Philosophers Speak of God

By
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and
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aspects of this individual. Thus a man may be “simple” in his fundamental intention but “complex” in the details of his actions and perceptions. Of course, if there be no diversity of aspects in deity—because of his oft-vaunted “simplicity”—then indeed he cannot be both absolute and relative. But the assumption of sheer simplicity is itself a monopolar one, and so it would beg the question to object to the dipolar view on this ground. In that aspect of deity to which “One” exclusively applies, of course, there is not a diversity of factors; but in the aspect to which “Many” applies, there is.

It may be asked if the dipolar view, which puts the ultimate contrasts within God, must not do the same with the contraries good and evil. The answer is that all contrasts, according to dipolarity, do fall within God (since, in one aspect of his reality, he is the most complex and inclusive of all beings), but each contrast is in God in its own appropriate way. Thus, for instance, only real ultimate or categorical contrasts can be used to describe the fixed character of God, that which is essential to his very existence or individuality. Now evil, in the sense of wickedness, is not a universal category. For example, the animals are incapable of it, because of their unconsciousness of principles. And God is incapable of it, as we shall see (e.g., in our “Comment” on al-Ghazzali). Thus wickedness is not in the divine “character” at all. True, the contrast between God’s goodness and the wickedness of various individuals does fall within God (whose total reality is more than his mere character or essential individuality) but not in such a fashion that he could be called wicked, even in his particular states. A round stone may be within a square building—to use a crude analogy. Evil in the sense of suffering, however, is indeed, we believe, a category. And, if so, the dipolar view must hold not only that God contains suffering but that he suffers and that it is in his character to suffer, in accordance with the suffering in the world. Here the Christian idea of a suffering deity—symbolized by the Cross, together with the doctrine of the Incarnation—achieves technical metaphysical expression. In regard to this problem, Berdyaev is perhaps the most illuminating of all theologians or philosophers, though Schelling, Fechner, Whitehead, and many others could be mentioned here. (See also our “Comment” on von Hügel in chap. iii.)

B. A CLASSIFICATION OF THEISTIC DOCTRINES

The dipolar view has two main consequences. First, it implies that to contrast God merely as the “eternal” with the world as “temporal” is question-begging. For we have to ask whether he has not both an eternal and a temporal aspect. (True, divine “time,” like divine predicates in general, must be categorically supreme.) But, second, if God be conceived as in one aspect temporal, relative as well as absolute, “matter” as well as “form,” there may be no longer any good reason to deny, but good reason to affirm, that through this relative, temporal, material aspect deity includes the world. Thus the motif of pantheism may, in a somewhat novel fashion, be given its due. The distinction from the classical form of pantheism remains; for the view is that in the absolute aspect of his dipolar nature the deity is not the actual world and does not even include it.

In addition to the questions just discussed concerning the relations of God to eternity, to time, and to the world or universe, there are two others that we wish to make crucial for our classification of types of theism. These are: “Is God conscious?” and “Does he know the universe? Is he omniscient?”

One might query the exactitude of
the terms used in these questions. Is the term “know” meant literally, it may be asked, or is it analogical rather than univocal? Must we not distinguish between “unconscious” and “superconscious,” between what is below and what is above or beyond consciousness or knowledge? For the moment, let it be said simply that knowledge is meant in the sense appropriate to rigorously or categorically supreme excellence (this is our reply to the inevitable charge of anthropomorphism) and that such expressions as “beyond consciousness” are rather eulogistic or emotional than logical or cognitive. Since God is, by definition, categorically supreme, almost no one denies anything to his essential nature, save with the contention that he is better off without it. Similar remarks apply to the contention that, while God does not literally contain the universe, he does something much better, viz., enjoys a “more eminent” analogue of all its values, since he is cause of all its being and goodness, or since he is pure undivided being and good. We are not asking, for the moment, “Does he do something better than this or that?” but only “Does he do this or that?” A girl who admits that her fiancé is not a professor is not thereby debarred from subsequently demonstrating that he is something even better (if this be possible), say, a great statesman.

