The Metaphysics of Experience

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GOD AND THE WORLD
(PR, Part V)

I • GOD THE REDEEMER

After the intricacies of Parts III and IV, through which the specifics of a process metaphysics are elaborated, Whitehead returns in a moment of generalization to what has been the underlying theme of PR: the reconciliation of the primordial oppositions given in and for experience—the one and the many, order and creativity, permanence and change, now as subsumed in the foundational dialectic of God and the world. It is no longer necessary to plumb the obscurities of the text, for Whitehead speaks lyrically and directly, pulling aside the curtain for a moment to enable the reader to catch a glimpse of the massive simplicity of his cosmological vision. It is indeed only a glimpse—a return to romance—the preface to the theological counterpart of process cosmology, a beginning not an end. The details are not worked out; the language is more evocative than precise; more is concealed than is revealed. Yet the revelation in and not despite its poetry gives process philosophy a scope paralleled only by the synoptic vision of a Hegel or an Aquinas.

The text is more appropriate for meditation than for critical analysis; hence what follows will concentrate neither on systematic rigor nor on the divergencies in post-Whiteheadian process philosophy which the text has spawned, but on the vision which Whitehead strove to incarnate in words, and on what for me are the implications of that vision. To elaborate those implications fully would require volumes, would entail the construction of a Whiteheadian theology, and consequently would violate the intent of this work. However, to gloss over the richness of Whitehead’s suggestions would be equally inappropriate. I have therefore attempted an intermediate approach, one which follows Whitehead in its use of the more romantic, less metaphysically precise methodology and manner of expression, one which broods over Whitehead’s suggestions in a meditative manner and which itself suggests further avenues for systematic development in other volumes.
The vision to which Whitehead gives expression is a vision of the ultimate contrast in terms of which the creativity finds its fulfillment: God and the world. Neither pole is autonomous and yet, in a qualified sense, both are; neither pole is contingent, yet both are. Each transcends the other, is immanent in the other, creates and is created by, perfects and is perfected by, the other. Each resolves the tragedy latent in the nature of the other by supplying what is lacking in the other. In a genuinely Hegelian sense, each is the truth of the other, passing over into the other in a manner reinforcing Whitehead’s affirmation of the influence of Hegelian thought on his own (ESP 115–16).

The tragedy underlying the cosmological doctrine is the tragedy of loss, of the perishing of subjectivity, with its inherent unity of feeling, into objectivity, with its plurality of modal afterlives: the immortalization yet fragmentation of value achieved.

The ultimate evil in the temporal world . . . lies in the fact that the past fades, that time is a “perpetual perishing.” Objectification involves elimination. The present fact has not the past fact with it in any full immediacy [PR 340].

No finite beauty can survive in its pristine unity. It can shape all process consequent upon itself only at the price of its own self-functioning and unique individuality, because individuality qua individuality is obstructive and must be sacrificed to newly emergent creation. Every creature receives its ideal of itself from God through the mediacy of its actual world, weaves the content of that world into an immediacy, a concrete value patterned by the ideal, and perishes—leaving behind its power and its memories in its manifold objectifications but not its inner subjective unity. In becoming a value for the others it loses its value for itself. In Whitehead’s words, “There is a unison of becoming among things in the present. Why should there not be novelty without loss of this direct unison of immediacy among things?” (PR 340).

The tragedy hidden in the theological doctrine is the tragedy of divine aloneness. God, under the abstraction of his primordial nature, is totally isolated from finite process, despite his essentiality to the speculative scheme. Granted: he functions as the “principle of concretion” (PR 345), creating the conditions for the possibility of finite particularity, providing the source of all finite beauty and order and structure through his primordial valuation of the eternal objects. But under this aspect he is utterly indifferent to creatures in their concrete individuality, despite the fact that he is their “initial ‘object of desire’” (PR 344). He is merely the “unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality” (PR 343), unloving, unhating, unconscious, oblivious of
actuality: eternal beauty, the source of all exemplifications but unexemplified itself. In a word, God under the abstraction of his primordial nature is deficient in actuality. He is merely thought thinking thought. As Hegel expressed it, “this content shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit.” He is devoid of physical experience and hence “bodiless,” locked in his conceptual aloneness as the first creature of the creativity.

