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The God-World Relationship Between Joseph Bracken, Philip Clayton, and the Open Theism

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The God-World Relationship
between Joseph Bracken, Philip Clayton,
and the Open Theism

Doctor of Philosophy

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Claremont Graduate University

Claremont, Los Angeles

2012

APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read, reviewed, and critiqued the dissertation of Dong-Sik Park and do hereby approve it as adequate in scope and quality for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

The God-World Relationship between Joseph Bracken, Philip Clayton,
and the Open Theism

by

Dong-Sik Park

Claremont Graduate University: 2012

This dissertation investigates the God-world relationship between Joseph Bracken as a process theologian, Philip Clayton as a panentheist, and the open theism. They have affinities and differences as conversational partners in their multilayered relations. Their common question must be as follows: “What does it mean to believe in God today?” In this dissertation I compare their respectively theological perspectives and explore their affinities and differences. Many scholars have already noted more affinities than untenable differences among Bracken’s theology, Clayton’s panentheism, and the open theism. On the one hand, even though theological perspectives of Bracken and Clayton are obviously different from each other, they are both influenced in specific ways by Whitehead. On the other hand, open theism is a movement that emphasizes “the openness of God,” from within evangelical theism. The fact that there is even within classical theism the pursuit of new models of God such as revised classical theism or modified classical theism might suggest the need for contemporary models of God in philosophical theology.

This dissertation will thus explore philosophical theologies that are proper both to the biblical faith and intellectual earnestness, that is, 居敬窮理 (*geo (to live) kyeong (piety) kung (to acknowledge) li (reason)*) in Eastern philosophy, which means

distinctions but not separation between piety and intelligence, and that stand between classical theism and “orthodox” process theism. If there is no consistency among biblical, rational and existential descriptions of God, how can we establish philosophical theologies? Our theological task is to frame a new constructive theology whose primary aspect must synthesize both classical theism and process theology in the hermeneutical circle. For example, this new theism admits an infinitely qualitative difference between God and the world, as well as a really radical relation between God and the world. Aspects and domains do not encroach upon each other.

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“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men!”

Preface

What are the *raisons d'être* of theology?

It is natural that one lacks something in one's life. In order to rectify such a lack, one may achieve a vicarious pleasure through anyone who does not have the same part lacking. For example, someone who does not sing a song well may achieve the ability to do so by listening to the song as it is sung by other singers. Someone who does not exercise well may achieve the ability to do so by watching the play as it is played by other sport players. Such examples can be countless. What, then, is the ultimate lack in human beings in general? It is neither money nor fame nor social position. If it were any of these, those who are rich, famous, or in high social positions should be happy and satisfied with their lives. However, we know that they are not. The ultimate human concern lies beyond such mundane phenomena; the ultimate problem for humans, the problem we cannot solve, is the problem of salvation, although some religions maintain the possibility of human salvation in humanity. To that extent, then, humans may suppose "God" in order to satisfy their lack. In that sense, Feuerbach's thesis, "God is the projection of human consciousness," must be a wonderful insight. Feuerbach deploys this thesis in the perspective of atheism, but, if we elaborately develop this argument, we can meet a confession of another tone, that is, it is God that is the highest word which we can confess in human language. The faith we have, "God exists," finally supports that it is not a fiction. Thus to confess God in a seemingly atheistic time is a more brave and valuable confession than not to confess God.

In this dissertation I use some methods such as systematic theology, comparative theology between different scholars, the authority of the Bible, and various examples of human life.¹ In order to solve the problem of God, I have chosen three figures: a modified process theologian (Joseph Bracken), a panentheist (Philip Clayton), and modified classical theists (Open theists). In Chapter I, I begin to explore the problem of God in many skeptical elements and attempt to find a possible alternative from philosophical theology. In Chapter II-Chapter VI, I investigate theological characteristics of the model of God advanced by Bracken, Clayton, and the Open theists in order to show the affinities and differences between them. In Chapter VII, I present and defend a philosophical theology which synthesizes classical theism and process theism, and which I will call Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology (TPT). Giving the Trinity the position as the first adjective form in Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology, panentheism in this dissertation is based on the Trinity itself. The Trinity and panentheism have common grounds, i.e., God's transcendence and God's immanence in the relation between God and the world. By bridging with divine action four categories from classical theism—*Creatio ex Nihilo*, Trinity, Transcendence, and Worship—and one category from process theology, Dipolar God, I will depend the model of TPT. Central features of exposition include: Kenotic God, Relational God, Suffering God, Knowable God, and Revised Power of God (the voluntarily self-limiting God).

¹ As a matter of fact, many theologians have been ignoring each individual's life story in theology because they consider the individual story not as God's talk but just as trivial talk. However, we need to rethink this in that theology happens between my (human) story and God's story; each individual story already contains its own theological implications. For the believer, that story becomes "the story of God's self-revelation" and is, for the Christian, also "the story of God's redemptive work in Christ." Philip Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 85, 94, and 137.

Table of Contents

Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Preface	
Chapter I: Methodology and Theory of Knowledge	1
Chapter II: Joseph Bracken's Neo-Whiteheadian Perspective	33
Chapter III: Philip Clayton's Panentheism	57
Chapter IV: Open Theism	91
Chapter V: Affinities and Differences between These Philosophical Theologies	118
Chapter VI: Constructive Theological Proposal toward a Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology	136
Chapter VII: A Model of Theism as a Synthesis of Classical Theism and Process Theism	163
1. From Classical Theology	164
1) Creatio ex Nihilo	169
2) Trinity	173
3) Transcendence and Immanence	191
4) Worship	204
2. Conceptual Resources from Process Theism: Dipolar God	208
3. Divine Action	215
4. TPT Model	251
1) Kenotic God	252
2) Relational God	256
3) Suffering God	266
4) Knowable God	291
5) Revised Understanding of the Power of God and the Knowledge of God	
A) The Self-Limiting God	301
B) The Knowledge of God	325
5. Potential Objections to My View and My Response to Those Objections	341

Chapter VIII: Conclusion	348
Preliminary Bibliography	359

Chapter I: Methodology and Theory of Knowledge

In chapter one, I begin to point out the problem of God in many skeptical elements, explore the possibility of contribution to theology of the skepticism, and attempt to suggest a possible alternative from philosophical theology in the midst of the science beyond classical theism.

The Problem of God

“Is Christian theology still possible?”¹ This question must be in any sense a very sad question, since it tells us of a currently despairing address or situation of theology and in that it is such a question as cannot be asked if Christian theology is prosperous. We can first simply answer to this question in two ways: Yes and No. Then, what would be the criterion of Yes and No? We need to answer the question in relation to contemporary issues in order to satisfy the criterion, because theology is not always perfect regardless of the context and the period. That is, if Christian theology can properly answer to the contemporary issues, “yes” can be an answer; if it cannot answer to them, “no” can be an answer. Hence the criterion must be dependent upon whether it can answer or not to contemporary issues. However, since this very provocative question requires of our self-integral struggle with the identity of theology more than a simple “yes” or “no,” we have to find alternatives and hope for theology from the above five words within the quotation marks. In the sense, our step to find an answer from the past alone is not always appropriate.

¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., *God and the World* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 117.

Insofar as the question of theology is that of God, we can reflect upon this question with the following phrase: “God is dead; long live God!”² Cobb’s succinct six words interestingly include both skeptical elements (No) and constructive factors (Yes) in theology. Following this line of thinking, the most serious and troublesome problem in the world, as Schubert Ogden also very properly indicates, may be (paradoxically) neither political issues nor economic declination. Rather, I suggest, it is the problem of God, which is “the only problem there is.”³ Since God, the creator of the world, would be the very trouble-maker and the prime cause of the chaos in a contemporary society, in the sense, if we may say, the person (subject) who should appear in the court owing to the crime of dereliction of duty must be the very God.

In this sense, we can further reflect on Friedrich Nietzsche’s challengeable question from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which is very appropriate to the people who struggle with the problem of God in this world: “Have ye courage, O my brethren? Are ye stout-hearted? Not the courage before witnesses, but anchorite and eagle courage, which not even a God any longer beholdeth?”⁴ They must be really courageous to the extent that they reject the stationary proposition that God still exists today if Nietzsche is right. Even if there is no provocative message of Nietzsche, however, many people have been doubtful about the existence of God from generation to generation. Why do we feel vain or empty when we speak concerning God today? Should people still speak of God if many people live well without God? Is the difference of attitude toward life between believer and nonbeliever not vague? In these situations, why do we still want to believe in God and talk about God in a skeptical period? What does it mean to believe in God

² Cobb, *God and the World*, 41.

³ Schubert M. Ogden, *The reality of God*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1963), 1.

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, tr. by Thomas Common (The Pennsylvania State University, 1999), 255. (From <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/nietzsche/tszarath.pdf>)

today?⁵ Accordingly, accepting these questions, we need to deal with “self-critical treatments of religious belief.”⁶

Skeptical Elements

David Griffin summarizes eight doctrines of good news or essence of Christianity:

1. “Our world has been created by a good, loving, wise, purposive God”; 2. “God, loving all of us, desires that we treat each other with justice and compassion”; 3. “Our world is essentially good, even though it is now full of evil”; 4. “God continues to act in the world, especially through human beings, to foster good and overcome evil”; 5. “God’s love, concern for justice, and purpose, having already been expressed through a series of prophets and sages, were revealed in a decisive way through Jesus of Nazareth”; 6. “The divine purpose, thus revealed, is to overcome evil by bringing about a ‘reign of God’ on earth, in which the present subjugation of life to demonic values (lies, ugliness, injustice, hate, and indifference) will be replaced by a mode of life based on divine values (truth, beauty, goodness, justice, and compassion); 7. “Salvation can be enjoyed here and now, at least in a partial way, through direct experience of, and empowerment by, God as Holy Spirit, and by the faith that, no matter what, our lives have ultimate meaning, because nothing can separate us from the love of God”; 8. “The divine purpose is also to bring about an even more complete salvation in a life beyond bodily death”⁷ (Numbers are added).

Then what would be the skeptical elements which seriously increase the consciousness of the problem of God and even cause the forgetfulness of God in the world? Francis Collins found four vexing questions with regard to the problem of God: “Isn’t the idea of God just wish fulfillment?”; “What about all the harm done in the name of religion?”; “Why would a loving God allow suffering in the world?”; and “How can a rational person believe in miracles?”⁸ The most serious skeptical elements inter alia in respect of

⁵ John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.

⁶ Philip Clayton and Steven Knapp, *The Predicament of Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), viii.

⁷ David Griffin, *Two Great Truths: A New Synthesis of Scientific Naturalism and Christian Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 29-31. Numbers are added by me.

⁸ Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God* (New York: Free Press, 2006), chapter 2.

the idea of God, if we summarize these problems, could be the problem of evil, the religious pluralism, success of the sciences, and secular worldviews.⁹

First is the problem of evil. It is the most sensitive factor and kernel of skepticism to the classical theism, since the almighty God in a traditional meaning cannot be sustained in the midst of the daily evils. Second is the problem of pluralism: how could we say that there is no salvation outside church (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)?¹⁰ The existence of diverse religions calls into question the validity of Christian truth-claims. Since this requires public vocation of theology, we need to note Alan Race's observation that "the future of Christian theology lies in the encounter between Christianity and other faith."¹¹ Third is the relation between science and religion. According to Ken Wilber, they began "a deadly dance" or entered into a "complex war."¹² The debate of religion and science seems to be that of creation and evolution, of sacred and secular, of theism and atheism, or of believer and non-believer. Whereas for theists science is unholy, for atheists religion is absurd. What is then a correct answer?: Either-or, or both-and?¹³

⁹ Philip Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit: God, World, Divine Action*, Ed. by Zachary Simpson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 23. Clayton argues that "It is troubled by the problem of evil, though not completely destroyed by it; it is humbled before other religious traditions, though not ready therefore to proclaim the equivalence of all faiths; it is respectful of the power of scientific predictions and explanations, though not prepared to reduce the spiritual dimension to what science can grasp of it." Ibid., 24.

Karkkainen also suggests three challenges: philosophical and religious challenge, the radical transformation of Christianity from the contextual situations, and religious pluralism. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 303.

¹⁰ The radical rejection of pluralism appear as religious war such as Taliban's killing of members of Korean mission team in Afganistan and, as Christian conservative, Anders Behring Breivik's killing people in Norway (2011).

¹¹ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction*, 304. Regarding interreligious dialogue, Clayton argues that "Contact across the religions actually allows one to think more deeply about what Christian identity means in today's world. (The same applies, of course, for Jews and Muslims.) Each person has to find her own answer to that question, which she can then share both within her own community and in dialogue with other traditions." Clayton draws on three resources in Christianity from the New Testament "in complex interactions with alternative religious worldviews"; from John Wesley's ministry in relation to outside Christianity; and from emerging Christian communities beyond old dualism. Clayton insists that interreligious dialogue does not make Christian identity vague, but more distinctive and clear: "The more clearly we learn to hear the music of other traditions, the more beautifully we can sing our own song." http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-clayton-phd/can-christians-survive-th_b_841429.html.

¹² Ken Wilber, *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* (New York: Random House, 1998), 15.

¹³ A possible element of skepticism could be the problem of monism in that God (infinite) and nature (finite) are one. In the pantheist worldview nature is the ultimate reality, beyond which nothing can

Fourth is the public dimension of theology, that is, how can we do theology in a secular society? Can Christian theology play a royal role separated from the world? These skeptical elements are not interested in any superficial speculation but in the concrete reality.

