortality. As Whitehead states it: "Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception into God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality." Since the human mind or soul is composed of these moments of experience, it must suffer their fate. Part of what has been may be preserved in God's experience; all cannot be. God, like any other actuality, reacts in a selective fashion, and in the selective process some available data are rejected. In any case, when a moment of experience is past, its inner life cannot be recreated, try as we may.

The selective process that characterizes God and all other actual entities should not be misunderstood. Particularly in the case of God, it is not a technique by which evil, pain, suffering - in short, all types of negative value - are disregarded. In the process of life some
data are lost, data of all sorts, factual and value data. God is chiefly concerned with positive value, but he does not disregard negative value. In other words, God experiences the world as it is.

F. God the Great Companion.

God's experience is made available to other individuals. The benefits of God's experience are felt by mortal men: Jesus walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem, and the glory of divinity shone through. Thus the kingdom of heaven was in the midst of men, and God's love is demonstrated. This is the basis of the claim that God is the great companion, one among many other individuals participating in the affairs of life, helping others (and being helped).

Whitehead suggests that without such a being as God, the crowning quality of civilization, peace, would not be achieved. Peace is the state of mind which flows from the conviction that what is fine is preserved in the nature of things, preserved as only God can preserve it. In general, God not only envisages the ideals of civilization but shows supremely how they can be expressed in the life of an individual.

G. Whitehead's Answers to Some Traditional Questions.

Whitehead answers many of the classic theological questions: Is God one or many; immanent or transcendent; temporal or eternal? Is God infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power? He suggests that God is one individual but has many functions. For this reason he may be called either one or many, depending upon the approach. Similarly, God is immanent, in that he provides data for, and receives data from, other individuals. Yet he is transcendent since he contemplates possibilities,
many of which are not actualized in experience; some of them may never be realized. He is also transcendent because he is different from others. God is eternal in the sense that he contemplates these eternal possibilities, and also because his life never fades. But God changes, develops; thus he is temporal. God is free because his envisagement of the realm of possibilities is not restricted by anything outside him; but God is limited since he depends for his being, in part, on the activities of other individuals. God is infinite and complete in the sense that he contemplates all possibilities; he is finite and incomplete since he is not everything. He is good and not evil; yet, he experiences evil as real, i.e. tragically. Also, as has been noted, his goodness is not that of static perfection. God is limited in power because he cannot force anything on any individual. Further, though he is omniscient with reference to the realm of possibility, he is limited in his knowledge of actual individuals. He does not have fore-knowledge of what an individual will do.

God is not the only reality. All other individuals are real, though none reaches the level of God in richness and complexity of value experience. God is not the creator of the world in any absolute fashion. He and every other individual make data available for the use of others. In a sense God creates the world (of other individuals) since he provides data for them. However, it is equally correct to say the world (of other individuals) creates God since they provide data for him. God was "not before all creation, but with all creation."11

Thus, in Whitehead's theory, God is not the first cause either as temporally prior or as the ultimate causal factor to the exclusion of everything else. He is one causal factor among others. He is, however,
superior in excellence of experience to all other actual entities. He
sets an example and, in this sense, may be termed 'final cause.' God is
also 'efficient cause' since he is self-energizing. However, other
actual entities are efficient causes for the same reason. Within each
individual there is an urge toward self-development. This purpose is a
final cause. All individuals, ordinary ones and God, provide data
or material for the use of others. The ideal possibilities (eternal
objects) envisaged by God serve as 'formal' patterns which all actual
entities, including God, use in their process of self-development.

H. God's Personality

In Religion in the Making, Whitehead argues that it is unnecessary
to consider God as a person. He refers to the fact that in Confucian
and Hindu thought God is not so regarded. Those who claim to have a
direct experience of a personal God are, in Whitehead's opinion, without
rational justification, relying on an unverified personal opinion. On
the other hand, he contends that there is a universal concurrence of
experience concerning the presence of a "permanent rightness" in the
nature of things. The word "rightness" is used in a broad sense, apparently
as a synonym for orderliness. However, included also is the more obvious
and usual meaning of value.

The earlier statements in Religion in the Making, that God should
not be considered a person, must be reexamined in the light of the
preceding discussion of the religious availability of Whitehead's God.
In the early treatment, Whitehead argues that there is no universal
agreement about the personality of God, but there is agreement con-
cerning a permanent rightness in the universe. The later books,
Science and the Modern World, Process and Reality, go far beyond the minimum 'permanent rightness.' Indeed, even in Religion in the Making Whitehead refers to the ideal companion who saves what otherwise might be lost. This theory is greatly amplified in Process and Reality, as has been noted. What Whitehead seems to be chiefly opposing is the ascription of a certain type of personality to God - that of a transcendent creator, a brutal tyrant, or a petty moralist.

Whitehead does not offer what purports to be a dogmatically certain creed. He outlines a tentative possible interpretation of available facts of religious experience. In dealing with the profound things of life, he advocates (in his more mature philosophical deliberations) the avoidance of too simple symbolism. The symbolism of personality seems entirely appropriate to Whitehead, in his later writings.

Whitehead offers only suggestions, "images." We cannot achieve an exact or complete conceptual formulation of the divine nature. To that extent he agrees with practically all theologians. Nevertheless, he believes that our insights are sufficiently accurate to enable us to avoid some of the most serious errors of past theological speculation. What is more important, these insights can provide the basis for a more adequate and accurate positive system of thought concerning God. Thus, he contends that the weight of available evidence - the intuitions of recognized leaders in religious and philosophical thought (Jesus, the later Hebrew prophets, Plato) - justifies the rejection of ideas of God stressing imperial power, unbending petty morality, barren metaphysical ultimacy. These insights justify the use of concepts emphasizing aspects of ideal personality: love, patience, companionship, a concern for the
higher values both as ideal and as actualized.