Furthermore, a main purpose of this book is to present evidence to show that, when the questions above formulated are answered with any but one set of answers, the result is absurdity, and this whether there be “something better” to consider or no. There is also evidence that the “best” form of consciousness, or of knowing or inclusiveness, becomes conceivable only when the correct combination of them, along with the right relation to time, has been found. As this has seldom happened, it is not surprising that so many attempts have been made to give meaning to such expressions as “beyond consciousness” (or “beyond personality”) or to the notion of a more eminent way of having or containing all things than literally having or containing them. Certainly the best consciousness or personality is beyond our mere human consciousness or personality in quality. But that is already said by affirming its “best” status, its unique excellence, thus implying that any other kind of consciousness must be inferior. Why affirm the uniqueness twice over, and that not as a mere matter of rhetorical emphasis but as an alleged doctrinal distinction? Similarly, if God is all-inclusive, of course this inclusiveness is not just ordinary inclusiveness, say, that of a man in relation to his cells, merely stretched to cover the universe. Most criticisms of “pantheism”—and many formulations by its defenders—are too crude on such matters to have much value.

The affirmative answers to our five questions—Is God eternal? Is he temporal? Is he conscious? Does he know the world? Does he include the world?—can be symbolized by the following letters:

E Eternal—in some (or, if T is omitted, in all) aspects of his reality devoid of change, whether as birth, death, increase, or decrease
T Temporal—in some (or, if E is omitted, in all) aspects capable of change, at least in the form of increase of some kind
C Conscious, self-aware
K Knowing the world or universe, omniscient
W World-inclusive, having all things as constituents

If all the five factors are asserted together, ETCKW, they define the doctrine we call “panentheism” (also “sur-relativism”). The joint affirmation of T and E (if consistently carried through) insures, as will we hope become apparent sooner or later to the reader, the conformity of a doctrine with the prin-
principle of polarity discussed above. This means that there will be no favoritism as between ultimate contraries. (When \( E \) and \( T \) are thus both affirmed, it is to be understood that each is meant to apply to a different aspect of the divine being, so that no formal contradiction results.) By omission of one or more of the five factors, such omission being taken as implying denial, one can define various views which, by comparison with panentheism, may be termed "truncated" doctrines. Some of these combinations, however, may be dismissed as too obviously without plausible meaning. Thus it seems unmeaning to suppose that a being with full knowledge of all the universe will lack self-awareness or consciousness, and hence we omit combinations like EKW or EK, which affirm knowledge but not consciousness. Or, again, assuming that any being with (supreme) self-awareness will know what it includes, we need not consider such combinations as ETKW, which imply divine consciousness of a world-including self, without knowledge of the world which is included. Finally, it seems evident that every being has some status with respect to time as well as eternity, in that it must be one of the following: (1) in all aspects eternal; (2) in all aspects noneternal or temporal; (3) in some aspects the one and in some aspects the other. Accordingly, every admissible combination must begin with \( E \) or with \( T \) or with ET, and there can be no such truncated combinations as CWK, which would be silent as to temporal status.