Those objections to the doctrine of God do not consist of a simple structure but of multilayered complex structures which make people doubt the existence of God and force theology to reestablish a new doctrine of God. The skepticism concerning God today is not only the exclusive understanding of atheists or liberal theologians but also a general opinion or perspective of ordinary people. The problem of God is also omnipresent inasmuch as God is omnipresent all over the world. This phenomenon does not come from any specific period or occasion but is a product of the long process of human history. Although there are several reasons and many elements to make one doubt the existence of God, this skepticism might originate from the objection to the transcendental or omnipotent God, that is, skeptical responses such as the problem of evil, the religious pluralism, science, and secular perspectives come from real issues “from below” in this world, so that transcendental, almighty God does not easily solve the problems of lives of people.

Theology of the Death of God

At the culmination of the problem of God there is “theology of death of God.” The secular theology and theology of death of God, as Karkkainen sums up, emphasize “the immanence of God, the absence of God from the world, or the nonexistence of God (or at

exist. Pantheism has an element of common good insofar as it entails a compassionate mindset for all living things. Another element is projection theory, which is that what we call God is nothing else than an outward projection of humanity’s directly greatest ideal. This criticizes dualistic attitudes of Christians in life.

least the idea[s] of God).” Coining a neologism, “theothanatology” (the death of God), theology of death of God has two aspects: “‘soft’ (theistic and panentheistic views) and ‘hard’ (agnostic and atheistic views).” The former does not believe in God’s death in a literal sense but in a transcendent God, which classical theism excessively emphasizes, although panentheism believes in the transcendent God. The latter accepts God’s literal death (e.g., Thomas J. Altizer and William Hamilton).¹⁴

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche notes, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.... Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us—for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto.” Nietzsche appeals to the human being, especially, *ubermensch* (Superhuman) in order to solve the problem of God, because God can be trusted no more, and argues that people must agree on “the ungodliness of existence... as something given, palpable, indisputable.”¹⁵ Could we judge the death of God?

Nietzsche’s “*requiem aeternam deo*”¹⁶ refers to the death of God. By the same token, William Hamilton, in *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, argues that “God is dead. We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God, but about the experience of the absence of God.”¹⁷ We need to make a distinction between “the absence of the experience of God” and “the experience of the absence of God.” Whereas the former distinction still acknowledges God’s existence, although there are some hard cases in which to find God such as the context of suffering, the latter experiences God’s absence

¹⁴ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 171-172.

¹⁵ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 175.

¹⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. *The Gay Science: with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1974), 120.

¹⁷ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 178. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 191.

in any situation. In fact, it is a serious problem that we so frequently experience the absence of God in our lives.

However, in the face of the same phenomenon, Dietrich Bonhoeffer rather investigates anew a doctrine of God from modern atheism which enables him to think of “the world without God.”¹⁸ To explain God as a working hypothesis is a “counsel of despair,” “a death leap back into the Middle Ages.” However, Bonhoeffer does not assert God’s nonexistence, but rather a more paradoxical claim with ultimate honesty; “Before God and with God we live without God.” A main point is not the presupposition of the absence of God but the removal of the presupposition, i.e., God. We stand continually before God who allows us to live in the world without the working hypothesis of God.¹⁹ Even though we live in a godless world, that is, “even if there were no God,” when we see Christ who took the cross, we can recognize that “only the suffering God can help.” The world without God is more mature than the world with God and it is nearer to God. In the sense, for Bonhoeffer, we cannot think God without the world, because God lets himself be pushed out of the world and thereby relates himself to the world. God exists “in the crucified Christ as the *deus coram mundo* (‘God who is present in the world’).”²⁰ In this sense, the omnipresence of God must be understood through the concept of the death of God.²¹ However, we have to recognize some criticisms of theology of the death

¹⁸ Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 57. Jüngel asks a very profound question: “to think God without the world which, for its part, is to be thought without God? To what extent does God’s deity imply the world if the worldliness of the world excludes God expressly?” Bonhoeffer describes the autonomy of the world: “In theology... Herbert of Cherbury, who asserted the sufficiency of reason for religious knowledge.... Finally the philosophical bottom line: on one hand we have the deism of Descartes, who holds that the world is a mechanism, running by itself with no interference from God; and on the other hand the pantheism of Spinoza, who says that God is nature. In the last resort Kant is a deist, and Fichte and Hegel are pantheists. Everywhere the thinking is directed towards the autonomy of man and the world.” Ibid., 57-58.

¹⁹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 59-60.

²⁰ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 60-61. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 172.

²¹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 63.

of God. Karkkainen notes that it was criticized not only by church members and someone who wants to introduce atheism into the Christian circle but also by theological critics such as Langdon Gilkey who deals with God outside Christian theology and tradition.²² Pinnock points out that the rejection of the existence of God has nothing to do with God who really is and the God of the Bible, but only with the God of classical theism.²³

Contribution to Theology of the Skepticism

What a poor God! Why did God create the world if God knew that there will be so many complaints about God? God would regret in a sense to create the world, if God knew the future. Does God not complain, “If I knew then what I know now”? If God were a host holding a conference concerning the problem of God, what would be God’s answer to the skeptical questions? Can God even answer all of these questions? In order to save God from these skeptical problems, what should we do? Can we remove all these problems?

There are theological crises in the contemporary period in that people doubt the existence of God. Nonetheless, can we neglect these kinds of skeptical, real phenomena which might be considered symptomatic responses of an age of skepticism? Do these skeptical questions and responses concerning God bear only on the negative influence on Christian theology? Or, does it mean to deny theism? No! We need to overcome this theological crisis honestly and intellectually. What is a good way for theology to approach the contemporary intellect? As a Chinese proverb properly says, “We should see the moon, not a finger which indicates the moon.” We should listen to and see the essence for which skepticism really argues and criticizes. Furthermore, we should not

²² Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 178.

²³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 188.

only discover why the problem of God has now become of central importance, but also realize how this problem forces us to find a new alternative theism today.