I. God and Evil.

In his consequent nature God experiences both the good and the evil actualized in the world. His own aim, like that of the creature, is at beauty. "God's purpose in the creative advance is the evocation of intensities,"13 but these intensities must be balanced to overcome the mutual obstructiveness of things. God therefore seeks in his experience of the world the maximum attainment of intensity compatible with harmony that is possible under the circumstances of the actual situation. In order to insure this richness of experience for his consequent nature, God therefore provides to each occasion that initial aim which, if actualized, would contribute maximally to this harmonious intensity. This is the aim God wills as good for that creature as the dynamic source of value. It is not capricious, for it seeks the well-being both of the creature and of God. Were God to select any other aim for that occasion he would be frustrating his own aim at beauty.

Whitehead concludes that evil is the selection by some creature of a value in a given situation that was less than the maximum value that could have been realized in that situation. There is no actuality that does not have some measure of goodness. Evil is the realization of a lesser good. Of course such evil may still be quite radical because the difference between what is and what might have been can be vast.

Two things can be said about the relation of God to evil. First, although evil is the result of free decision by creatures, God is partly responsible for most of what we call the evil of discord. Had God not let the realm of finitude out of chaos into a cosmos that includes life,
nothing worthy of the term "suffering" would occur. Had God not lured
the world on to the creation of beings with the capacity for conscious,
rational self-determination, the distinctively human forms of evil on
our planet would not occur. Hence, God is responsible for these evils
in the sense of having encouraged the world in the direction that made
these evils possible. Deviation from God's will is not necessary; hence
evil is not necessary. But the possibility for the deviation is necessary;
hence the possibility of evil is necessary. Secondly, God can suffer
with the world, because evil is real for God. Temporal tragedy enters
into God's experience as an ineradicable fact. As we pain those who
know us incompletely, so we pain all the more one whose awareness of
things is complete. God's sensitivity to the world is unreserved; his
love is unbounded. And he who loves most, risks most and suffers most.
Loss in the temporal process, therefore, means genuine loss in the life
of God. Suffering in the world means suffering in the life of God. God
takes the world into himself - its triumphs and joys, its failures and
griefs.

We have now completed an account of Whitehead's philosophy of God
concluding with his explanation of the relation of God to evil. In the
proceeding chapter we shall deal in greater detail and more critically
with the God-world relation as expounded in Process and Reality in light
of "God (as) the great companion--the fellow sufferer who understands."
ENDNOTES

1. Process and Reality, p. 520.
2. Religion in the Making, p. 56.
6. Ibid., p. 526.
8. Ibid., p. 191-192.
10. Ibid., p. 531.
11. Ibid., p. 521.
12. Ibid.
Chapter III. The God-World Relation in Whitehead's *Process and Reality*

Thus far, the concentration has been on Whitehead's thought as expressed in his earlier works. However, any statements taken from *Science and the Modern World* or *Religion in the Making* about the nature of God are systematically worthless unless proleptically interpreted in terms of Whitehead's mature position. Taken in isolation they only serve to muddy the waters. So, let us deal with Whitehead's mature position as put forth in *Process and Reality*.

A. God in the World of *Process and Reality*.


Whitehead's God is bipolar. He has a "primordial nature" and a "consequent nature." Though the two integrate, we should first distinguish them. Viewed as primordial, God is "the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality." Here the key word is "conceptual." It is opposed to physical, and seems to mean mental, ideal. God's primordial nature is infinite: nothing is excluded from it, because it has no physical relations, no definite, delimiting interactions with the temporal world. It is free, complete, and eternal. It is also actually deficient, and unconscious.

In contrast, the consequent nature of God is relatively determinate, overseeing completion, "everlasting," actual, and conscious. It originates with experience derived from the temporal world. Through his consequent nature, God is completed by the individual, fluent satisfactions of finite fact. Here he is related to the world; he "prehends" the actualities of the evolving universe. Whitehead's image for the operative
growth of God's conscious, involved nature is "tender care" that nothing be lost. In his consequent nature, God saves the world. The world passes into the immediacy of his own life, and he dismisses the revolts of its destructive evil. These are purely self-regarding, and God gives them the triviality of mere individual facts. However, the good of the evolving world--individual joy, individual sorrow, the introduction of needed contrast--this God saves and relates to a completed whole.

This salvific work of God displays an infinite patience. For it, Whitehead calls God a poet, leading the world by his vision of truth, reality, and goodness. The universe strides creatively from infinite conceptual possibility, in the primordial nature of God, through the multiple solidarity of free physical realizations in the temporal world, to its final (not static) goal, the ultimate unity of multiple actual facts with the primordial conceptual fact. This harmony of the many with the one is the "reason" God engages the world in his consequent nature.

Both God and the world profit from their engagement. "Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty." Together, they serve one another's novelty. God serves the primordial multiplicity of the world, giving it unity; the world enables God to acquire a consequent multiplicity, which his primordial character then absorbs into its own unity. God is the infinite ground of all mentality, yet the unity of his vision seeks physical multiplicity. The world is a multiplicity of finite realities, yet it seeks perfecting union with God's simple vision. As permanence and flux, God and world yearn for each other. Creation reaches its final term in everlastingness, which is the apotheosis of the world.
Whitehead's cosmological dialectic thus has four phases. First, in the primordial nature of God, there is conceptual origination. This is non-physical, and therefore deficient in actuality, but infinite in its "adjustments of valuation." It stands outside time, multiplicity, change, engagement with the physical world. Second, there is, in time, a phase of physical origination, begetting many actual entities, all limited, individual, related to one another. This second phase depends upon the first for its conditions, that is, it depends upon the ingression of the eternal object. It is an advance in creativity, insofar as full activity is attained, but the individual actual entities are not yet sufficiently solid—their unification is deficient. The third phase remedies this deficiency, since the actual entities are assumed into the integral consequent nature of God. Everlastingness, the reconciliation of the immediacy of the many with the objective immortality of completed unity, is the result. Finally, the perfected actuality of the third phase passes back into the temporal world, so that each temporal actuality now feels the harmony of the third phase in its relevant experience.

Whitehead calls this fourth phase God's love, his particular providence, for the world. It makes what is done in the world objectively immortal in heaven. Conversely, the realities of heaven pass back into the world. So does creativity finally justify our insistent craving that zest for existence be refreshed by the everpresent, unfading importance of our immediate actions.