Omitting a few remaining combinations as of little apparent importance, historical or otherwise, and in two cases admitting attenuated forms of one of the five factors—indicated by parentheticals—we have as significant for our purposes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETCKW</th>
<th>The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, Knowing and including the World.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Plato, Sri Jiva, Schelling, Fechner, Whitehead, Iqbal, Radhakrishnan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-K</td>
<td>The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, not knowing or including the world. Aristotelian theism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECK</td>
<td>The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, Knowing but not including the world. Classical theism, Philo, Augustine, Anselm, al-Ghazzali, Aquinas, Leibniz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK</td>
<td>The Supreme as the Eternal beyond consciousness and knowledge. Emanationism. Platonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EKW</td>
<td>The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, Knowing and including the World (so far as &quot;real&quot;). Classical panentheism. Sankara, Spinoza, Royce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETCK</td>
<td>The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, Knowing but not including the world. Temporistic theism. Socinus, Lequier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETCK(W)</td>
<td>The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, partly exclusive of the World. Limited panentheism. James, Ehrenfels, Brightman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T(C)(K)</td>
<td>The Supreme as wholly Temporal or emerging Consciousness. Alexander, Ames, Cattell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>The Supreme as Temporal and nonconscious. Wieland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table, granted its (we hope) not grossly arbitrary choice of initial representatives or founders of the eight doctrines, follows a chronological order. (In our sequence of chapters we follow this order, save that we devote a separate chapter to modern panentheism and a separate main division—Part Three—to skeptics. Otherwise, both within chapters and in the succession of chapters, the order is chronological.) Our classification exhibits the history of theistic speculations as primarily a long experiment in omission. Leave out all characters save eternity and con-
sciousness, and you have Aristotle's self-inclosed deity, whose entire being consists in "thinking of thinking." Awareness concerned only with itself. Leave out temporality and world inclusiveness, and you have the standard doctrine of medieval and early modern theology, Jewish, Mohammedan, and Christian, which therefore seems eminently to deserve the title, "classical theism." Leave out all save eternality alone, and you have the One of Plotinus. Omit only the factor of temporality, and you have the God-totality, conscious and cognitive, of Spinoza, and (less equivocally affirmed) of Royce. Omit or attenuate the factor of world inclusiveness, and you have Brightman's temporalization of classical theism. Omit eternity, and you have the emergent theism of Alexander and others. Omit all but temporality, and you have Wieman's view of God as the mysterious creativity in life which, though not aware of self or world, produces ever-new values.

What is the lesson of this vast intellectual experiment? We hold that it is that none of the omissions succeed, that the "truncated" views really are mutilations, and that thought has been forced back, more and more imperatively, to the integral panentheistic conception adumbrated by Plato. We hold that eternity in total abstraction from time or becoming (EC, ECK, ECKW) is abstract—as why should it not be?—and deficient, for all that is said to the contrary, in fullness of actuality. It seems clear that eternity, in abstraction from consciousness and knowledge and from the actual universe (the One of Plotinus), is deficient in actuality (E). It is mere form without content, unity which unifies nothing—save unity itself. But, again, as to Aristotle's theism (EC), we must note that self-awareness is empty of content unless the self has some other mode of awareness than its awareness of its awareness of its awareness—of what? Every subject, even and especial-ly the supreme subject, must have objects which are other than just itself. Finally, and least often realized concerning classical theism (ECK), it is to be observed that knowledge is deficient unless it fully and literally contains its objects. ECK is the paradox of a knowledge whose objects change, though the knowledge-of-these-objects does not change, and which is wholly necessary, though the objects are not. Thus we have a complex—knowledge-of-X—which is immutable, though a constituent of this complex is mutable, a complex which is wholly without contingency, though some of its constituents are contingent (could have been otherwise). To deny the applicability of this reasoning is to imply that what there is in the divine is only "knowledge of" rather than "knowledge of." When we are told that it is the world that has relation to God, rather than God to the world, we are in effect informed that, while X is known by God, God does not know X, which seems senseless. It is useless to say that God knows directly his own essence and that, this being the cause of all, knowledge of it imparts knowledge of X. If God knows that by knowing his essence he knows X, then he knows X, and there we have the complex in question. If not, he is ignorant of something known to classical theists. Besides, we are told that God could conceivably have "decided" not to cause X. But then, the essence must be neutral, as between the existence and nonexistence of X. For God cannot have been free to decide against something implicated in his very essence. If, then, the existence of X is not implicated in the essence, knowledge of the essence will not imply knowledge of that existence. ECK is thus even more manifestly inconsistent than EC.