Yet the infinite beauty of his conceptual structure is the immortal appetition of the universe, actively luring finite creatures up the ladder of love. Beauty diffuses itself, not through acts of efficient creation but through its infinite evocation of novel instances of itself: universes of creatures stirred by the creativity to become God-like by temporalizing the eternal togetherness of primordially ordered form in their concrete immediacy; universes of self-creating creatures whose response to the divine seduction is the incarnation of beauty. With poignant sensitivity to the overwhelming dignity and worth of the individual creature, Whitehead’s “unmoved mover” sacrifices the efficient creative force exercised by a traditional omnipotent deity in favor of the autonomy of the self-creative creature. Whitehead’s God “thinks” the Word; he does not create the world. He orders the possibles; he does not command the actual. The latter activity is reserved to finite creatures, whose hearing of that Word as it echoes through an actual world straining for new births and whose acceptance of it in a creaturely fiat initiate the self-creative process in which the abstract Word is modified and particularized until it comes to term as a drop of fully determinate existence fully responsible for what it is. The transcendent Word becomes flesh in the speech of every concrescence, acquiring concreteness and full determinateness by drawing the many onward into ever new unities in which “the temporality of mere fact [acquires] the immortality of value” (ESP 84).

But again the tragedy of loss intervenes, a tragedy which God’s primordial functioning cannot resolve, any more than it can overcome the divine isolation it creates. The immortality achieved in world process is objective, fragmentary, and public—subjectivity, privacy, and undivided unity having perished with the closing up of each drop of creaturely process. The limited victory which personal threads win over time is the partial stabilization and propagation of incarnate value through increasing intensities of memory and anticipation. Character endures and develops, canalizing the creative urge, reiterating past

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value, and reaching out to future embodiments. But the victory is only partial, and the ultimate evil—the loss of immediacy, the fading of the past—ultimately triumphs. When the value achieved, the subjectivity attained, is trivial in intensity, the loss is merely part of the profligacy of a universe which strews its shores with death because its depths teem with life. But when that value is significant, when that subjectivity attains rational consciousness, its loss, its perishing, brings despair to the human spirit. The perfect moment, the culmination of expectation, passes; and in its passing becomes more and more an object to be viewed in a memory impotent to revive its subjective immediacy. It becomes merely "the time when . . . ," a fact still efficacious in the present, still objectively immortal, but incapable of being re-experienced in its overwhelming beauty. The most acute form of the evil of perishing lies in the ultimate disappearance from the world of fact of the most profound beauty finite process has created: the human individual. Here the cry is not simply "Why must the perfect moment perish?" but "Why must I perish?" "Is my life, with its beauty and ugliness, its exaltation and degradation, merely to end as an unfinished painting, left behind as an historical curiosity without an ultimate unity, without the final brush stroke which would transform its ongoing incompleteness into aesthetic unity?"

The universal hunger of humanity is for redemption: redemption from loss, from partiality, from temporal limitation, from finitude; redemption through an activity which somehow weaves the threads of life into an immortal tapestry immortally self-conscious. The world itself pleads for such a redeemer, for it too, from its less to its more personalized elements, self-destroys as it self-creates, attains only limited harmonizations of the many, partializes, negatively prehends, decides against because it decides for. Even in its totality, the world of fact is essentially incomplete and transitory, merely a voyage between the deaths of cosmic epochs. Without a redeemer, one who feels the totality of finite process into himself and gives it the immortal and perfect unity attainable only from an infinite atemporal perspective, world process, conscious process, human life, are absurd. Without love as the primordial orientation of the redeemer and the redeemed, a love which draws rather than coerces creatures into harmony because it reverences their autonomy, that redemption is impossible.

These longings find expression in the deepest religious experiences of mankind and manifest a fundamental finite need and aspiration for immortality, self-perfection, and self-transcendence: for redemption through love. For Whitehead, the need and aspiration contained in them reflect the incoherence of the speculative scheme as thus far constructed. The speculative circle is not closed, finite process is left essen-
tially disjointed and alienated. Despite finite efforts to weave the many into one, the creativity is essentially unsatisfied. Nature needs more than eternally ordered form to become and to remain in solido; it needs a final, redemptive synthesis to overcome the tragedy inherent in the endless partiality of selective objectification, loss, and perishing. If redemption is the wishful thinking of visionaries and old men, then God himself as presented in the scheme is an abstraction suitable only for mathematical study—a complex pattern of valued possibilities and not an actual entity, not determinate.