If, within the frame of this overall cosmology, we try to set the relations between God and world, we can only do so antithetically. For
instance, we can say with equal truth that God is permanent and the
world fluent, or that the world is permanent and God is fluent. So too
for the contraries one/many, immanent/transcendent. We can say that God
is eminently actual, by comparison with the world, or that the world is
eminently actual, in comparison with God. Finally, it is as true to say
that the world creates God, as that God creates the world.

For Whitehead there can be no vicious separation of flux from
permanence, no award of eminent reality to God which leaves the world
deficient. The "finer religious intuition" he seeks to honor in his
metaphysics insists that the fundamental problem is double: actuality
with permanence, requiring fluency as its completion; actuality with
fluency, requiring permanence as its completion. The first half of the
problem implies the derivation of God's consequent nature from the
temporal world, to complete his primordial nature. The second half of
the problem implies that God saves each fluent occasion, giving it
objective immortality in his primordial permanence.

The crux of the solution, where God acquires fluency and the world
becomes everlasting, is "the temporal world perfected by its reception
and its reformation, as a fulfillment of the primordial appetition which
is the basis of all order." At the crux also meet the "diverse categories
of existence" which allow us to form the predicamental antitheses
between God and the world. Because "God" and "world" exist differently,
our terms ("one", "many", "fluent", "permanent") can so shift their
meanings that an apparent opposition becomes rather a contrast. In
other words, we are talking about two terms inextricably related, and
related positively, so that one can never cancel the other.
3. Rejection of Traditional Religion.

While Whitehead's philosophy rejects the major historical theologies, it retains some fondness for a suggestion in the Galilean origin of Christianity. This dwelt on the tender elements in the world, which operate slowly and quietly, by love. It found purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. The love which it stresses neither rules, nor is unmoved. It seeks no reward in the immediate present, and it is a little oblivious as to morals. But, unfortunately, the brief Galilean vision of humility did not prevail through the ages. Rather, the Aristotelian unmoved mover, and the notion of God as eminently real, fused to dominate the history of Christianity and Mohammedanism. This tradition posited an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys. And such a view Whitehead considers responsible for the tragedy in western history. When God has been fashioned as an imperial ruler, the personification of moral energy, or an ultimate philosophical principle, his separation from the world, his being cast into static molds of perfection, vitiate the consequent world view. Neither the Caesars nor Aristotle made a God compatible with Whitehead's reality.

Lest such criticism seem arbitrary, it is important to realize that there are definite convictions behind Whitehead's unconventional version of theism. If we can clarify the sacred principles of organism, and then locate their experiential source, we shall be at the heart of Process and Reality. Whitehead sanctions such a search, because he presents God as the chief exemplification rather than the source of his metaphysical principles. He also rests the cogency of his argument "upon the elucidation of somewhat exceptional elements in our conscious
experience—those elements which may roughly be classed together as religious and moral intuitions."¹⁴

From Process and Reality, I think, and from Whitehead's previous books, comes the suggestion that "dynamic relatedness" is close to his genetic intuition. By this phrase I merely mean to coin an alternative to "process."¹⁵ The point is that Whitehead has seized upon the fluency of reality, its constant alteration, and its connectedness; to be is to be moving, developing, changing. Reality is indeed "organic": thoroughly interrelated, and "alive."¹⁶ Any conceptualization which makes it static, or which fosters substantial dichotomies like subject/object, is playing false to our most primordial experience.

If "dynamic relatedness" expresses Whitehead's most prized conviction, it will understandably generate a metaphysical scheme inimical to Aristotle's "unmoved mover." We shall have to ask some questions about the axiom "how an actual entity becomes, constitutes what the actual entity is;"¹⁷ but suffice it here to note that most traditional philosophy of God does indeed fall if being is essentially process. Like Cartesian dualism, classical theology is anathematized at a stroke.

This does not mean, however, that nothing Parmenidean remains in Whitehead's metaphysics—that he is Heraclitus reborn. As we saw earlier, reality has and demands order and permanence. To account for these, Whitehead needs the primordial nature of God. Further, the plethora of physical prehensions pale before the cornucopia of possibilities, and "God" must preside over the specific ingressions of eternal objects which give us just this universe and no other. Whitehead owes a great debt to Plato, if not Aristotle; and his training to eminence as a mathematician gives him an idealist's appreciation of how mind could
constitute, and must found, reality. The result, therefore, is the both/and postulate, the double problem "civilized intuition has always, though obscurely, grasped." This is that fusion of fluency and permanence, that "everlastingness," postulated by the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. So much, then, for the metaphysical consequences of dynamic relatedness.

Let us now indicate more fully the "civilized intuition" and "somewhat exceptional elements in our conscious experience" which seem to lie behind or beside dynamic relatedness, and which are an alternative expression of where the God-world relation in Process and Reality stems from. Some of their context can be glimpsed in the section preceding that on which we have concentrated.\(^{18}\) Whitehead begins this section with a plea for liberal openness: "the chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence."\(^{19}\) For instance, there is a greatness in the men who built the religious systems of the world, and a greatness in the rebels who destroyed them. "Philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world—the fairies dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross."\(^{20}\) But if we sift out the temperamental emphases behind the great ideas in history, we find they group around two poles: permanence and flux. Something abides, though panta rei; the passing moment loses intensity unless it submits to permanence. In what sounds like a ground-level judgment Whitehead flatly asserts: "those who would disjoin the two elements can find no interpretation of patent facts."\(^{21}\) Perfect realization does not merely exemplify what in abstraction is timeless; rather its moment is unfolding, though time seems to lapse. In deepest intuition, we demand, with Plato, that time be the 'moving image of eternity.'
Related to this central intuition of "patent facts" is another contrast, which shows in the two faces of "order." Order is the condition for excellence (concrecent novelty needs a base, pattern, permanence); order can also stifle life, robbing it of zest and freshness. Whether in education, or the political art presiding over cultural change, wisdom hits a balance. Indeed, culture itself has to blend an clan for the future with realism about time's horrors: the ultimate evil is that all time is a perpetual perishing—as the future will show. God and the world, as we have seen Whitehead relate them, are the final interpretational categories, through which the evils in dynamic relatedness may be overcome. Through the temporal world in union with God—through God's consequent nature—Whitehead reconciles the conceptual appetition which begins reality, moving mere possibilities to actuality, and the physical realization in which they have imperiled form. When Whitehead seeks an epitome of the feeling behind his metaphysics, he chooses two verses from a religious hymn: "abide with me; fast falls the eventide." 