There seem two sources for the common refusal to admit this. One is a failure to distinguish the truisms that the thing known must be other than the
knowing from the quite different stipulation that the known must be outside the knowing. A constituent of a whole is certainly other than the whole, yet obviously not outside it! But, we shall perhaps be told, the object must not only be other than—it must also be independent of—the knowledge. Suppose this too be granted, why may not parts be independent of the whole containing them? Must every whole be “organic” with respect to all its constituents? Most philosophers, at least, would reject such an extreme view. But then they must not argue, “independent of, therefore outside, the knowledge.”

The second source of the denial that divine knowledge can literally include the world within itself is an unconscious piece of anthropomorphism. The very people who insist that divine knowledge is radically different from human knowledge, so that the term “know” is here analogical rather than univocal, are often the ones who argue (in effect) as follows: We as knowers do not literally include the known; therefore, God does not. This is to forget that human so-called “knowledge” of any concrete actuality is mostly ignorance and for the rest mostly guesswork and probability. In the highest sense of “knowledge,” namely, direct, infallible, concrete, clearly conscious apprehension, we human subjects can scarcely be said to have any knowledge. Granted that we do not “include” mountains when we “know” them, unless in some very attenuated sense of include, equally we do not know mountains, except in a very attenuated sense of “know,” by comparison with what the word means when we say that God knows mountains. What, then, is to demonstrate that the two attenuations are not identical? Furthermore, wherever our knowledge achieves something like infallibility, it also becomes evident that it includes the known within itself. Thus we know, in a sense infallibly, the aches and pains we directly feel. Do we not also include these feelings? Are they not features of our consciousness at the moment?

Suppose that the divine knowing is indeed a self-enclosed reality, with the known entities outside it; we then have a total reality, God-and-World, which is more inclusive than either, and of which God is one constituent and World the other. If it is held an impiety that God have constituents, what about the more obvious impiety that he should be a mere constituent? The entire question alters its meaning according as one includes or omits the temporal factors, E or T. A purely eternal deity can have no constituents. Granted. Also, to have constituents in just the way in which purely temporal (“corruptible”) beings have them is certainly unworthy of deity. But to have constituents in the manner appropriate to a being with an eternal aspect, but for the rest (in categorically supreme fashion) temporal, is something that neither classical theism nor classical pantheism, nor any other commonly held traditional doctrine, has adequately considered.

If the supreme lacks awareness of the world (EC, E), then he is not supreme in awareness. Besides, the adequate awareness-of-X is logically X plus something, and thus there is no sense to the notion of something superior to all possible awareness. But, on the other hand, if the supreme has awareness of the world, then, as we have seen, it cannot be without the contingency and change of the latter.

The only way, we suggest, consistently to relate the supreme to awareness and to the world is to admit a temporal aspect of deity. At once the foregoing difficulties vanish. For the temporal aspect of deity can very well include the temporal world, since a changing whole can certainly contain changing elements, and since the novel can certainly be known by knowledge similarly novel, or the contingent by knowledge like-
wise contingent. There will then be nothing paradoxically superior to the supreme, no entirety of reality other than the supreme itself, no more concrete object of reference from which deity is abstracted. Rather deity will be the integrated totality, the ultimate concrete from which all abstract features are taken.

The beauty of this position is that, if a changing reality can include a changing world, it can equally well include an unchanging factor. For a whole, in order to change, has no need of altering all its components; indeed, it need not "alter" any, since it will suffice to acquire new components. There is obviously change in the passage from abe to abed. Yet no component has altered, unless the absence of d be called a component—a strained use of language at best.

Precisely the same applies if, instead of change in components, we speak of contingency and necessity. If a whole is necessary, all its parts or members must be. But if a whole is accidental, not all its parts need be so. Suppose, in Abed, A has being by necessity, and b, c, d are contingent items of existence. It will then be true that Abed exists contingently. For instance, suppose A is the generic form "adequately knowing whatever exists, as existent, and whatever is merely possible as merely possible," and suppose that b means "a certain thing adequately known as existent and as having a certain accidental character," and that c means "something else known as having another accidental character." A is then a necessary law of the divine knowing, with contingent application to each particular case, what is not contingent being only that there are some such applications or other.

