

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

So far we have tried to defend the concept of dipolar God and the ontological proof for his existence. We have found that the two realms are the "games" played among different groups of certain people. Whereas the concept of deity, on the one hand, has been discussed among classical theists, pantheists and panentheists, the ontological proof, on the other hand, has been seriously discussed among theists, sceptics and atheists. Since ambiguity is regarded as a necessary condition for morality to be significant, we can defend the ontological proof merely in a humble way. We could not defend it "with flying colors" because the case of God is truly ambiguous. We may see this from the following story narrated by John Wisdom.

Two people return to their long neglected garden and find among the weeds a few of the old plants surprisingly vigorous. One says to the other "It must be that a gardener has been coming and doing something about these plants." Upon inquiry they find that no neighbour has ever seen anyone at work in their garden. The first man says to the other "He must have worked while people slept." The other says "No, someone would have heard him and besides, anybody who cared about the plants would have kept down these weeds." The first man says "Look at the way these are arranged. There is purpose and a feeling for beauty here. I believe that someone comes, someone invisible to mortal eyes. I believe that the more carefully we look the more we shall find confirmation of this." They examine the garden ever so

carefully and sometimes they come on new things suggesting that a gardener comes and sometimes they come on new things suggesting the contrary and even that a malicious person has been at work. Besides examining the garden carefully they also study what happens to gardens left without attention. Each learns all the other learns about this and about the garden. Consequently, when after all this, one says "I still believe a gardener comes" while the other says "I don't," their different words now reflect no difference as to what they have found in the garden, no difference as to what they would find in the garden if they looked further and no difference about how fast untended gardens fall into disorder. At this stage, in this context, the gardener hypothesis has ceased to be experimental, the difference between one who accepts and one who rejects it is now not a matter of the one expecting something the other does not expect. What is the difference between them? The one says "A gardener comes unseen and unheard. He is manifested only in his works with which we are all familiar," the other says "There is no gardener" and with this difference in what they say about the gardener goes a difference in how they feel towards the garden, in spite of the fact that neither expects anything of it which the other does not expect (Wisdom, 1970:434).

If the case of God is truly ambiguous, then we may ask: Do we need to prove for God's existence? To this question, some theists would say "yes" while others would say "no." Those who say "no" are usually satisfied with supernatural knowledge revealed by God in the Scriptures. Those who answer the above question affirmatively, despite their acceptance of supernatural revelation, believe that human reason may pave the way for the justification of our belief in God. They would argue that we do not need to prove for the

presence of evil and the presence of this table in front of us because their existence is obvious. Since the case of God is not like the case of evil or the case of this table, that is the reason why we should prove for God's existence. In Hartshorne's case, he, the researcher believes, is forced to prove for the existence of God's abstract aspect because he needs to make a clear distinction between his panentheism and Spinoza's pantheism. And as we have already seen, his ontological argument could be defended only in a humble way.

As for the concept of God, it is the realm discussed among theists, no matter they are classical theists, pantheists or panentheists. We have seen that since their concept of God is monopolar, both classical theism and pantheism have faced a lot of traditional difficulties. For Hartshorne only the panentheistic concept of God, who is dipolar, can resolve all those problems. In the last chapter it seems obvious that the problem of evil makes trouble for both classical theism and pantheism. Considering them carefully, we would find that the problem of evil creates more serious trouble for pantheism than for classical theism. Since, according to pantheism, God and the world are identical and the world contains a great deal of evil, God contains a great deal of evil. From this it follows that God is not worthy of worship. Hence the most serious difficulty the pantheist faces, we can conclude, is that their God is not worthy of worship. Classical theism, on the other hand, faces another serious problem. If God and the world are totally separated, there would be something superior than God and the world - something which includes both of them. If so, it would follow that the classical God is not supreme. But it is commonly agreed among all theists that for a God to be God, he must accomplish both theological and religious requirements, namely, both supreme and worthy of worship. According to this principle, we would find that both the pantheistic

God and the classical God fail to fulfill its requirements. In order to see this clearly, we may prove it. Its logical symbolism can be found in an appendix V.