B. Theological and Religious Critique.

Like the summary of Whitehead's theism contained in this thesis, and our search for the driving conviction behind it, my theological and religious animadversions will be brief.

1. Change and Creativity.

If it is true to say that God is an integral element in the creative advance of the world by the ways in which he contributes himself to it, it is also true to say that the world contributes itself to the becoming of God. This is because every actual occasion, when it perishes, is
added to the consequent nature of God, where it is everlastingly preserved in an objective state. The objectification of past actual occasions in the consequent nature constitutes the sum of God's physical prehensions. Without them, God would not be an actual entity and hence would be devoid of reality. Because the world contributes what it is physically to the everlasting nature of God, there is a legitimate sense in which it can be said that the world makes God real, and without a world, there could be no real God. When God prehends the world and takes it into himself in his consequent nature, he is thereby changed. In Whitehead's paradoxical language it is true to say that "God creates the world as that the world creates God." 23

One virtue in Whitehead's work is that he forces us to rethink the problem of change, without committing ourselves to an ontological dualism. Whitehead describes the world of human experience with great sensitivity to its complexity, the unity it has for us. He parallels his abstract, formal categories e.g. eternal objects with a description of man's composition and knowledge that makes their derivation plausible. Man, the experient of process, has more relation (prehension) than he can consciously know. His "experience" and "feeling" are, in Whitehead's usage, more primordial than his consciousness. He really thinks with his body, and the number of prehensions he raises to "presentational immediacy" (the level of sensory awareness) is far fewer than those he "suffers" viscerally in their most rudimentary impact. Symbolism, which mediates impact into awareness, specifies Whitehead's epistemology.

But this anthropological correlate to process raises another issue, I think: is the theory of predication at work in Process and Reality adequate? Classical theism is very sensitive to the analogy in its
predication, for by analogy it tries to avoid anthropomorphism. Man's experience is transmuted into statements about all reality only by passing the gauntlet of logic and sufficient reason—by distinguishing what being is for us from what it is in itself. Critical realism can profess to find, in human judgment, an adequation of mind and reality, ultimately based in the spiritual nature of man (Geist in Welt) and experienced in the intelligible emanation of insight or judgment from understanding. However, it will not so employ this legitimated isomorphism that all reality is constructed in man's image. Rather, man is image of God; insight into imagination is pale reflection of noesis noeseos; Being itself is Geist ohne Welt. The ultimate ontological relation of man and God, God and the world, is mysterious, because man cannot think the infinity of God. Whitehead, trying to give process a systematic priority, radicalizes "creativity" and sets the crux or pivot of reality in the temporal world, insofar as this fulfills primordial appetition (creativity's drive). The mutual complementarity of God and world is important for Whitehead. The Christian instinctively relates this juncture to the Incarnation. He believes all things hold together in Christ. The question comes to be, what kind of dynamic, processive relation does the Incarnation set between God and the world? Does the incarnate utterance of himself join God to the creativity of the world, so that its concrescence is his own? What rapprochement can we effect between the world's evolution and God's full perfection if we explain "pure act" so that ipsum intelligere, ipsum amare, ipsum esse subsistens connote the excitement, the lure for discovery, the vitality Whitehead so appreciates? Against Whitehead, I do not want a deficient God. Intellectually and religiously both, I demand
John's conviction: "God is light and in him no darkness at all." With Whitehead, I want a God who is alive, appreciative of growth and novelty. The bible's "ultimate" is the trinitarian God, who makes the world by diffusing his goodness and saves it by taking it into his inner love-life. If we interpreted these truths in dialogue with modern science we might find a theology appreciative of Whitehead.

2. Religious Sensitivities.

It would be fascinating to fashion more theological hypotheses. Anyway, their thorough analysis soon becomes more important than their proliferation. I should like finally, however, to nod toward the personal "religious" rather than "theological" sensitivities on which Process and Reality treads. Positively, it supports religion's sense for the obscurity, the mystery-of-the-complexity, in a processive world. Weprehend and feel God through the world. He exerts "causal efficacy" on all actual entities, and we grope after an understanding of him as the world's ground. Contemplation, acquired or infused, comes forward in the Christian tradition; eliminative thinking on no-thing-ness is offered by other traditions. Paradox and dark night play through all religious literature. Even "action" may be a way to knowing some of that "more" of God's enveloping the mind. Whitehead often speaks of the obscurity of our knowledge—of the deep intuitions and experiences which only religion and art can handle. His own view of philosophy is aesthetic more than rationalist, and he would agree that philosophy, as the systematic elucidation of experience, always runs behind its source. It should also be clear by now that Whitehead strengthens, and often clarifies, our religious longings for being-with God (ontological covenant), growing
into his life, wondering more and more reverently at the polymorphic beauty of his world.

Negatively, Whitehead leaves the individual who is personally religious, and especially the Christian who would dialogue with God, quite unsatisfied. Though God is, in his consequent nature, conscious, and he likely has "personal order", it is difficult to conceive of him in direct address to men. Whether there is religious history, in contrast to cosmological process, is therefore unclear. More troubling than this lack of free encounter, though, is the question of salvation in Process and Reality. From the discussion early in this chapter, we know only that God's primordial nature gives the actual entities of the temporal world an "objective immortality", thereby saving them from time's perpetual perishing. Does this really mean anything more than "what has been always is, as having been?"

Concerning evil, Whitehead's view makes finite actual occasions responsible for the evil resulting from their own choices, moral or submoral. Of course, to the extent men's choices are hedged in by divinely urged possibilities and values, the choices can hardly be said to be men's own; they are rather forced by God. But suppose evil is chosen only by men in independence from God. Why should we want in the first place to reduce God's responsibility for evil? Because of an antecedent commitment to God's goodness. And the price of this move is to make the actual course of events irrelevant to God's moral character; this goes counter to the religious feeling that God's moral character is revealed in events. Furthermore, it makes the doctrine of God's goodness itself an ad hoc hypothesis of the metaphysical theory, not something learned from experience. If God's primordial decision regarding graded
values and limitation in general is at root arbitrary, as Whitehead says it is, then it is only coincidence if God is metaphysically good, this being an arbitrary decision God makes in determining the metaphysical principles to which he must conform. Although Ockham's razor is a dangerous weapon, I think the simpler doctrine would be that God, if he is to be judged by moral categories, is just as good as experience shows him to be and no more. This should be admitted whether or not one maintains he creates the whole world or only the metaphysical principles (Whitehead's position).