The logical difficulties of ECK are not, contrary to common opinion, balanced by adequate religious values. A deity who cannot in any sense change or have contingent properties is a being for whom whatever happens in the contingent world is literally a matter of indifference. Such a being is totally "impassible" toward all things, utterly insensitive and unresponsive. This is the exact denial that "God is love." It means that nothing we can possibly do, enjoy, or suffer can in any way whatever contribute a satisfaction or value to the divine life greater or different from what this life would have possessed had we never existed or had our fortunes been radically other than they are. Strange that for so many centuries it was held legitimate to call such a deity a God of love, or purpose, or knowledge! What we really have is the idea of sheer power, sheer causation, by something wholly neutral as to what, if anything, may be its effects. The naked worship of power is with wonderful exactitude, although unwittingly, enshrined in this doctrine. Is it wholly an accident that a hierarchical view of ecclesiastical policy is historically connected therewith?

E, or the doctrine of Plotinus, is the paradox of a Something superior to all else but totally without internal contrast or diversity, even, apparently, such as is implied in self-awareness. However, as we shall see, Plotinus is wiser than he knows, and he almost gives us the two-aspect doctrine, ETCKW, but with a brave attempt to make it look like a one-aspect doctrine. After Plotinus, the T and W factors are lost for a thousand years. But indirectly these factors continue to qualify the dominant conception. For example, Jesus is a temporal being; yet, it was said, Jesus is God. Since identity is a transitive relation, it seems that God is a temporal being after all. (If it is but one of the "two natures" which is God, then God is a part of a man; or, if Jesus is not a man, but a God-man, then both "God" and "man" are constituents of a whole which is more than either and which, in one aspect, is temporal.)
The same sort of thing happened in India and China. The supreme—Brahma, Nirvana, Tao—is often described as timeless and wholly absolute; but, if the empty abstractness of the supreme so conceived is unsatisfying, then Vishnu or the Deified Buddha or an Avatar will serve better. Is it not time to face the issue at its center: Why not put concreteness, which means time as well as eternity, passivity as well as activity, sensitivity as well as power, into our concept of the supreme? (In what sense, if any, has been peculiarly "incarnate" in a man is a question that may then be discussed on its merits instead of being given a spurious meaning by assigning it the role of mitigating initial blunders in our concept of deity.)

Now we come to views which admit the T factor. They may do this either in combination with E or without it. In the latter case, the use of the word "God" is of dubious propriety. Only in mythology, not in any philosophy or systematic theology, can one speak of a merely created deity, a deity with no underived being whatever. Even apart from the terminological question, the basic point is that only a deity whose existence or essential individuation is eternal can have much philosophic relevance. The relevance lies just in the way in which deity alone among individuals is able to unite time and eternity, necessity and contingency, actuality and potency, and thus to explain the categories by exhibiting them as abstractions from its own actuality. But this function is equally jeopardized by the omission either of E or of T from the union ET.