To be actual, God must take on a “body” and, in so doing, redeem: i.e., he must have physical feelings of the totality of each and all finite achievements, integrating them into the ongoing unity of his consequent nature. He thus creates himself out of the world by accomplishing its final integration, as the world creates itself out of him by concretizing the divine ideas.

What follows from the exigencies of this ultimate integration marks out God as significantly different from other actual entities. (a) If he is to overcome the partiality which characterizes world process, he cannot selectively objectify the data of his physical feelings. He must feel the totality, the subjective unity, the immediacy, of each spatio-temporal creature into himself. (b) He must therefore become both each creature and the togetherness of all creatures. Therefore his feelings cannot take place within the confines of a spatio-temporal perspective or of a private, exclusive, idiosyncratic subjective aim. (c) In consequence, he must be atemporal, immediately connected with each creature’s actual world, contemporaneous with every creaturely concrescence. The concrete, determinate, individuality (satisfaction) he aims at must be such that in it all finite satisfactions, despite the disparate and obstructive character of their individuality, can be united without losing their immediacy. His subjective aim must therefore be general enough to subsume all less general subjective aims as specifications of itself and hence as harmonizable.

However, to make such assertions about the divine actual entity seems to be exempting him in an ad hoc manner from the rules of metaphysics in order to salvage the coherence of the metaphysical scheme. Is this really the case? I think not, at least not with regard to the wider issues concerned. Whitehead has consistently underlined the fact that each actual entity becomes its own creative appropriation of its actual world, that no concrescence can outgrow its actual world. With respect to God, the relevant problems are: (a) What is the divine actual world? and (b) What is the nature of the divine subjective aim? With respect to (a), some Whiteheadian scholars, notably Charles Hartshorne, have rejected Whitehead’s assertion that God is “always in con-
crescence and never in the past” (PR 31) and replaced it with an interpretation of God as a personal order of divine occasions. Under this rubric, the divine actual world would grow with the creative advance of the universe, as “The many become one, and are increased by one” (PR 21), and God would be compelled to perform successive redemptive acts. In consequence, there would be many “arrests” of divine existence, many episodes of divine redemption linked in the unity of a personally ordered society by a divine defining characteristic. By the principle of relativity, each of these episodes would be superjected to the world, would become part of the objective datum for future creaturely process, would become fact, stubbornly insistent, incapable of being negatively prehended. In other words, an enduring creature would be confronted willy-nilly with the fact of its past redemption and compelled to accept it, to integrate it as part of its present determinateness in the same way as it must appropriate any other fact in its actual world. Whitehead might be interpreted as lending support to this view when he states that “the perfected actuality passes back into the temporal world, and qualifies this world so that each temporal actuality includes it as an immediate fact of relevant experience” (PR 351). However, that he calls it “immediate fact,” that in virtue of his redemptive activity God is termed “the great companion—the fellow-sufferer who understands” (PR 351), point to an alternative interpretation in which a single redeeming act is contemporaneous with all finite immediacies, such that it can be grasped only indirectly—i.e., presentationally objectified in an act of faith through which the creature gives free assent to its own redemption, freely incorporating it as an ingredient in its definiteness. To make redemption an historical series of acts rather than one overarching process takes it out of the realm of “faith” and into the realm of objective, inescapable fact. To remove the element of faith, even well-founded faith, from human religious life and from the vital process of any actual entity, to excise presentational objectification and its implied interest in the present, is to bind the present irrevocably to the past, to sacrifice spontaneity and autonomy at the altar of necessity.