Whitehead's religion does not seem to offer a model for ethical action, and motivation toward self-emptying love. No doubt, these matters need not occur to the cosmologist, insofar as relativity physics is his aim. They would seem germane to a cosmologist convinced that his directive metaphysical intuitions are religious, however. If they come to the Christian through his literal, ontological faith in the Incarnation (hypostatic union), that should not rule out the legitimacy of the cosmological issues they entail. For Whitehead, surely, man and his world are inseparable. Say something constitutive about the human situation, therefore, and you have hypotheses relevant to cosmology. I can recall no statement, however, confronting the Christian claims for Jesus; "the brief Galilean vision of humility" hardly does them justice. Religiously, this is the great inadequacy of Process and Reality for the Christian. And that is too systematic, too ambitious a work to be absolved from this inadequacy, I think. Whitehead values value very highly; for this religious Christian, the world of Process and Reality is hard to value.

A Christian theology which appropriated process, somehow correlating
it with God's incarnational being-for-us, might elevate the philosophic and cosmological status of biblical categories like covenant. In this way, Whitehead would be helping justify our desire that our work and prayer make a difference—that history be really serious. But something has to be done for the model of interpersonal relations, if the God of Process and Reality is to have what Christian religious intuition demands. Still, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have seldom been happy with the God of the Christian philosophers, so they might overlook Whitehead's silences, being happy that "process" in a few ways intimates their God.
The perfection of God's subjective aim, derived from the completeness of his primordial nature, issues into the character of his consequent nature. In it there is no loss, no obstruction. The world is felt in a unison of immediacy. The property of combining creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy is what is meant by the term "everlasting."

"Prehensions" are "concrete facts of relatedness" (Ibid., p. 32). If they involve actual entities they are termed "physical prehensions," if they involve eternal objects they are termed "conceptual prehensions."

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2. Ibid., p. 529.
3. Ibid., p. 532.
4. Ibid., c.f. p. 34.
5. Ibid., c.f. p. ix.
6. Ibid., p. 527.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 528.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid. Whitehead simply asserts this, with no explanation.
11. "Contrast" is a mode of synthesis of entities in one prehension. Page 167 says the mind/body relation is such that the inhibitions of opposites adjust into contrasts of opposites (within experience?).
12. Ibid., c.f. p. 519.
13. Ibid., p. 521.
14. Ibid.
15. "...how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is; so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent. Its 'being' is constituted by its 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of process.'" Ibid., p. 34-5.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 512.
20. Ibid., p. 513.
21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p. 318. Whitehead does not give title or author.

23 Ibid., p. 410.

24 This relation is, technically, "creation." It is said to be real from the creature's side, only "rational" from God's side (because God is thought the same whether he creates or not). However, as we shall now discuss, the revealed situation ("supernatural existential") challenges the classical assumption that God has no real relations.

25 C.f. Ibid., p. 527. God's consequent nature may be an alternative version of this crux.


27 I John 1:15.

Chapter IV. Two Gods of Love?

The fourth and final chapter will concern itself with what is for many the most fundamental characteristic of the divine: God as "God of Love." We will examine the above characteristic as expressed in the Christian tradition, represented by Thomas Aquinas, and in Whitehead. In so doing we will come to a final conclusion regarding the Christian viability of Whitehead's God.

A. Intersection Between Aquinas and Whitehead.

The thought systems inaugurated by Aquinas and Whitehead, while differing both philosophically and theologically, intersect at one point at least, where dialogue between them is a definite possibility. This point is the possibility of discourse about God himself (and not simply about man's aspirations toward the divine) based on some analogy between God and the world. Other theological systems prefer to take refuge in Jonathan Edwards' warning about the "Western license of affirmation," and reduce the language of theology to poetic and mythic discourse. Theology cannot dispense with these latter modes of discourse because of their evocative and disclosive power. But neither can it rest content with such language alone, and dispense with all recourse to the conceptual and analogical—not if to believe is spontaneously to seek to understand, and if one allows that religious experience extenuates itself into thought. The attempt to do so rests upon a confusion of conceptual contents, which supply a perspective of limited intelligibility in which one can refer to God, with the uncreated and unknown being of God as he is in himself—as if the Deus Absconditus were somehow represented 'in'
the concept rather than merely discoursed about 'from' it. Obviously, divinity cannot be discoursed about as can the entities of the empirically given world, but neither can theology be faithful to its task if it fails to strive to speak of God in every way available.

This shared assumption, at any rate, delivers to Thomism and to process thought at least three common conclusions: (i) there is a God, apart from whom reality would cease to be intelligible; (ii) human action or agency is the analogue for our conception of the deity, who is thus conceived as interacting with the world; and (iii) such divine agency is in the final analysis that of love. However, the character of this divine, loving agency towards the world differs radically for the followers of Aquinas and those of Whitehead.

B. Aquinas: Beyond Agape to Amicitia.

Medieval exploration of love tended to view New Testament agape as the prerogative of God and to consider natural human love in terms of classical Hellenic eros. But the real discussion focused on a third kind of love, namely God's agapeic love for man insofar as it sedimented itself in man as a real intrinsic component of his own existence. Such love was acknowledged as entirely the gift of God; it was "grace," bringing about "justification" and "righteousness" and constituting what the Apostle Paul named "the new creation," which was life according to the Spirit (Pneuma) in opposition to unredeemed life according to the flesh (sarx); its effects upon man were described as "rebirth," "regeneration," "adoption," "sonship," etc. Such love was given the name "caritas" and was conceived as an unique blend of eros and agape. It was love for the other (simultaneously God and neighbor) that was also
self-fulfilling, because it answered to the deepest aspirations of the finite lover. Augustine had earlier touched upon it, in his typically paradoxical way, in noting that the Christian who loves himself is in danger of losing his soul, yet in not wishing his soul to perish, he is in the deepest way loving it.\(^3\)

Aquinas' technical handling of this subtlety relied upon distinguishing acquisitive love (amor concupiscentiae) from personal love (amor benevolentiae), and on this basis the finis qui of the love (some impersonal good desired) from finis cui (as the one to whom and for whom it was desired—either oneself or one's friend). Selfless love was willing good to one's friend rather than to oneself. But the ontological intentionality of the act itself, its intrinsic motive and finality below the level of consciousness, could not fail to be an enrichment of the lover's own subjectivity. This was the finis cuius gratia of the loving as a reality of the lover's own being. Indeed, the more selfless the love, the more does it enrich the one who loves precisely as a human person, as a subject existing in community and called to self-transcendence.