Wittingly or unwittingly, all views other than ETCKW sacrifice categoriality. EC, ECK, E, and ECKW make the category of temporality (and with it contingency, relativity, diversity, complexity) extrinsic to God, inexpressible in terms of the divine nature. EC, in addition, makes knowledge, as having contingent objects, similarly inexpressible, and (as we have seen) only by inconsistency does ECK, or classical theism, appear to escape this limitation. E makes even self-awareness inexpressible from the standpoint of deity. Thus ETCKW is the truly categorial conception of the supreme, the conception that reduces the categories to their proper status as essentially expressions of deity. Then anything you please is either God as knowing the world, or the world as known by God, or some aspect of these; but, since the subject includes its object, the form of the object is a form of the subject, on its "content" side. To describe the knowing-of-all-things is to describe all things known as well; so any category refers either to an aspect or to a member of the divine reality. Thus to be "actual" now is to be enjoyed by deity now (implying that there is a diversity of now's in God); to be "possible" now is to be something God may come to enjoy. The divine is thus not pure actuality but the standard or definitive actuality, and by the same token he is the standard or definitive potentiality. The theory of pure actuality makes God neither the definitive actuality nor the definitive potentiality. For it implies that you cannot say what is actual and what is merely potential by saying what God is, because his actuality (according to the theory) has no alternatives and is wholly neutral as regards alternative possibilities. Thus the omniscient being cannot function, as he logically ought to, as the measure of all things, the actual as actual, the possible as possible. For he is not differential as between actualized and nonactualized potentialities in the world. This incurable neutrality, which is metaphysical incompetence, is the price of monopolarity. Pantheists seek to evade the problem by denying that there is a real distinction between actual and possible (even Royce finally did this). They thus make deity differential.
(in Pickwickian fashion) by abolishing all intelligible difference. Against all these difficulties, the T factor is our safeguard. It makes the W factor, the pantheistic motif, innocuous and thus opens the door of escape from the paradoxes of a supreme reality which yet cannot intelligibly contain the totality of the actual.

Since the W factor, as rendered innocuous by the T factor, is radically different in its implications from the W factor as otherwise interpreted, to call both ECKW and ETCKW by the one term “pantheism” is to open the door to numerous fallacies of ambiguity. ETCKW has been called, by several writers (who have not always clearly defined their view), “panentheism,” and this term seems in every respect appropriate. God is not just all of (other) things, but yet all other things are literally in him. He is not just the whole of ordinary individuals, since he has unity of experience, and all other individuals are objects of this experience, which is no mere sum of its objects; moreover, his identifying “personality traits” are entirely independent of any set of ordinary actual individuals whatever. To be himself he does not need this universe, but only a universe, and only contingently does he even contain this particular actual universe. The mere essence of God contains no universe. We are truly “outside” the divine essence, though inside God.

It will no doubt strike some as strange that, in listing the five factors that distinguish the various ideas of God, nothing is said as to “will” or “freedom” in God or as to “personality,” and also nothing as to “power,” “creation,” or “goodness.” Surely, it may be thought, these are vital for religion, and their omission a serious oversight. In brief, our defense is that the correct interrelation of our five factors will constitute a fairly adequate definition of divine will, freedom, personality, power, goodness; whereas, without these five factors, the traditional terms will have no sharp conceptual significance but will be merely honorific or emotional, mere epithets. Classical theists have often spoken of divine personality, or divine persons (as in the Trinity), and have derided the pantheists because of their “impersonal” deity; but what personality might be if entirely devoid of temporal process, potentiality, and passivity, they have as little told us as the pantheists. The same holds for “will” and “freedom.” In the sheerly eternal, what is eternally is, and there is no meaning to the question, “What might it have been?” Hence, if God’s will is that of a sheerly eternal being, it is meaningless to ask, “What might his volition have been (other than the actual one to create the world)?” And hence to speak of freedom, alternatives of possible volition, is here out of place. On the other hand, if God is an eternal-temporal being, eternal in essential individuality, temporal in the flux of his acts and experiences, if he is conscious and knows all things, how can he fail to be also a volitional personality? What is awareness, apart from all volitional response? Could one be aware, in the fullest degree, of the joys and sorrows of others and not share these sufficiently to wish to further the one and hinder the other? We think that only a verbal psychology could seem to justify such an abstraction of awareness from evaluation and response. Awareness is essentially a response, an adaptation to others. And what is “personality” but an enduring individual character or essence in a flux of such responses? As such is it known to psychology and common experience. What has made certain ideas of God impersonal has been the denial of alternativeness, of the distinction between character and act such that, of two mutually incompatible possible acts, either one would express the same individual or personal character. Now
time is the order of alternativeness—the order which relates real and merely potential acts. Thus T in our symbolism might perhaps as well have been N, for potentiality. It is the denial of potentiality to deity, or the denial of temporality, that makes any genuine conception of divine personality impossible. (In thus equating nontemporal with nonpotential, we are in agreement with the great tradition of Western theism, which has almost always either denied both or affirmed both of deity and has assumed their equivalence.)