The fact that there are many skeptical elements today neither means a denial of theism nor accepts skepticism and atheism as the alternative, but rather entails that concomitant phenomena in accordance with skepticism enable a theism to frame more robust foundations. “Patmos,” Holderlin’s poem, implicitly shows us the above argument: “Near is and hard to grasp the god. But where there is danger what saves grows, too.”²⁴ Just as Zarathustra maintains that “one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star,”²⁵ so theology must have skepticism as chaos in order to give birth to a dancing theology. That is, skepticism is not always a negative influence on Christian theology, but may become a catalyst to increase theological investigation. The attitude of theology responding to skepticism should neither object to it nor be isolated into the dark cave of Christianity alone, since, argues Dean Nelson, “living with doubt” enables us to discover new things in both science and faith. Rather, a serious problem occurs when fundamentalists are blinded by their certainty in both of them.²⁶

In this context, Christian theology should not be sectarianized in a narrow area in a period when other disciplines actively undertake to influence and change the society and suggest newly positive alternatives toward a new world. Christianity cannot avoid the criticism of theological “laziness,” which Calvin considers as “original sin,” unless

²⁴ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 105. According to Ogden, Christianity has always been secular, because in its essence, in the presence in our human history of Jesus Christ, it is simply the representation to man and the world of their ultimate significance within the encompassing mystery of God’s love... It is not to be explained historically except as “secularized” Christian theology. Ogden, *The reality of God*, 69. In addition, our age, as Gerhard Ebeling has said, is “the age of atheism” –that, if the reality of God is still to be affirmed, this must now be done in a situation in which that reality is expressly denied. Ibid., 13.

²⁵ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 26.

²⁶ <http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/story/2011-08-28/Why-certainty-about-God-is-overrated/50166464/1?loc=interstitialskip>

Christianity moves toward public spheres. Christianity needs to recognize that these skeptical responses give us the “backdrop,” which causes theology to be more abundant, and must be treated as “a live option.”²⁷ That is, insofar as skepticism enables theology to avoid the pitfall of irrational dogma in which Christianity in many ways has been caught, we need to note Job’s attitude in Job 13:3, “But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God,” since it is not an unholy attitude toward God but rather an enthusiastic longing for the truth.

Facing such many challenges, nonetheless, Christians have been criticizing such skepticism in order to defend their own kingdom of dogma. Philip Clayton and Steven Knapp, however, argue first, that such a response is a rather “desperate, last-ditch effort to save something that cannot be saved in any other way.” Second, such approaches have “immunization strategies” from criticism by non-Christians as well as Christians who worry about “Christianity’s delusion.”²⁸ In this sense, when we construct a theology, we should recognize that skepticism is not against Christian faith and that theological work with doubt is much better than that without doubt, since it can reject logical contradictions in ‘theo-logy.’ Wouldn’t it be an intellectual paranoia to consider skeptical thoughts as a heretical doctrine? That is, we cannot establish our faith or theology by refusing the skepticism.

Clayton explicitly notes, “The context for treating the question of God today must be skepticism. Propositional language about God can no longer pass as unproblematic.”²⁹ In other words, one could not and should not neglect the contextual questions for

²⁷ Philip Clayton, *The Problem of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 4.

²⁸ Philip Clayton and Steven Knapp, *The Predicament of Belief*, 5. They emphasize that we should find out the “reasons for doubt” and only then can one consider “countervailing reason” that overcome reasons for doubt. Ibid.

²⁹ Clayton, *The Problem of God In Modern Thought*, 3.

skeptical thought about God. Any theology that is to be accepted naturally in the contemporary world must understand why the notion of God is problematic. Self-preservative, passive attitudes to skepticism hypnotize themselves, not listening to the others' voices. This autism does not contribute to Christianity. Without admitting skepticism, we neither fully know God nor answer the questions of skeptics. That is, God seems no longer exist in the world when we look around us at our *sitz im leben* such as suffering, evil, and war,³⁰ but the dead God is still living, here and now, and will live forever insofar as a new theism is ever-changing in accordance with the contemporary situation. Thus the problem of God is nothing else than that of theology.

Theology in Contexts

Theological situations in any period are not only so diverse but also so ambiguous that any one crude and naïve theological method, whatever it is, cannot fully deal with these manifold skeptical theological spheres. If we ignore the actual diversity, Süsskind asserts that it is "like cutting off the patient's injured limb in order to restore the health of the whole."³¹ In other words, people cannot, like Archimedes,³² apply one firm and immovable hermeneutical point of view to each particular situation in order to shift and interpret the entire contexts. Furthermore, such a situation may not respond to any tears,

³⁰ According to Karkkainen, classical theism means "those post-biblical developments of early Christian theology" with the help of Greco-Roman philosophical categories. The developments reached 'medieval scholasticism' and 'post-Reformation Protestant orthodoxy.' And its characteristic as an Unmoved Mover is that God of classical theism is distanced from, unaffected by, and unrelated to the world: "God is depicted as immutable, self-contained, all-sufficient, impassible, supremely detached from the world of pain and suffering." Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 10-11.

³¹ Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, 368.

³² "Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth." Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Classics of Philosophy* (2nd Ed.), ed., Pojman, Louis (Oxford University Press, 2003), 499. It is like as follows. One of the ways which we can make a car less hot in the hot weather is to cover the car with a sunshade. However, when we drive, we have to take it away. It is impossible to drive with the sunshade covered. However something is important in a certain time and space, it is not always important in any time. Medicine can in a case be changed into poison.

sound of flute, or dirge out of marginal places.³³ When we consider the relationship between theology and contexts, we need to follow Whitehead's famous metaphor of "the flight of an aeroplane": "It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation."³⁴ If the ground is our context and the thin air is the work of theologizing, we cannot and should not stop this circular process.

Whenever we revisit the history of theology and Christianity, as we know, on the one hand, theology has continuously transformed its own model according to the period³⁵ and, on the other hand, should be open toward a new horizon of understanding, in that, as Whitehead maintains, speculation has been "the salvation of the world," and "to set limits to speculation is treason to the future."³⁶ In other words, theology is always contextual insofar as theology continually relates to the problem of the *period*. In this sense, insofar as we need to reflect on the relationship between theology and context, or that between imagination and action, we can think as follows: imagine, and a new world will be opened; act, and a new world will come to you. Whereas to imagine is to be sensitive to God's will, to act is to respond to God's will in the world. Thus, imagination and action will make your life better. Isn't our life simple? Then, theology must be self-reflective. When it loses its self-reflective function, it can no longer be theology, since theology must be always human-response to God's ceaseless self-revelation in a new age. If we do

³³ "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn" (Matt 11: 17).

³⁴ PR, 5.

³⁵ John Cooper very aptly points out this stream. Several distinct theological positions on the God-world relation are: "classical Christian theism, modified classical Christian theism, revised classical Christian theism, Christian panentheism, and non-Christian panentheism." John Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 321.

³⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* (Princeton University Press, 1929), 76.

not have this kind of attitude even in theology, we have to remember a warning:

corruptio optimi pessima (the corruption of the best is the worst of all).³⁷

Theology (Faith and Theological Reflection) in the Midst of the Science

In spite of several skeptical elements and the theology of death of God, we need to defend a form of theology which is proper to both contemporary sciences and the tradition of Christian faith³⁸ in order to overcome the “god of the gaps.”³⁹ Since the problem of God very intimately relates to the world, we should explain especially “God’s presence in a scientific world.”⁴⁰ In fact, as John Haught argues, theology is still stuck in a prescientific understanding of cosmology despite “the correctness of an evolutionary worldview.” In this sense, contemporary theology needs “a system of concepts” that sufficiently and thoroughly explains science, religion, and all other modes of experience.⁴¹ In order to satisfy this theological method, we need rationality in theology. Ingolf Dalferth explains the rationality of theology in six ways: what is rational is not necessarily proven; what is rational is not necessarily a self-discovery; rationality is not the monopolized product of science; rationality depends not on content but on method (rule of logic); rational belief has two meanings in the content of belief and the way the belief is held; rationality is various. Rationality develops in the field of discussion whether it is for or against our beliefs.⁴²

³⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corruptio%20optimi%20pessima#>.

³⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 22.

³⁹ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 5.

⁴⁰ Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God’s Presence in a Scientific World*. Eds. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 249.

⁴¹ John F. Haught, “Foreword,” in Joseph A. Bracken, S.J., *Christianity and Process Thought* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2006), x.

⁴² Ingolf Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 3-6, 10.

At this point, we can find a clue to approach the acknowledgement of the problem of God: The problem of God is that of theology. That is, because of “poor theologies of God,” argues Pinnock, God’s name is dishonored.⁴³ Because of this problem of poor theology, we need to develop theology itself. Clayton considers Christian theology as “level-two discourse concerning level-one beliefs, attitudes, and practices of the Christian community.” This type of theology presupposes the “life of faith,” that is, “believing reflection,” which is not separated from the profane world.⁴⁴ But perhaps matters have become more complex than Clayton admits. Are there no gaps between faith and contemporary sciences? Do sciences, without doubt, accept claims that faith accepts? Is doubt an unnecessary element in forming a theology in science?⁴⁵ To these questions, we need to speak in a way that affirms that faith without doubt is blind and doubt without faith is empty.

By the same token, Robert King asserts that today’s context is pluralistic and secular: “It is pluralistic in that it includes radically different religious systems..., secular in that it admits of the possibility of dispensing with religious systems altogether.”⁴⁶ Nonetheless, as Jüngel and Karkkainen argue, we need to approach secularism “not as a threat but as an opportunity for Christianity,”⁴⁷ since division between secular and sacred is not appropriate. If we make a distinction, are all places except churches secular places? If so, in order to make this world sacred, should we establish churches all over the world? Are we not also secular people, since we live longer outside churches? A conversation

⁴³ Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, David Basinger, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 104.

⁴⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 24.

⁴⁵ Clayton notes, “I’d been told that doubt was sin and questioning was of the devil. If those were the ground rules, I was ready to walk from Christianity and never look back.” <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/claremonttheology/2011/10/how-questioning-christians-saved-my-faith-by-philip-clayton/>

⁴⁶ Robert King, *The Meaning of God*, xi.

⁴⁷ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 171.

between a Jew (sacred) and a Gentile (secular) in Acts 10 teaches us that what kind of theological attitude we should have and that we should not call anything (even humans) impure which God has made clean (15, 28). When the secular (Cornelius) falls at the sacred's feet (Peter), the sacred says, "I am only a man myself" (26). Furthermore, the sacred must be humble to the secular and we should not make a radical distinction between sacred and secular, because "all are in God," according to the panentheism's definition. Since God has granted even the gentiles "repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18), Peter says, "who was I to think that I could oppose God?" (Acts 11:17). To that extent, then, can the classical theists think that they could oppose God who really embraces even the gentiles (skeptics)?

In the relation between sacred and secular, Clayton calls the person who has both faith and doubt the "secular believer,"⁴⁸ one who affirms that doubt is not external to religious belief but internal to the dynamical belief, accepting Diderot's saying: "Doubts in the matter of religion, far from being acts of impiety, ought to be seen as good works, when they belong to a man who humbly recognizes his ignorance and is motivated by the fear of displeasing God by the abuse of reason." When we can reestablish Christian faith or identity in the public area, not refusing the skepticism, its method should be a synthesis which is an important element in a constructive theology. The public aspect of a theology must doubt "*a priori* certainty and the accompanying dogmatism." Any openness to science, other religions, and even nihilism is "not the antithesis of believing and does not make the life of faith and practice impossible." We need to construct a critical faith and then to advance its appropriate theology. Nonetheless, Clayton does not agree with the leading skeptics such as the Dawkinses and the Harrises who abandon

⁴⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 58.

belief, but rather maintain that we need “to acknowledge the possibility of the impossibility of religious belief,” by keeping “the reason for unbelief” or “the controversial nature of religious belief.”⁴⁹ Clayton vindicates perspectives on Christianity from opponents of theology and suggests an open debate with them, asking however, that they “Do not commit ‘Straw Man fallacy,’”⁵⁰ that is, those who propose an alternative to Christian theology should criticize the same positions that other opponents of Christianity criticize. Rob Bell acknowledges that he also does not believe in such a god as the one in whom atheists do not believe.⁵¹ Thus, Clayton seriously suggests a presupposition of arguments: “To destroy a straw man rather than to debate our real position is neither reasonable nor productive.”⁵²

Thus we need to doubt theology’s own truth,⁵³ as Pannenberg accepts, in order to affirm “the contested nature of theological truth,” since believers’ inner certainty of the truth of their beliefs about God is not same as their inner certainty of their knowledge of the empirical world. In fact, Christian debates about God—the end of history, the advent of Christ, and the coming kingdom of God—in the midst of science “remain disputable (*strittig*) until they actually occur.”⁵⁴ However, moving beyond Pannenberg’s focus on historical facticity, Clayton affirms that “the life of faith is possible even in the absence of knowing,” and speaks of “an attitude of ‘hope-plus-faith.’” We can find a clue through

⁴⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 24-25. In this sens, Clayton argues that Dawkins and Dennett overlooked that “religious believers may actually evidence a more tentative, hypothetical stance toward their beliefs than many scientists.” Ibid., 47.

⁵⁰ “A straw man argument is an informal fallacy based on misrepresentation of an opponent's position.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straw_man_fallacy

⁵¹ Rob Bell, *Love Wins* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011), 9.

⁵² Philip Clayton, “Adaptation, Variation, or Extinction: How Can There be Theology after Darwin?” (Darwin Festival 2009), 3.

⁵³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 26. Clayton argues that Pannenberg denies Barth’s appeal to a “salvation history” (*Heilsgeschichte*), but he does not establish the natural theology, but have “the religious experience of God,” or “the actual events of the life of Jesus.” Pannenberg’s theological method is not privatizing Christian truth, but publicizing theological knowledge under “the Intersubjective Principle” which entails scientific integrity and accepts criticizability. Ibid., 26-28.

⁵⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 28.