But why is not divine love itself, as pure agape, also self-fulfilling in this same sense? Aquinas' reply is simply that such love is subsistent. Uncreated and unoriginate, it is the source of all the value in the universe and does not come into existence by way of a response to values originating elsewhere. Divine loving cannot be conceived as an accidental or contingent accretion; it is rather constitutive of God's very being in its pure actuality and so cannot be thought of as enhancing his own being. The sole beneficiaries of such love are creatures loved for their own sakes. God wills existence and salvation (finis qui), to men (finis cui), for their own sakes (finis cuius gratia)—even though the
divine goodness, and so God's love of himself, is the irreducible explanation of why he wills good to the creature. God's love of creatures is not a way of loving himself, it is rather the outpouring upon others of self-subsistent love that has no cause and no motive other than love itself. The goodness achieved in the world does not contribute to the goodness intrinsically constitutive of deity. It does contribute to what is called God's glory, but that is ontically extrinsic to God and the reflection of his being with the domain of creaturehood. True enough, God's love for the creature is at the same time a love for himself, but in the sense that he wills himself as end and the creature as ordained to that end. The meaning here is not that creatures are means to some achievement within God himself, but only that creaturely existence is a self-transcending dynamism towards inexhaustible divine goodness. It can be said that God desires our love in return, as answer to his self-giving love. But even here the reason is not need on his part, but the will to give himself to men as their highest happiness. What most accords with infinite goodness is its self-effacing communication to others.

There is, however, yet another dimension to Aquinas' analysis of love that illumines love in its divine form. Christian love seeks the good of one's neighbor, and so what predominates in it is the element of agape. It is thus "benevolent love" rather than "concupiscent love," "gift-love" rather than "need-love" in C. S. Lewis' succinct phrase. But this caritas is more than mere benevolence in that it adds to the latter the two elements of mutuality and communication in a shared life. It thus moves in the direction of what Aristotle calls "friendship," and is in fact a genuine amicitia between God and man. The shared life
can only be God’s communication to man of some finite participation in his own uncreated life of love. Our caritas towards God thus rests upon his self-communication to us, his agape or gift-love that graces men with the state of adoptive sonship. Here, the deepest element in love between God and man (and so in love between Christians) appears not precisely as the wishing well to the other, but as what issues from this when it is mutual and efficacious giving of self to the other, namely that unio affectiva that constitutes the lovers in a perduring state of love.

Love is then, most formally, union which, precisely as union (rather than unity in the strict sense), demands two or more autonomous and free subjects. It is a union proper to love, that is, something affective in kind rather than entitative, in which the other is "let be" in his very personal otherness, and so loved for his own sake. The import of this—where divine love in itself is concerned—is that God’s love for men is, in origin, agape, love that gives and does not receive; but on its own initiative it extends itself beyond this to where it establishes man as a dialogic partner to the love.

C. Whitehead: Return to Eros.

Whitehead’s metaphysical system conveys a differing concept of God and so a differing concept of divine love; this concept is something other than agape, understood as God’s self-communication issuing in that effective union which is true friendship between God and man. As noted previously, Whitehead’s thought is a philosophy of organism in which entities are not substances, but rather immanent principles of process called occasions. Organic development, as the law of the universe, is
the realization, in the form of actual occasions, of abstract and infinite ideal possibilities, called "eternal objects." But this demands positing an originating principle of such continuing realization of value. In this way, Whitehead introduces God into his world view as a "derivative notion," along with eternal objects and actual occasions, of process as ultimate. God's function is that of a limiting principle adapting limitless possibilities in a realistic and efficacious way to occasions in their process of self-becoming. God accomplishes this by envisaging what is concretely the ideal possibility for each ever-emerging occasion, and offering it to that occasion as its "initial aim," thereby luring it into the "creative advance into novelty."9

Because he is "not an exception to metaphysical principles...but their prime exemplification," God is himself an actual occasion; he differs from others only in his non-temporality, which renders him exempt from transformation into something that is not God.10 He not only envisages ideal possibilities for the world (in his primordial nature) but also prehends values for himself in his own becoming in the physical pole of his being (his consequent nature). Thus, the supplying of initial aims to the world not only lures it into advancement but also enables the world, on the basis of how it chooses to actualize the possibilities available to it, to provide the raw material out of which alone God can further actualize himself. Whitehead gives expression to this in one of his paradoxes: "It is as true to say that God creates the world, as that the world creates God."11 God's basic relationship to the world, then, by way of both the primordial and the consequent nature, is one of love. But the love in question reveals itself as akin to eros rather than to New Testament agape and its Medieval development into amicitia.
There are at least three structural points in Whitehead's thought that implicitly determine this view of divine love. First, God's relation to the world, though benign, is neither strictly free nor creative. The world is necessary to God, and so thereby is his relationship to it. Moreover, in itself the world is just as necessary as is God, and exists quite apart from any act of love on his part summoning it into existence. Worldly existence as a mere "given" loses its gift-like character; at the very heart of the mystery of being there is no act of transcendent freedom that has no motive other than love for what it calls into existence. God is no longer the creator, but only the ideal companion to man, since "both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground" which is the impersonal "creative advance into novelty." Second, the motive of God's love for the world is God's own advancement. He makes values available for emerging entities, not ultimately for their sakes but for his own; his luring forward of the world is, in the end, only a means to his own continuing actualization. Third, whatever values are realized in the world immediately perish. They cease to be actual in themselves and become only data to be prehended by succeeding occasions. Only in God is the world's achievement preserved and so rescued from oblivion. Divinity is thus the final depository for whatever good man may win out of nature and history.