It seems closer to Whitehead’s intentions, therefore, to infer that the divine actual world includes all actual worlds simultaneously and all spatio-temporal drops emerging from those actual worlds in unison of becoming. From the divine perspective, time becomes space in the sense that all “times” are co-present in divine feelings, although retaining, and related by, the various forms of extensive connection. However, we cannot assume that God directly feels each creaturely “becoming,” that creaturely immediacies are immediately present to and felt into the divine concrescence, for this would involve a violation of the causal independence of contemporary occasions. Therefore, each
creaturely immediacy must be presentationally objectified in God (indirectly felt) on the basis of the real potential for that immediacy contained in the creaturely past as causally objectified in divine physical feelings. Inasmuch as the graded eternal objects which structure that real potentiality are the divine conceptual functioning, God grasps them in their fullness by being them and hence has a full, albeit indirect, feeling of each creature's present. At the same time, he feels that present as past vis-à-vis a future concrescence in the same thread, since he feels all creatures in unison of becoming. He therefore both directly and indirectly feels each item in his actual world: his indirect feelings "creating" the concrescent item by supplying it with its subjective aim; his direct feelings experiencing the efficient causality of the item's satisfaction. His comparative feelings contrast the generality of his gift with the particularity of the creature's free particularization and in that ultimate affirmation–negation contrast, bring God to consciousness. In his final synthetic feeling—the divine satisfaction—the importance of the contrast and all other such contrasts in the particular thread of finite existence as well as in all other such threads are adjusted so that the totality has the unity, immediacy, and concrete value of the one divine experience without losing or eliminating the unity, immediacy, and concrete value of the many creaturely experiences.²

However, as a noted Whiteheadian scholar once remarked, "Is it that God has a marvelous memory and will eternally enjoy thinking about me?" Is it that the immortality which creaturely immediacy gains in the divine consequent nature is merely objective (i.e., factual) immortality and not the subjective immortality which humans crave? Two strains of thought suggest themselves. First, in virtue of the unique nature of the divine concrescence, the entire life history of a person would be redeemed and transfigured in the divine synthesis, the many nows unified in the one, divine, overarching now. Since God overcomes the obstructive character of the now, all the many nows retain their full determinateness—i.e., conscious unity—in God. The historic ego becomes ahistorical and speaks one "I" which sums up the completeness of its conscious life. But while this satisfies the human craving for immortality, it does not quench the human thirst for eternal life, for never-ending development, for continuance of the ongoing process of experience which constitutes finite reality. Thus the second thread must be developed as well; an account must be given of "afterlife" which is not at

² It would be naive to suggest that there are not as many problems with this interpretation as there are with "divine personal order" interpretations; and, indeed, in order to resolve its latent inconsistencies, God must be granted certain exemptions from the rules of metaphysics. But at least the spirit of Whiteheadian thought is retained.
the same time inconsistent with the metaphysics of life. Two answers might be explored. Just as the complexity of the bodily society makes life and conscious life possible, so the complex structure of the consequent nature of God could become the "body" for the individual soul, the structured society in whose interstices the soul would "lurk." Given the reciprocal paradoxes which haunt Whiteheadian thought, this is a solution not to be rejected out of hand but to be explored for its metaphysical consistency. An alternative solution would postulate that, in its union with the divine immediacy, the human "soul" overcomes the obstructiveness and limitations of its finite perspective and shares the divine perspective, becoming God without losing its own individuality. Thus the ongoingness of its life would become identified with the ongoingness of the divine concrescence: it would "participate" in the divine Life with its ongoing novelty in the "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Ga 2:20) manner described by St. Paul and a host of other Western (and Eastern) mystics. Both alternatives need and deserve further explication and examination. For our purposes, they demonstrate that the religious longings for an afterlife need not be ruled out a priori as inconsistent with Whiteheadian metaphysics.