Charles Sanders Peirce: “truth is the character which... we may *justifiably hope* will be enjoyed by beliefs that survive however long or far inquiry is pursued or prolonged.”⁵⁵

Although Peirce notes that theology was essentially exclusive, since it holds a specific doctrine, he also accepts the religious life for truth. Like Peirce, Clayton argues that religious beliefs can be revised by new scientific results but, unlike Peirce, Clayton notes that theology can help believers determine whether revision is justified or not.⁵⁶ Clayton, through Peirce, recognizes two basic assumptions of inquiry: first, instead of private claims, “validity claims must be ‘redeemed’ through critical discourse;” second, we must presuppose that “inquiry is moving toward a final hoped-for consensus.” Theology, then, exists “in the ever-changing realm in which hope, faith, doubt, and skepticism intersect.”⁵⁷

How can we put the place of theology in the “causal closure of the physical,” that is, in the universe as “a closed system of matter and energy?” If one gives up the closed system of a strict naturalism, divine influence or divine lure is possible in the universe.⁵⁸ Polkinghorne argues that whereas science asks “how things happen,” religion asks “why,” that is, religion asks “questions of meaning and value and purpose.” Thus, we should ask both scientific and religious questions about the same event. From the perspective of this point of view, atheists fail to see the possibility of meaning beyond the fact, and they also fail to recognize that they have their own points of faith about any

⁵⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 29-30.

⁵⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 31. Clayton maintains that “theologians can engage in research and reflection without presupposing in advance that their research will finally confirm what they hope to be true. For example, one might engage in dialogu with other religious traditions witout knowing in advance that the comparions will favor the superiority of one’s own tradition over the others. Similarly, one can engage closely with scienfic results, and with the spirit of naturalism, without at present knowing that the best arguments will in the end favor the theistic position.” Ibid.

⁵⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 32. “Habermas, following Peirce, refers to these as *einlösbare Geltungsansprüche*, redeemable validity claims.” Ibid.

⁵⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 178.

given perspective “similar to religious faith.” Thus people of faith should “welcome truth from whatever source it comes,” because God uses any truth which reveals God’s will. This may be the reason Polkinghorne likes 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Test everything. Hold on to the good.”⁵⁹

So, science and faith, in the best form of each, need one another in order to promote the survival of the most appropriate theory. Theology needs to be transformed in its own history, in relation to other religious tradition, and in relation to science. We need to recognize that theology is science and Christians should use science in order to prove the truth of Christian discourse.⁶⁰ Clayton attempts to seek a universal value of theology in the midst of science and his position as a “secular believer,” in that he argues that “theologians respond positively to scientific and philosophical advances because we believe that at the end of the day all means of ascertaining truth are means of the self-revelation of God. In the end the many shall become one.”⁶¹ We have to follow not the scholastic claim that places theology as the queen of the sciences, but the Jesuanic ethic which treats it as a kenotic discipline, and finally we must recognize that scientific claims need metaphysical claims. In turn “today’s metaphysics may be part of tomorrow’s empirical science.”⁶²

Then, how can we preserve theology’s identity if theology has dialogues with science and philosophy? Is the truth of theology the same as the truth of science or not? If they are same, doesn’t theology belong within science? If they are different, should theology “stand outside” the discourse of the sciences?⁶³ Roughly speaking, whereas

⁵⁹ <http://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2011/08/16/lifestyle/features/god-vs-science.html>

⁶⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 33.

⁶¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 36.

⁶² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 37.

⁶³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 39. A problem in the debate between science and theology is,

scientific truth is the “truth of correspondence, the *adequatio rei et intellectus*,” religious truth is “subjective, passionate, and intrinsically perspectival” and “inseparable from questions of meaning.” The dichotomies such as reason vs. faith, nature vs. grace, natural vs. supernatural come from the opposition between science and religion, we find ourselves accepting contrasting theories of religious truth, since secular believers “presuppose a phenomenology of science as objective knowledge.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, in order for theism to be “a live option,” theology should not be isolated from other disciplines but have an interdisciplinary relation to natural sciences (such as sociobiology and evolutionary psychology), to social sciences (such as psychology, sociology, economics, and cultural anthropology), to history, literature, and the arts, and to metaphysical reflection.⁶⁵ Thus, theology is the “product of reflection and work in other disciplines.”⁶⁶

Integration between Faith and Reason

Furthermore, skepticism forces us to keep a balance between faith and reason. Whereas theologians such as Schleiermacher and Cobb argue that we can understand God by means of human reason (natural theology), theologians such as Barth and Cunningham assert that we can learn about God only through revelation.⁶⁷ In such a tension, we need to accept such a theological attitude as “faith seeking understanding (*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*),” which starts from skepticism but establishes a balanced theological view,

affirms Clayton, that “scientists retreat increasingly into their specialized work, and seminaries and divinity schools are increasingly refusing to undertake any serious exploration of science as it is actually practiced.” Ibid.

⁶⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 41-42.

⁶⁵ Clayton, “Panentheism in Metaphysical and Scientific Perspective,” 75-76.

⁶⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 48.

⁶⁷ William C. Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 53.

inasmuch as it is not closed in faith but opens toward understanding. Faith and understanding can give rise to two different questions as an approach to God: why do we believe in God?⁶⁸ And why are we willing to know God? Whereas the one question is about faith, the other is about reason and knowledge, that is, epistemology. Those questions can be described simply as faith and reason. What could be our answer to those questions? The form of our answers may be something like this: “Because....” However, can you give the same answer to two different questions? This argument reminds us of Tertullian’s spelling question: “What has indeed Athens to do with Jerusalem?” Faith gives rise to thought or philosophy and thought or philosophy returns to the faith. By the same token, Aquinas maintains a similar argument: “grace never destroys the nature, but fulfills it.” Thus we need to fully “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).⁶⁹ In a sense, it is right to say that since “the faith with philosophy is more powerful and persuasive than that which does not have philosophy,” we do not have to totally reject Whitehead’s insight, “the final court of appeal is intrinsic

⁶⁸ Isn’t our life a kind of relay games? My life in this world is a process in which I run a special and limited part within the whole race. An important thing in the race is not only to run very well but also to hand a baton over to the next person. It is meaningless to run very hard without a baton. What should I turn over to my children? Property or honor? Never. I don’t have those things. What should I offer them? Although I don’t have any special things to hand over, I just want to give them faith which is given to me from my parents. Although my faith is more progressive than that of my parents, how is it possible for me to have faith and have theological thought without the faith of my parents? It is neither a baton as wealth, nor a baton as honor, but a baton as faith that I hope turn over to my children and their children. I dream that this baton of faith is connected to my descendants until the kingdom of God. Thus, is it not a baton as faith that I have to tightly hold in my hand and run diligently?