There is one particular strength in this conception of divine love as eros, one that has been fully exploited in the process theology that has developed subsequent to Whitehead. It does enable one to envisage God as lovingly involved with suffering mankind. Indeed, it is taken in seriousness as meaning that God himself suffers—a truth that finds its strongest warrant in the Cross of Christ. By this account,
there is no suffering in human history that is not at the same time God's suffering. Moreover, it is precisely love that opens God to the genuine risks involved in encountering evil. This principle is more strongly urged, it is true, in certain other contemporary theologies that look more to Hegel than to Whitehead. These latter view divine love as a pure agape that kenotically empties itself into the world in such ways as to become vulnerable to all the negatives of that world. In process theology, by contrast, God has no choice but to experience in his consequent nature the waywardness of history. Still, his love determines the concrete ways in which he exposes his loving initiatives to the world's distortion of them, as he seeks to counter them in his own experience.

The point I am trying to make in all this is that passivity and receptivity, an openness of the self to being affected both favorably and adversely by what befalls the beloved, is indigenous to love as such. Apart from this there may be benevolence, but not genuine love, which is an identification of the self with the beloved in the latter's struggle to win values out of a processive universe. This is undoubtedly true of finite love which in seeking to enrich itself runs the risk of frustration, and is unavoidably exposed to forces of resistance and negation. But is it ingredient in love as such, and so of love conceived as infinite? Love is an identification with the beloved, and if the latter is in a state of wretchedness, seemingly the lover lays himself open to the same anguish. Differently put, love is a matter of giving, and ultimately the giving of oneself, to the beloved; any evil that may afflict the latter would seem to afflict him who is one in heart and mind with the beloved. Words of Augustine come readily to mind here,
"Well did one say to his friend: 'thou half my soul.'" Love is a union in heart and affection that seeks not to suffer with the friend but to alleviate his suffering; if I do suffer with him, that is motivated by a desire to lessen his anguish by bearing it with him and not by a craving for suffering as such. The precise formality of love lies not in the compassion but in the efficacious intending of the welfare of the friend. To merely feel piety or experience compassion without striving to alleviate the anguish of one's friend would hardly qualify as genuine love.

Compassion is always an accompaniment of love between humans, but that is due to the fact that such love cannot entirely transcend the causes of suffering at work upon the beloved. The mark of divine love is not its sharing in suffering but its saving and rescuing from such evil. True enough, process theology explains that the evils of the world, as experienced by God, are overcome within himself. But even this is less a saving of the world than a harmonizing of its discords within divine experience.

Is the process doctrine of a compassionate God entirely alien, then, to Christian thought? Hardly—if one takes seriously that it is God himself who suffers on the Cross. But a Christian reservation may well be felt on making that suffering something that divine love must undergo rather than something that such love embraces in its transcendent freedom. With the Cross of Jesus, the cause of human suffering lies revealed not as love but as human malice, whose Christian symbol is sin. Suffering is something that sin, precisely as the human refusal to love, carries ontologically in its wake. God's love is such as to wish that such sin be overthrown from within human love, from a love that loves enough to enter into the depths of suffering. Thus, even now, divine
love intends efficaciously the conquest of the power of evil—but it
will to achieve this historically, and in the domain of human freedom,
through God's assuming as his own the human history that bears the
wounds of sin. God's love mysteriously wills to involve man's liberty
(whence came sin and suffering in the first place) in the overthrow of
evil from within.\textsuperscript{17} It is God who casts down the reign of sin, but not
in and as God; rather in and as man the beloved, and so not in power but
in lowliness and humiliation.

To attempt to say more than this would take one into questions con-
cerning the mystery of iniquity and a theology of redemption—questions
which, while cognate, fall beyond the scope of this modest thesis.

D. The Christian Option.

God Appears, and God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night,
But does a Human Form Display
To those who dwell in Realms of clay.\textsuperscript{18}

If in the final analysis these two concepts of God as love are con-
flicting and irreconcilable, a choice has to be made. For the Christian,
dwelling in the light of revelation, the sole norm for such a choice is
the human form that divine love has assumed in Jesus. The following
three observations are simply among the more obvious of the many reflections
that follow upon that acknowledgement.

First, Jesus calls God his Father. He is uniquely the Father of
Jesus, and only derivatively of other men who are open to the encounter
with God he mediates. But the root meaning of that Fatherhood derives
from the Old Testament awareness of the Lord as the Creator God who
summons the world into existence out of the void, and takes sovereign
initiatives towards it. This is as alien from Whitehead's notion that God is not God without the world as it is from the Greek understanding of the eternity of matter. Process thinkers are unanimous in viewing God as a special and privileged agent in the world process. But the radical obedience of Christ to his Father speaks rather of One who is the transcendent ground of every instance of agency. The God of Jesus is hardly recognizable as a particular efficient agent appealed to at moments of indeterminacy in the natural and human world. Closer to the mark is a God of transcendence who calls finite freedom into existence in the first place, sustains it without violating it, and indeed makes the creature to make itself. In Whitehead's thought, the actual occasion retains an autonomy over and against God, in virtue of which it is self-creating. Its freedom, and so its capacity to love, are not rooted in a love that is itself uncreated and creative but are merely postulated as a given. If this self-creative process be in selective response to lures coming from God, still God is at most a persuasive companion in the transaction.

Christianity has consistently confessed Christ as himself the bearer of God's salvation, not as an intermediary who offers to men the means of saving themselves. Christ, as the human face of God, embodies a reconciling and saving love that is self-effacing, and that raises man to friendship with God; the Christian does not encounter Christ merely as an enticement towards present enriched experience that will perdure only in God, and so is finally an aspect of God's love of self. Another indirect way of saying this is at hand in the Christian understanding of the human person as imago Dei. On such grounds, our love in its Christian depths seeks to imitate divine love in its creative power. It intends,
not any absorption or manipulation of the beloved to the lover's own purposes, but an affirmation of the loved one in his or her own being and goodness. Love, in this sense, is a finite continuation of God's own act of creation. Joseph Pieper calls attention to the gratitude that attends the very first stirrings of love, betraying that the lover responds less to 'qualities' in the beloved that appeal to him, than to the phenomenon that the beloved simply 'is.' This is only a faint and finite reflection of love in its divine mode.