1. If God is totally independent of the world, he is not supreme.
2. If God is really identical to the world, he is not worthy of worship.
3. It is commonly accepted among theists that for a God to be God, he must be both supreme and worthy of worship.
4. It can be deduced from (3) that God is supreme.
5. Similarly, it can be deduced from (3) that God is worthy of worship.
6. It can be inferred from (4) that it is not true that God is not supreme.
7. It can be inferred from (5) that it is not true that God is not worthy of worship.
8. Thus from (1) and (6) it follows that God is not totally independent of the world.
9. Thus from (2) and (7) it follows that God is not really identical to the world.
10. Therefore, from (8) and (9) it follows that God is not totally independent of the world, and he is not really identical to the world.

From (10) we can infer that God is neither totally independent of the world (classical theism) nor really identical to the world (pantheism). We can use this to deduce panentheism from the following argument.

Either classical theism or pantheism, or panentheism.

Neither classical theism nor pantheism.

Therefore, panentheism.

When classical theism and pantheism are refuted, we are left with panentheism. Hartshorne's panentheism can hold and preserve the thesis that God is both supreme and worthy of worship. For Hartshorne God is not a substance or being, but an eminent process. God is a process like all other entities. The difference is just that God is eminent or unsurpassable by any other entity except by himself. Hartshorne believes that this is a correct way of seeing God, the world and all creatures. As he puts it :

If we reject the Buddhist-Whiteheadian view (that a human career, for example, is not a strictly single reality with differing qualities but an apparently continuous succession of realities each as a whole new), then we are not only supposing that for over twenty centuries the Buddhists, who thought with care about the matter all this time, were simply mistaken, but we are also supposing that... contemporary physicists, who keep telling us that they have been forced to the conclusion that reality consists of "events not things"... are also in this simply mistaken (Hartshorne's OOTM, 1984: 108-9).

In adding a brief postscript to Dr. Sia's book God in Process Thought, Hartshorne wrote: "My philosophical theology has been tolerably understood by Protestants of many varieties, Catholics of several countries, Unitarian-Universalists, Rabbies, some Hindus, Chinese, and still others." From his utterances "Protestants of many varieties" and "Catholics of several countries," it seems to the researcher that Hartshorne himself well realizes that his view is more welcome to Protestants than to Catholics. Baltazar confirms this fact when he says :

Protestant process thought in America has largely followed the philosophy of Whitehead. American Catholics who are behind in the development of a process theology, could well adopt Teilhard's process thought. This is especially true since post-Vatican Counciliar theology, which has become significantly evolutionary in character, has been largely influenced by Teilhard de Chardin (Baltazar, 1973 145-6).

Why so? It is too naive to assume that the situation is as such because Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Teilhard are Anglican, Protestant, and Catholic respectively. It seems to the researcher that the Whiteheadian-Hartshornian view is more progressive than that of Teilhard in that according to Teilhard God is still monopolar and does not grow even though it is possible to predicate temporality of God.* The researcher thinks that this may be the reason why his fellow Catholics are happy with Teilhard's view, but unhappy with that of Hartshorne.

It is very hard for classical theism to adopt the panentheistic view of God. The classical theist would assume, as Swinburne does, that if God is temporal, then God is time's prisoner. In the view of the classical theist, the panentheistic God would always be considered as time's prisoner. But this is

*According to Baltazar's interpretation, God is regarded as ground, and the creatures are considered as seeds. It is the seed that grows or becomes. The ground is the source of growth, of the seed. Since the ground is not a super-seed it does not grow. See Eulalio Baltazar. "Evolutionary Perspectives and the Divine." In George F. McLean. ed. 1973. Traces of God in a Secular Culture. New York: Alba House, pp.158-9.

quite a mistake. Even though Hartshorne does not deal with this problem directly, he would not, the researcher thinks, hesitate to reply as Baltazar says: "As evolutionary, time is not an absolute and homogeneous container of everything; instead it is one with the existence of a thing as process. To observe time, one must observe the evolutionary process itself" (Baltazar: 1973: 151).