⁶⁹ It is the criticism of Christianity that we often hear through mass media. It is natural for Christianity to be criticized by the world because it has lost its foundational spirit. However, an attitude beyond criticism is important. When we look at the phenomenon of suffering of our society or especially that of Korean church, we do not need the ability of lawful criticism alone. If we have only this ability, we are not different from the Pharisees. We need alternatives, not criticism alone. And beyond that criticism, descending into the situation of the pain of Korean society or the Korean church, we should help both to rise up by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

reasonableness,”⁷⁰ although it is not the final answer. In the sense, we need to agree with Tillich’s perceptivity that “Every creative philosopher is a hidden theologian.”⁷¹

In order to have the dynamics of faith, there must be “the deep interconnection between faith and doubt,”⁷² since doubts and uncertainties are no longer considered as “sinful.” Rather, such doubts lead to “a stronger and more enduring form of faith,”⁷³ since “questioning is the piety of thought.”⁷⁴ Rob Bell also maintains that “the discussion itself is divine” and “no issue too dangerous”⁷⁵ and Tillich also argues that doubts are not the negation or enemy of faith, but the unavoidable act of faith in the spiritual life and two poles of the ultimate concern,⁷⁶ since there must be uncertainty in faith.⁷⁷ That is, on the one hand, “the skeptic is not completely outside of faith,” since “the skeptic... is not without faith,”⁷⁸ and, on the other hand, “even the theologian is not completely ‘inside’ faith,” since every theologian “is always in faith and in doubt.”⁷⁹ Thus, living faith includes the courage to take the doubt and even the risk.⁸⁰

Tillich properly argues that an “element of doubt is a condition of all spiritual life. The threat to spiritual life is not doubt as an element but the total doubt.”⁸¹ Thus, we need to realize the “Protestant Principle” which insists that “its creeds and other traditional

⁷⁰ PR, 39.

⁷¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 25.

⁷² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 57.

⁷³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 256.

⁷⁴ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 341. He “The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become.” Ibid.

⁷⁵ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, ix, x.

⁷⁶ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins Perennial, 1957), 19, 20, 25. Quoted from Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 57, 58. The doubt in every act of faith is neither methodological nor the skeptical doubt, but “existential doubt.” And this “faith includes courage.” Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 20.

⁷⁷ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 16. Quoted from Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 57.

⁷⁸ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 23. Quoted from Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 57.

⁷⁹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology I* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 10. Quoted from Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 57.

⁸⁰ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 119. Quoted from Clayton, *Adventures in Spirit*, 57.

⁸¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 48.

beliefs are not absolutes,” since they go “beyond themselves to something that lies behind all such formulations.”⁸² In that sense, dualism is explicitly against Christian faith: Sunday and the other days; sacred and secular; faith and reason, church and the world, and theology and science. Rather, they must be mutually compatible.

In order to develop both faith and reason, anyone without any interruption can and should express his or her own theology or faith. If one interrupts others’ theological ideas by any existing institutionalized dogma, however, it is similar to what Pharisees did for believers. When Jesus had finished speaking, even Jesus left and “hid” himself from them (John 12:36) because of Pharisees and although many leaders believed in Jesus, they could not confess their faith “for fear they would be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42). By the same token, because of the power of massive conservative Christians, if many theologians would not express their faith and theology, we cannot expect any theological development. In this sense, conservative groups of Christian would be same as Pharisees who “shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces,” neither letting themselves nor those who are trying to enter (Matthew 23:13).

Then, where can we find such a properly theological model that has a balance between faith and reason? In the time of “the crisis of liberalism,” where can we find public theologians today? What has happened to liberalism?⁸³ Clayton requests “a new integration,” “as the heritage” and “a renewed liberal Christianity,”⁸⁴ between the Christian tradition and contemporary culture and science. There can be no integration if

⁸² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 58.

⁸³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 257. Clayton sighs: “What are the days when every intellectual American was reading that new book by Paul Tillich or one of the Niebuhr brothers? Where can one find theologians who seek a finely honed balance between inherited tradition and contemporary world in the ways that Schleiermacher, Tillich, and Rahner once did? It is a potent heritage, which in the past has had a transformative influence on society and the church as a whole: powerful convictions, power arguments, and powerful leaders in the church, and academy, and society. Today, one worries, the mainline churches seem to be suffering from a sort of liberal laryngitis.” Ibid.

⁸⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 259.

we consider contemporary culture and science as enemies to our faith, or if we ignore the tradition because of the value of contemporary disciplines. Thus the drive to integrate is “an ethical and a deeply religious commitment” in Christian identity.⁸⁵

As the modern new scientific knowledge progresses, theology has to find new theological answers to the traditional questions,⁸⁶ thereby beginning “the quest for a new integration.”⁸⁷ Clayton wants liberals to study afresh their classic texts such as “those of Schleiermacher and Ritschl and Troeltsch, of Rauschenbusch and Bonhoeffer and Tillich” and to pursue “new forms of integration that demand our attention today.”⁸⁸ When the new integration means to integrate “contemporary experience and contemporary reason” (the unanswered problems of our own day) with “the inherited resources of Christian Scriptures and traditions,” we need to keep the balance between two poles within “the Wesleyan quadrilateral.” That is, on the one hand, although we should not consider the inherited traditions as a complete tradition, we should keep continually to the scriptures and traditions, even in the contemporary theological spheres. On the other hand, this needs a hermeneutical circle: “[O]nly when the ‘horizon’ of the text and tradition is fused with the horizon of our contemporary world is the Christian voice complete.”⁸⁹

Then, how can we achieve integration? Suggesting a practical method, we need to think along with church, which needs to be continually incarnated, and an incarnational

⁸⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 256.

⁸⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 105.

⁸⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 259.

⁸⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 260. Clayton suggests multiple fields for integration in our present context: “multiple religious traditions, diverse cultural traditions, science and religion, complicated ethical questions, from bioethics to new forms of human relationship, the continuing struggle to integrate faith and politics, the new opportunities for constructive dialogue between liberals and evangelicals within the one church, the ‘lived integration’ of one’s corporate beliefs with one’s corporate practice.” Ibid.

⁸⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 263. .

theology needs to call “*continual integration*”⁹⁰ with “ever-new contexts of knowledge, ever-new social contexts, ever-new contexts of ministry.” In this sense, we can ask, “What today are the new incarnations of scripture and tradition with reason and experience? What tomorrow will be the new fruits of their union?” Integration is an open-ended task, insofar as revelation is not finished but continues to happen today. Richard Niebuhr properly refers to “the mountain of revelation,” which is not only one that we climbed once upon a time, but one that needs to be climbed again “in every generation, on every new day.” Thus revelation is the “never-ending pilgrim’s progress of the reasoning heart”⁹¹ and “a moving thing” which needs the interpretation and reconstruction of ever new human situations in “a single drama of divine and human action.” In this sense, continual integration means “not how features in our past are repeated in our present, but how our present grows out of our past into our future.”⁹²

Arguing that a form of the integration of belief and scholarship involves “intellectual rigor and academic excellence,” which serves the church and becomes part of church mission, Clayton shares Peter Berger’s conviction that a combination of critical inquiry and passionate faith makes a balance between skepticism and affirmation “without emigrating from modernity,” and believes that this combination is “the new liberalism’s greatest strength.”⁹³ As Niebuhr argues, such an integrative theology in the Christian church should not criticize all other faiths in order to prove the priority of Christian, but should mean a confessional theology which carries on the self-criticism in the church.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 263-264.

