

Question for Symbol & Analogy seminar, 4/13/76

The consideration of the intellectualist position and the conceptualist counter-position on real relations suggests that the "process God" is a product of the counter-position and so does not allow for a completely logical, coherent and consistent statement about God; that only the formulation, "an unchanging God," permits such systematic God-talk. Yet it is still difficult to grasp and state precisely why this is so.

One approach would be to consider what systematic explanation is. Systematic explanation implies the expression of the interrelationship of a certain set of factors such that the expression remains valid regardless of the contingent changes in those factors. Any valid law of physics would be an example of such explanation. Conceiving God, then, on the analogy of "ultimate explanation," one would have to insist that God does not change but is universally and eternally valid as He is.

Or again, any understanding at all presupposes the possibility of complete and perfect understanding—perfect explanation not only of recurring phenomena but also of every contingent factor within the whole of history. But such a perfect understanding can not change; otherwise it would not be perfect; and if there were no perfect understanding, then, in logical consistency, there can be no understanding at all. Conceiving God, then, on the analogy of "perfect understanding," one would have to insist that God does not change.

Or stated otherwise, the condition for the possibility of systematic thought, the horizon of human consciousness, is some perfect understanding or complete explanation. Conceiving God on the analogy of the "horizon of human consciousness," systematic statement could only point to a non-changing God.

Please comment on these thoughts and add correction and/or further precision on this issue.

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