Another question that may be raised here is whether the panentheistic God is to be equated with the God of the New Testament who values all human creatures with a universal and impartial love. Still, he is far from being the God of contemporary liberation theology, who is considered as the God of the poor and the oppressed. As Hick comments :

The God of the process theodicy* is -according to this line of criticism- the God of the elite, of the great and successful among humankind. God is apparently the God of saints rather than of sinners; of geniuses rather than of the dull, retarded, and mentally defective; of the cream of humanity rather than of the anonymous millions who have been driven to self-seeking, violence, greed, and deceit in a desperate struggle to survive (Hick, 1990: 54).

The researcher thinks that Hick and critics of this kind are probably mistaken. As we have already seen in the last chapter, it is panentheism which succeeds in guaranteeing and preserving divine love and divine goodness

*"Theodicy" is from the Greek theos, god, and dike, righteousness. The term is first introduced by Leibniz. It is now understood as an attempt to justify God's righteousness under the problem of evil.

whereas both classical theism and pantheism fail to do so. If by “universal and impartial love” they mean “heavenly love”, then God’s love is merely an error as already shown in the last chapter. If God is love, then the panentheistic God is the God of the New Testament.

Since God is love, he is found everywhere there is love. We could find the Kingdom of God here in the world. As Whitehead says: “For the kingdom of heaven is with us today ... What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion - the fellow - sufferer who understands” (Whitehead, 1978:351). To consider God as the God of the elite or the God of the poor is simply misleading. It is not correct to call God as the God of the poor or the God of the elite. If God is to be fully God, he must be God not only for every man, but also for every entity even subatomic particles. Hartshorne himself pronounces nowhere that the panentheistic God is the God of the elite. On the contrary, he pronounces that God’s love embraces all creatures. For Hartshorne all entities are regarded as “living” processes in that they have their own feeling and freedom or creativity. From this it follows that all entities are not different in kind but different in degree of complexity. Thus all entities can be considered as “others” to one another. Since love as understood by Hartshorne is adequate awareness of the value of others, “everything -no matter how lowly it is- is completely worthy of love in the sense of having its interests fully appreciated” (Sia, 1985: 91). Hence Hick and critics of this kind are simply mistaken.

In summary, we may say without exaggeration that while classical theism may ultimately end up as emptiness, pantheism eventually seems to be

terminated as blindness. Both pantheism and classical theism seem fail because they stand on only one pole of the metaphysical opposites. Gilkey is right when he says: "To paraphrase Kant, the main thesis... is that secular experience without religious symbols is blind, unarticulated, and terrifying; religious symbols without the content of secular experience are empty and meaningless" (Gilkey, 1973: 9). Hartshorne, we may say, is to classical theism and pantheism as Kant is to rationalism and empiricism. Kant did not come to abolish rationalism and empiricism, but he came to complete them. Similarly, Hartshorne has not come to abolish classical theism and pantheism, but he has come to complete both of them.

However, the researcher is well aware that all views of God - panentheism is no exception- are, more or less, subjective at least in the sense that all God-talks are anthropomorphic. No one knows exactly about God's nature as God himself does. Thus what the researcher, as a secular believer, has tried to defend, namely, panentheism, is not as it is a truth, but as it is the most intelligible, the most consistent and the most rigorous logical analysis when comparing it with other schools now. If someday there are some better systems, the researcher is not reluctant to reflect on them. But what the researcher is holding now are the theses that God is not dead and will never die, and that Hartshorne's philosophical theology is one of the best systems we have at the present time.