It is often thought that any two persons, even God and a man, must each be outside the other. But this seems too narrow and ungeneralized use of anthropomorphic analogy. Human persons are indeed outside each other in space, since each is but a part of the whole actuality. But the whole of actuality, as content of the experience of one person, will be “outside” the other persons only as a whole is—partly—outside its parts (Fechner); they, however, will certainly not be outside it! Mutual externality here is not required. Mutual action and reaction, on the other hand, are indeed required. The whole-person and part-person interact. If they did not, then, since being is always (in one aspect) power, any part which, in relation to the whole, had no power to act but was merely passive would, in this relation, have no being, and hence, contradictorily, would not be a part. To have a self-deciding part is not to decide that part but rather to enjoy or suffer its self-decision. As Fechner has said, not all volitions in a mind need be by that mind. The sense in which evil is in God is thus explained. God suffers our evil acts, but his volition is always of good.

It can be claimed that this does not limit the perfection of the divine power but makes it the ideal case of what all power essentially is—power over powers, partial determining of the finally self-determined actuality of others, participa-

tion in their self-creation (Whitehead).

According to many of the greatest philosophers, experiences are the very actuality of all things, and they are always in one aspect self-created. No mere manipulation of pre-existent things can make a single new experience, nor can anything not the subject of that experience make it to be what it is. It must make, enact, itself.

What, then, becomes of the famous idea of creation ex nihilo? Whereas, it is commonly said, ordinary creative action presupposes “matter,” divine creation does not. Admittedly, ordinary cases of creative power lack, in principle, something reserved for the categorically supreme case. But, still, “out of nothing” is a dubious way of formulating this categorically privileged way of creating. Does God create an adult out of nothing or out of a child? The creative functioning of deity involved in the production of Beethoven’s music certainly did not treat as nothing the free self-decisions of Beethoven’s predecessors in composition. Only in connection with an absolute first moment of time has even divine creation no antecedent data or conditions. (The contrary views of Augustine and Aquinas will be considered in chap. iii.)

Our classification of doctrines stresses consciousness and knowledge but not volition and power. There is an advantage in this. For only a conscious being with complete knowledge, or one “to whom all hearts are open,” can be trusted to use power in ways appropriate to the state of these hearts. This is the goodness of God. (See our “Comment” on al-Ghazali in chap. iii.)

It should be granted that any classification of doctrines is somewhat arbitrary and that other classifications remain not only possible but for some purposes superior. But there seems to be a real need to counteract the venerable tendency to put power or causality or eternity uppermost in theological
speculation, leaving divine consciousness, awareness, and responsiveness to take their chances, often very poor chances at that. To impute responsiveness or love or even awareness or volition to a non-temporal being has always seemed at best a pious fiction. Words like "knowledge" or "personality" or "will" come cheaply enough; the task is to find a logical structure in our thinking about deity that makes room for the ideas thus labeled.

Since the monopolar doctrine assimilates the contrast between God and other individuals to that between being and becoming (or cause and effect, or simplicity and composition), one may say that in this doctrine the category of being is virtually the object of worship, and the contrary pole is degraded. So we may speak of "ontolatry," worship of being, or similarly "etiolatry," worship of cause. Now the remedy for these diseases is not to substitute the contrary pole, worshiping becoming and effect, and degrading being and cause. The remedy is to recognize that both poles under each category apply in one way to God and in another to other individuals. God is neither being as contrasted to becoming nor becoming as contrasted to being; but categorically supreme becoming in which there is a factor of categorically supreme being, as contrasted to inferior becoming, in which there is inferior being. Both poles have two levels, analogically but not simply comparable. The divine becoming is no more divine than the divine being; but both are incomparable (except analogically) to other being or becoming. For the line of categorical supremacy must always be crossed.