The second problem alluded to earlier—the nature of the divine subjective aim—is as thorny as the question of the divine actual world. If God is to reach satisfaction, his subjective aim cannot be so abstract (general) as to be unconcretizable—it must define a perspective (albeit divine)—and yet at the same time it must be general enough to harmonize both all finite subjective aims and their concrete realization no matter how incompatible and mutually obstructive they may be. The key to a solution lies in Chapters 10 and 11 of SMW, wherein Whitehead elaborates the inner structure of the world of eternal objects, and the divine activity of ordering that world. A detailed exposition is not in order here, but certain general indications can be made about the directions an attempt at solution might take. The central issue has to do with the character of the divine activity which orders the forms in such ways that their isolation in status relations becomes a realized togetherness vis-à-vis each possible creaturely perspective. As was detailed earlier, the general abstract relevance of form to actuality becomes in the divine primordial nature a real relevance to potential actualities, to possible perspectival unifications of actual worlds. This aspect of the ordering of the forms constitutes the irrational element introduced by the divine activity, an irrationality whose reason cannot be given since it is the source of all rationality. The divine conceptual activity structures the forms into a world of mutually implicated, mutually relational possibilities. God conceptually realizes—the disjunctive diversity of—the forms, thereby becoming the principle of concretion. Only
“after” the divine action of “thinking together” the forms as they could relate to each and all possible finite perspectives can talk of a “world of forms” have any meaning. It is the “worldliness” of this world, the general structure reflected in the structure of each particular form, which constitutes the primordial irrationality as the condition for the possibility of rationality. God’s conceptual activity “at once exemplifies and establishes the categorial conditions” (PR 344). The task of the metaphysician, however vaguely and metaphorically that task can be accomplished, is to grasp and to express that irrationality. In a very real sense, metaphysics (at least Platonic metaphysics) has the divine subjective aim as its principal object, since that aim establishes the intelligibility of the cosmos. But what is the divine subjective aim?

If one were to take as an explanatory framework a Platonic interpretation of Whitehead (or a Whiteheadian interpretation of Plato, since the two are correlative), the question translates as: What is the nature and function of the Form of the Good? In the Allegory of the Cave (in Book VII of the Republic), it becomes clear that the relation of imaging which holds between shadows, artificial objects, reflections, and natural objects, drops out as soon as Plato begins to talk about the Sun, which is both the condition for the possibility of visibility and a visible phenomenon itself, though “hardly seen” (Republic 517b). Both aspects of the Form of the Good must be held in mind if it is to be interpreted properly: (a) it is the source of all intelligibility; (b) it is in itself intelligible, albeit irrational (i.e., inaccessible to discursive thought, hence unjustifiable). With respect to (a), we must ask: What is the relation of this grounding condition to particular intelligibilities? Of this primordial form to all other forms? Is it the case that the world of forms is to be conceived as a pyramid of ascending degrees of abstractness with the Good at the apex? If this is the case, then the movement of dialectics would consist in a progressive withdrawal from, abandoning, and leaving behind of the concrete in the reach for the more abstract. If the vision of the Good is construed as a vision of the ultimate abstraction, it would be impossible for the return to the Cave to occur, for philosophers to become kings, for wisdom to be the ability to rule well. Granted: the philosopher must be dragged into the throne room; nevertheless his vision has prepared him for the task from which he shrinks. The vision must therefore be a vision of a form which is most concrete, not most abstract, of a form which structures together the totality of forms in its unity, of a form which relates to each form as its form-ness, as its “soul,” its inner depths, its coherence, and relates each form to all others in an organic fashion.3

3 See Whitehead’s discussion of the types of abstraction (SMW 166ff.), and Chapter 2, note 35, above.
If the divine subjective aim is taken to be the Form of the Good, the divinely realized unity of all eternal objects which makes finite realization possible, the ultimate obstructiveness of subjectivity and immediacy and the lesser obstructiveness of evil cease to be a problem vis-à-vis the divine physical synthesis. The divine perspective is a perspective in that the divine ordering is this rather than other, and yet is a perspective broad enough to prehend physically all other concretized perspectives into itself without eliminations and negative prehensions, inasmuch as all other perspectives and the subjective aims luring their concretization are already ideally realized (i.e., together) in it and for it. Divine physical feelings merely realize actually what is already ideally realized in the divine conceptual order. Immediacy is only obstructive in the context of finite perspectives and finite subjective aims. Hence when a finite subject-superject is felt into a subsequent finite process, the immediate unity of the subject is fragmented into its many potential objectifications. In God, however, the multiplicity of objectifications superjected by a finite entity and separately seized by subsequent entities can be grasped in their subjective unity by divine physical feeling and in their contrast with the entity’s subjective aim as originally received from God. All other oppositions and inhibitions among finite entities can be overcome through adjustments of importance lured on by the divine subjective aim—the ξαλόν κάγαθόν. In such wise, the secondary evil of the world, the aesthetico-moral evil of incompatibility, is overcome. As aesthetic, the evil is the mutual obstructiveness of immediacies—“that those elements with individual weight, by their discord, impose upon vivid immediacy the obligation that it fade into night. ‘He giveth his beloved—sleep’” (PR 341). As moral, it is the victory of the lesser value over the greater value—natural disaster, human “sin.” In the divine consequent nature, nothing is allowed to perish, neither the sparrow which falls from heaven nor the hair numbered on a human head. Neither the good nor the evil is lost in this final transformation into concrete beauty. The sparrow, the hair, the good, the evil—all have their place as background or foreground or contrast term. “God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good” (Gn 1:31).