Second, Jesus summons his followers to koinonia, to a fellowship of love. That fellowship is the effect in men of God's transforming love mediated by Christ. And it reveals itself as constituted by the intersubjectivity of a genuine community. Hans Urs von Balthasar has noted that "the essentially communitarian character (of Christianity) can only be achieved by genuine personalization of all its members." If the love mediated in Christ forms us in this fellowship with God and other men and women, it is far more than divine eros; it is agape, and even more, amicitia. It is love that regards persons in the full sense of those who exist in their own right, as free subjects, and so capable of intersubjectivity. Indeed, its fullest realization appeals to the doctrine of the Trinity as the koinonia of God's own inner life. Here, the richest analogy of all between God and us becomes an analogy of relational love. And here it becomes clearest that divine love is gift-love, not need-love.

By contrast, a tendency within process theology is to deny that God is not a person at all but only a principle. Among the commentators on Whitehead, William A. Christian has elaborated most consistently the side of Whitehead's doctrine according to which God is an actual entity.
and, therefore, not a person, since a person is definitionally a nexus of actual entities. An actual entity is a person (in Whitehead’s sense) only as it constitutes a society of occasions, expressing thereby continuity with its ancestor occasions. But it is difficult to see how God on this level could influence or love the world at all, much less love it as a Person bringing human beings to their full personhood.

Third, the love and reconciliation mediated by Christ is known in the New Testament as "rebirth," "adoption," "sonship," etc. The import of these terms is not just fulfillment of mankind’s deepest capacities but a genuine elevation, something beyond man’s drive to temporal transcendence, not only quantitatively but qualitatively. Whitehead, too, allows for the introduction of novel values into the world by God’s love, but these are homogeneous to God and man. Other actual entities contemplate in the conceptual pole of their being, though on a lower scale of appreciation, the same eternal objects as does divinity. If God aids the world in its organic growth, this is because he himself is in pursuit, on a higher level, of the same objectives. Once again, such divine love is eros because its carrying forth of the world is the way to its own self-achievement. This is different indeed from divine love as agape, from love that can incarnate itself as man and surrender itself upon the Cross for men, from love that can make man a friend of God.

God offers us his love that we may respond and correspond to it, that we may love God himself and, still more urgently, each other. But God created and maintains us in our freedom of choice, and so he makes his love, his self-gift to us and the world, indeed he makes himself, dependent on our acceptance or refusal. Langdon Gilkey rightly calls this God’s self-limitation and Bernard Lee speaks of God’s helplessness.
Geddes MacGregor speaks of a God of love who in creation does not exercise absolute power but renounces it—a God who lets his creatures be and thus limits himself. 26 Indeed, God's love can be disappointed, the coming of his kingdom can be resisted. One may even say that in Jesus, God the Son is crucified, the Spirit refused and the Father rejected. The suffering of God may be an appropriate expression, like that of God's joy (suggested but not clearly expressed in Luke 15). But even in his suffering God is creative, out of the nothingness of sin and death. He offers his conquering love in Christ crucified, who therefore is God's power and God's wisdom.

The divine lover will win but he will win as a lover must, by the kenotic power of his love. To say that is simply to affirm our Christian faith. The existential question put to each of us is this: Will you and I have played our part in the victory, the victory of love, of God as love, over everything that is hateful, mean, selfish, wicked, unjust, and false?
Agape is divine love for man which, in marked contrast to eros, is altruistic in that nothing accrues thereby to the lover. It is a love difficult for man in any exploration of his own natural impulses to love, and becomes manifest only in the words and conduct of Jesus as God's self-revelation; cf. II Cor. 5:19, I John 4:8-16. The New Testament also employs agape to characterize both man's love for God, cf. Rom. 8:28, Eph. 6:24, I Cor. 2:9, 8:3 and love between Christians, cf. Jn. 13:34-35. But it does so in a derived and extended sense of the term, in which the intention is to emphasize that Christian love is not all religious eros, but rather response to God's prior love of men.

Eros is self-love, not in the pejorative sense of selfish love, or of love with an eye to its own reward after the fashion of what Leibniz calls "mercenary love," but in the sense that even in its noblest instances self-fulfillment is the irreducible motive of the love.


"God's willing of the end is not the cause of his willing the things that are subordinate to that end, but he does will that such things be ordered to their end." (Summa Theologiae, I, q. 19, a. 5.) The cause of God's willing of the creature is not, then, the willing of his own goodness; there simply is no causality within God.


Summa Theologiae, II-II, q. 23, a. 1.


In Process and Reality the notion of "God" seems to be derivative, at least by explicit statement. For Whitehead maintained that "God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far off empty space." Process and Reality, p. 28.


Ibid., p. 405.

Ibid., p. 410.

Ibid., p. 411.

Ibid., p. 408.

For Whitehead God is not sovereign over suffering but instead "the fellow-sufferer who understands." Ibid., p. 413.
This does not mean that God, in his love and suffering, is thwarted, or that he faces conditions not of his own making. But as the French say, aimer est souffrir, to love is to suffer, and therefore, to say that love is essential to the Being of God is to say that in one way or another suffering is essential to his nature. Cf. Geddes MacGregor, p. 4.

In particular, Jurgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); e.g. "The justifiable denial that God is capable of suffering because of a deficiency in his being may not lead to a denial that he is incapable of suffering out of the fullness of his being, i.e. his love." (p. 230)

"God does not control his creatures; he graciously lets them be." Geddes MacGregor, p. 15.


"An enduring personality in the temporal world is a routine of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors." Process and Reality, pp. 412-413.

However, Victor Lowe, in discussing the problem of God in Whitehead's philosophy has suggested that it is "impossible to specify the exact logical structure of Whitehead's metaphysical position." Victor Lowe, Understanding Whitehead (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, paperback, 1966), p. 290.


See Geddes MacGregor, pp. 140-150.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