The divine becoming is more ultimate than the divine being only in the simple sense of being more inclusive, of being concrete while the other is abstract. So we maintain that our charges of cause-worship or being-worship or power-worship cannot be countered by the simple expedient of accusing us of the contrary superstition, effect-worship, process-worship. We worship supreme-being-in-supreme-becoming, supreme-cause-in-supreme-effect; that is, we worship the supreme, not any polar category. If it be said that, after all, supreme-inferior is a polarity, we reply that even here we worship the supreme-as-containing-the-inferior and deriving enrichment from this containing. Even inferior being-becoming is not degraded in this doctrine but glorified by the recognition of its contribution to God himself. Nothing is debased to the status of irrelevance, whereas in the monopolar procedure all becoming and all effects are mere impertinences, since being just as being is held to have all value. God should least of all require the kind of praise that makes the better seem still better by saying that the inferior is even less than inferior, is nothing, merely evil, or wholly negligible. But that is the kind of praise he has generally received: We thus read our lack of imagination, or of generosity, or simply of love, into God himself.

Some of our selections present proofs or arguments for the reality of God. All such arguments amount to this: that the proposition, "There is a supremely excellent being, worthy of worship," expresses fundamental or categorical aspects of experience and thought, while the denial of this proposition contradicts such aspects. There can be as many arguments for God as one can distinguish fundamental aspects of experience and thought, and it seems unlikely that there is but one possible way of making such distinctions, or one fixed number of resulting arguments. The list we propose is as follows: there are three arguments corresponding, respectively, to aesthetics, ethics, and the theory of knowledge, or beauty, goodness, and truth, and three arguments corresponding, respectively, to the ideas of
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Cosmic order, cosmic contingency (or change), and, finally, the very idea of God, or supremely excellent being, himself. In the order named, the six arguments are: the aesthetic argument, the ethical argument, the epistemological (“idealistic”) argument, the design argument, the cosmological argument, and the ontological argument. All of these are found in some form from fairly early times but are usually so stated that they stand or fall by the tenability of classical theism, classical pantheism, or Aristotelian theism. Only in rather recent times have the arguments begun to shake off allegiance to one or other of these doctrines as their predestined conclusion. Since these doctrines are paradoxical, and any argument, however cogent, can be denied if one is willing to perpetrate paradox (contradiction), it is no wonder that the usual statements of arguments for God have been found less and less convincing. At best these statements pose a dilemma: accept the paradoxes of the conclusion of the argument or the paradoxes of the atheistic denial of the conclusion.

The cosmological argument, blended with the argument from order, seems to appear first in Plato (Latos x). Augustine gave a version, hardly a perspicuous or satisfactory one, of the argument from truth, which was almost correctly formulated by Royce in his Conception of God. Anselm, we believe, will yet be granted the glory of having achieved a nearly correct version (presented as supplement to an incorrect one which is all that most commentators seem to have noticed) of one step in the ontological argument. Plotinus seems sometimes to be groping toward an aesthetic argument (impeded by his failure to appreciate variety or contrast as no less essential to beauty than unity), but the possibilities of this form have not yet been properly evaluated.

Kant offered an ethical argument, limited severely by his assumption of the absolute independence of deity, from which it followed that the union of righteousness and happiness which is indeed the “supreme good” to be served by our actions must be man’s rather than God’s, so that God becomes the means to our ethico-hedonic self-realization, instead of our self-realization being seen (Whitehead) as our enjoyment of the privilege of contributing to the self-realization of deity, which alone can possess the literal summum bonum.

Every one of these arguments for theism can, we believe, be given a more exact and perspicuous form than has hitherto been given them. But this is a subject for another occasion.

The reader is now invited to see how far the analysis presented in this introduction illuminates the intellectual history presented in samples through the following pages. It may be that he will find another interpretation more convincing. If so, good luck to him!
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