In that divine glance, God attains consciousness. Prior to his physical feelings, prior to the impact of the world upon him, God is “infinite, devoid of all negative prehensions,” “free, complete, primordial, eternal, actually deficient, and unconscious” (PR 345), an unmoved mover luring incarnations but oblivious of them. In taking up the world into his consequent nature, he loses the “freedom” of indetermination, becoming “determined, incomplete, consequent, ‘everlasting,’ fully actual, and conscious” (PR 345). He is determined in the sense that the
world in providing him with a content to be structured allows him to attain definiteness, i.e., actuality. But from the standpoint of the world, that definiteness is never "finished"—God is "always in concrescence and never in the past" (PR 31). He emerges as with each creature and with all creatures "all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt 28:20). This "withness" of God's concrescence, its simultaneity with that of all finite occasions, is the creature's guarantee of finite freedom and at the same time the keystone of creaturely faith and hope. All creatures, all spaces, and all times, past, present, and future, are everlastingly knit together in beauty in the divine consciousness. That consciousness in its subjectivity is not directly accessible to finite occasions, any more than the consciousness of any finite occasion is open to scrutiny, but insofar as any finite occasion shares a portion of both God's presented locus and God's actual world, the creature can make the symbolic reference, grounded in the act of faith, that its past and future have been redeemed by the divine vision in the goodness which has no opposite. The creaturely sense of this is the creature's presentational objectification of God, the ultimate application of the principle of relativity—God's superject nature. But, as stressed earlier, the superjection is not to be construed in the same terms as a finite superject, functioning objectively as efficient cause of futures, for the divine concrescence is never in the past of any occasion. It is a superjection graspable only through faith: tenderly leading through inspiration, gently redeeming through a love whose effect must be freely seized by the creature, which thus becomes its own co-redeemer, divinized through its willing absorption into the divine.

God's rôle is not the combat of productive force with productive force, of destructive force with destructive force; it lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. He does not create the world, he saves it: or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness [PR 346].

The eternally present poem, the never-to-be-completed yet always complete epic of world process, is the ultimate marriage of primordial valuation and finite achievement, creaturely words wedded in the everlasting meter, rhyme, and structures of beauty. "In this way God is completed by the individual, fluent satisfactions of finite fact, and the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves, purged into conformation with the eternal order which is the final absolute 'wisdom'" (PR 347). The vague sense of that order, coupled with its affirmation and responding love, is human religious experience.
In a final hymn to the ultimate opposites, Whitehead presents the great litany which closes PR, a litany expressing the ultimate complementarity of the cosmological and theological perspectives, the ultimate orchestration of the classic themes of metaphysics: the one and the many, permanence and change, immanence and transcendence, freedom and divine causality.

*a.* It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent [PR 348]

In the former sense, the emphasis is laid upon the primordial, atemporal valuation of eternal objects which renders world process possible: in micro-process, providing the initial lure of subjective aim, private subjective forms, and the mutual relevance of forms which grounds conceptual reversions, contrasts, propositions, and more complex modalities of mental life; in macro-process, proving the interconnectedness of form which keeps objectification from being murder by dissection, thereby effecting genuine transition from past fact to present immediacy. Thus, divine permanence, the eternal atemporality of the primordial nature, grounds the shifting character of the creativity in its surge for novel expression. When the emphasis is shifted, however, the world in its character of objective immortality, achieved fact, becomes the exemplification of permanence and the divine consequent nature acquires fluency as it ever expands in its ongoing absorption of finite achievement.

