

Critique by Process Philosophies of Classical Theism.

"...Crescas, and later Spinoza, denied contingency (and by implication change) not only in God but in the world which God knows. For they saw that the known is in the knowing, and if there is contingency and change in the former then there is also in the latter. Thus in Spinoza the Greek bias came to its last great triumph in Western thought. Not only God, but the world, too, was to be made safe from accident or genuine alteration. And indeed, immutable omniscience, implying the immutability of all truth, consorts ill with the view that becoming is real. If there is novel reality, then to that extent the truth also must be novel. To say of future events that they "are going to be" is to imply that their entire character is a present fact, though a fact which, with our human limitations, we have not yet reached. As St. Thomas put it, events in time are like travelers on a road who cannot see those ahead of them though they can all be seen by one sufficiently high above the road looking down upon its entire length, i.e. God in eternity. The entirety of creation cannot be viewed if there is no such totality. How can there be if the actual sum of events receives additions each moment? And what is becoming if not such perpetual adding of new realities. Thomas is assuming the falsity of a certain view of time; process philosophy adopts this view, and not without reason. (Hartshorne, Introduction to The Development of Process Thought)

"A decision...is a settling of the otherwise unsettled; it occurs in time, not in eternity; to say that God eternally knows all decisions is to imply that the totality of decisions is a single all-inclusive eternally complete set of realities. But then there is nothing for decision to decide. We only imagine we are resolving a real indeterminacy when we make up our minds; in truth the resolution is eternal. But if eternal, it has no genuine becoming. We say that we "make" a decision; but religious philosophies of being tell us that God makes everything by a single eternal act. So then I make my decision now and God eternally makes it! But if God makes it, how is it my decision rather than His?" (ibid.)