*b.* It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many [PR 348]

The divine unity is the absolute oneness of God’s primordial valuation, which stands opposed to the multiplicity of realized values in the world, a manifold transformed into the unity of a perspectival realization by the process internal to every actual occasion, a process by which “The many become one, and are increased by one” (PR 21). As the many become one, the One becomes many. The primordial valuation radiates itself as creaturely subjective aims relevant to unique actual worlds, evoking novel satisfactions to be felt into the divine consequent, which thereby embraces the discordant multiplicity and structures it into unity through its interfusion with the primordial One. God’s conceptual feeling is one but abstract; his physical feelings many but concrete. His hybrid feelings synthesize abstract unity and concrete multiplicity into determinate, concrete, and everlasting value—“the complete adjust-
ment of the immediacy of joy and suffering...the final end of creation” (PR 349). The consequent nature is thus Emmanuel—“God with us”—“the kingdom of heaven” (PR 350).

The paradoxical nature of the kingdom is that it is always complete yet always growing. However, the metaphysics of the divine has always yielded “this incredible fact—that what cannot be, yet is” (PR 350). The paradox results from the incapacity of the human mind to conceive non-temporal sequence, an incapacity which renders adequate expression of the phasic succession within the micro-process of even a finite entity almost impossible. The sequence in the divine entity is further complicated by the fact that divine physical feelings, as atemporal, feel the totality of finite causality, past, present, and future, in immediate unison, and yet as ordered in causal sequences. The paradox can be resolved by abandoning the finite perspective from which growth must be postulated as a necessary characteristic of God’s appropriation of a world in process and assuming the atemporal perspective of God⁴ in which the bi-directionally infinite series of creaturely immediacies is grasped in the unity of one datum. Thus, from the divine vantage point, the endless fruitions of the creativity are simultaneously co-present in the immediacies of their self-creative activities. The divine concrescence quoad se is complete insofar as past and future are not relevant terms. In eternity, interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio (Boethius, De consolatione Philosophiae, V.6); God’s physical feeling is complete. Quoad nos, however, it is incomplete, in that the future from any finite perspective is not yet actual and is perpetually actualizing itself.

c. It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently [PR 348].

From the creaturely vantage point, God, viewed in the abstraction of his primordial nature, is deficient in actuality, whereas the creature in its fully determinate concreteness attains the fullness of actuality. From the divine perspective, on the other hand, the creature achieves actuality in and through a selective concrescence from its actual world, one involving negative prehensions excluding the totality of both creaturely and divine accomplishment in the decisions which admit a relevant set of objectifications. This partiality in the creature’s inclusion of actuality

⁴ Whitehead does not assume this perspective, since the orientation of PR is expressly cosmological; hence the work is written from within one pole of the ultimate God–world opposition.
and potentiality in its self-creative process, renders the creature deficient in actuality when contrasted with the non-exclusive feelings of the divine consequent nature. The infinite actuality of God⁵ entails that the divine subjective aim is such that it can encompass all less general aims, resolving their antinomies and mutual obstructiveness. It must thus be a complex eternal object so general that all other eternal objects are unified in it despite their contrariety—in a word, the divine subjective aim can have no opposite, no contrast term. It must be the supreme genus, the sun of the world of forms, the Platonic Form of the Good. World redemption is therefore the becoming determinate of the Form of the Good through its ingression into the divine process of feeling the world into fully determinate unity and hence eminent actuality.

d. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World.

It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God [PR 348].

In the opposition between God and the world, the strain between transcendence and immanence which is a universal theological problem is overcome in a duality of contrasted relations. Each pole of the opposition both transcends and is immanent in the other. It is critical that the relations be carefully explored, for, as is the case with any terms in a dialectical relation, to devalue or to diminish the absolute character of one pole is to do the same to the other. Both God and the world can be immanent in each other only to the extent that they transcend each other. To weaken one relation is to weaken the other.

From the standpoint of God, transcendence is absolute to a degree unimaginable by the most ardent deist. In his primordial nature, God is so indifferent to the world that he is not even aware of its existence. As has been said before in a different context, he is, to use Peirce’s evocative language, “totus, teres, atque rotundus, . . . solitary, celibate, a dweller in the desert,”⁶ totally disconnected from finite reality, an Aristotelian unmoved mover. Contrasted with this absolute transcendence is the absolute immanence of the world in the consequent nature, which takes up all finite accomplishment in its “tender care that nothing be lost” (PR 346), in its “judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage” (PR 346). Good and evil, joy and

⁵ And it must be recognized that in a Whiteheadian context “infinite” and “actuality” can only be conjoined in mystery, for “infinite” denotes “unlimited” and hence “indeterminate,” and “actuality” means “determinate” and hence “finite.”

sorrow, find their niche in the divinely perfected world, which quite literally becomes the Body of God. To speak of redemption without realizing that it means Transsubstantiation is to miss the point entirely. The creature is redeemed by having its factuality and its immediacy transformed as an aspect of the determinacy of the divine actual entity. The creature, be it regnant monad in a man or a puff of existence in empty space, becomes consubstantial with God, everlasting sharing the divinity, the infinite beauty of divine fruition. For the conscious creature, particularly one attaining the intensity of human consciousness, this implies that in a very Spinozistic sense, redeemed human consciousness is a modality of divine consciousness. Following the lead of Hegel: since no entity, God included, can be immediately self-conscious, it might be said that human consciousness as fragmented through time and space is God’s consciousness of the content of his own concrescence, that human religious consciousness is God’s self-awareness diffused through the eyes and ears and mind of humanity and reunited in the redemptive act. Might it be said that in redeeming the world from partiality God also redeems himself from self-alienation? Be that as it may, God’s absolute transcendence and the world’s absolute immanence render both poles fully actual, fully determinate.

From the standpoint of the world, every entity transcends God in that God gives himself as both conceptual and physical datum to be woven into the finite superject. This is the absolute humility of God—that he consents to become man, mountain, or molecule, giving to each without reserve or exception both its subjective aim and its transformed, redeemed self. God is thus an element in the satisfaction of every finite occasion, immanent in it as luring form and everlasting value. The creature transcends the Creator as whole transcends part; the Creator is immanent in the creature as having his infinite primordial valuation finitized in a limited subjective aim, as having limited the infinitude of his consequent unity to be datum for a perspectival grasp.

Throughout the perishing occasions in the life of each temporal Creature, the inward source of distaste or of refreshment, the judge arising out of the very nature of things, redeemer or goddess of mischief, is the transformation of Itself, everlasting in the Being of God. In this way, the insistent craving is justified—the insistent craving that zest for existence be refreshed by the ever-present, unfading importance of our immediate actions, which perish and yet live forevermore [PR 351].

Thus, in fine,

\textbf{e. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God [PR 348].}

God creates the way beauty creates—by the evocation, unification, and self-donation of intensities of feeling. The love of Creator for creature
is found in the awesome aloneness of the self-creation of beauty, in the poetic tenderness which shapes the world epic out of the scattered, obstructive incomplete phrases of world-process, and in the revelation of that redemption for the free appropriation of the redeemed. The love of creature for Creator is manifest in attunement to beauty, in openness to creative ideals realizable in the present, and in concern (in the sense of Sorge) for the future as implicated in every present decision. As overtly religious, this love is a continual surrender to the hierarchy of values, a constant endeavor to actualize the greatest value in each occasion of existence, and an unshakable confidence that all one's failures and inadequacies will be re-created in beauty.

The world creates God in the way in which any fact creates the future consequent upon it—by limiting the creativity to be a manifold of novel creations superjected as data for creative transition. By providing the data for divine physical feeling, the world brings about the concreteness of God, ransoming him from his abstract conceptual solitude, giving him matter to be woven into divine Flesh, objects to be illumined in divine consciousness, values to be purified by divine redemption. God is what the world makes him to be; the world is what God lures and redeems it to be. “Either of them . . . is the instrument of novelty for the other” (PR 349); “each is all in all” (PR 348), the all-ness of physical enjoyment everlastingly unified with the all-ness of conceptual appetition, thus perpetually satisfying the endless yearning of the creativity: “that all may be one.” “For the kingdom of heaven is with us today” (PR 351).