⁹¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 263-264.

⁹² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 261.

⁹³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 264. Clayton notes that integration is a radical notion, because we need to recognize that our own beliefs (insider) and practices (outsider) are also “products of cultural construction.” Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 261.

⁹⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 261.

Beyond Classical Theism

From these dynamically multilayered theological perspectives, we need to change some aspects of classical theism and to go beyond it. Then we can ask what “classical theism” means. Although there are lots of interpretations of classical theism, argues David Griffin, classical theism focuses on the following attributes of God: Pure actuality; immutability and impassibility; timelessness; simplicity; necessity; omnipotence and omniscience.⁹⁵ In fact, since evangelicalism takes its theological justification from “the biblical traditions and the early creeds,”⁹⁶ if someone says that classical theology “has consciously entertained all the fundamental ideas which are applicable to its experience” and has asked and answered all theological questions, it has committed “The Fallacy of the Perfect Dictionary,”⁹⁷ since the contemporary theological topics remain unanswered.⁹⁸ When classical theisms attempt to apprehend (grab the fist) contemporary issues within themselves, there must be something like water which classical theism cannot prehend in their fists. In this sense, Tillich’s concern about fundamentalism is appropriate: “the theological truth of yesterday is defended as an unchangeable message against the theological truth of today and tomorrow.”⁹⁹

That is, fundamentalism has a problem, argues Tillich, “not because it speaks from beyond every situation, but because it speaks from a situation of the past.”¹⁰⁰

Whitehead also points out that adventures of ideas without constant tension between

⁹⁵ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 55. Whitehead argues, on the contrary, “The human mind was dazzled by this glimpse of eternity.... Greek philosophy... conceived ultimate reality in the guise of static existence with timeless interrelations. Perfection was unrelated to transition. Creation, with its world in change, was an inferior avocation of a static absolute.” Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 81.

⁹⁶ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 198.

⁹⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 173.

⁹⁸ If we overemphasize the function of classical theism, it might become an Icarus’ wing which melted because of the sunshine.

⁹⁹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 3. Tillich considers this fundamentalism as “demonic traits.” Ibid.

“novel thought” and “the obtuseness of language” are improper,¹⁰¹ and furthermore that “A learned orthodoxy suppresses adventure.”¹⁰² It is similar to Jesus’ teaching: “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men” (Mark 7:8). It does not mean to ignore a traditional line of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth, however, whether we agree with them or not, but to disagree with those who insist that there is only *this* traditional line in theology, by ignoring other lines of theologies. Insofar as the past can also change our current life, to remember the past is a great thing and the past is still alive even now. In that sense, a more proper theology does not focus only on the past, because the cross connection between the past and the present can affect on a proper theology of the future. Furthermore, we need to listen to Anselm Min’s argument: theology after postmodernity is not possible in a theoretical theology alone (Aquinas), nor in a praxical theology alone (liberation theology), but only in the tension between theory and praxis.¹⁰³

An analogy would be helpful for understanding this argument. If the Bible is God’s love letters for us, traditional doctrines of God are like the love letters for God of early church members. After early church members died, when their descendants in the belief read the two (or more) love letters, their feeling was likely different from that of the earlier church believers. Whenever they read, they may have had new interpretations of the original love letters from generation to generation, just as when, upon reading our parents’ love letters, not only do we find that the love letters show us our parents’ love, feeling, and life for each other, but we also discover our own need for new interpretations of our own feelings of love, which are different from the interpretations of the feelings of

¹⁰¹ AI, 120.

¹⁰² Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 277.

¹⁰³ Anselm Min, *Paths to the Triune God* (Notre Dame: University of Nortre Dame, 2005), 5.

love of our parents. In the same vein, although “the grass withers and the flowers fall,” they endlessly blossom and fall until “the word of the Lord” and the kingdom of God will be achieved (1 Peter 1:24-25). Just so, our theological task will be in an open-ended road and thus theology is ceaselessly in the process of finding cogent answers: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the (*theological*) hope that you have...” (1 Peter 3:15, Added and emphasized by me). Thus it must be the genuine purpose of theology to attempt to give universally valid answers to others, although there would be no such success in ongoing theological history.¹⁰⁴

Philosophical Theology

- “As a theological discipline dogmatics is the scientific self-examination of the Christian Church with respect to the content of its distinctive talk about God... Dogmatics is a theological discipline. But theology is a function of the Church” (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3).
- “Since Dogmatics is a theological discipline, and thus pertains solely to the Christian Church, we can only explain what it is when we have become clear as to the conception of the Christian Church” (Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, 3).
- “The Three Publics of Theology: Society, Academy, and Church... Theology as a discipline has many peculiarities... [A]ll theology is public discourse” (David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 3).

If we see the quotations of “Theology of page three,” which I call, whereas Barth and Schleiermacher consider theology as a discipline within the Christian Church, Tracy expands its area to society and academy. Admittedly, I prefer Tracy’s perspective to that of Barth and Schleiermacher, because the most significant task in this dissertation is to develop a model in philosophical theology that is philosophically coherent and

¹⁰⁴ To that extent, then, Henri de Lubac appropriately argues that “if ‘classical ontology’ disappeared, it was surely because it did not correspond adequately with being. Nor was its idea of God adequate for God.” Henry de Lubac, *The Discovery of God* (Eerdamans, 1996), 177.

theologically Christian—one that overcomes skeptical challenges and that goes beyond certain limitations that I find in certain varieties of classical theism. Nonetheless, we should acknowledge a starting point in order to embark on this project: how current theological trends relate to previous theology. On the one hand, is it possible to do theology without theological tradition? People cannot do theology in general if they are historically illegitimate children who do not know their theological parents. In that sense, we should not have an attitude which has “a woeful ignorance of the classical tradition,” and “a positive contempt for the theological past.”¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, is it possible blindly to miss classical theism without today’s God-talk, and to confine today’s doctrine of God emanating from the “scandal of the particularity” of each person and any particularly concrete context¹⁰⁶ within a frame of a “Procrustean bed” of classical theism? If someone says yes to these questions, not only must the former be empty, but the latter must be arbitrary. In this sense, as Ogden argues, the theologian must understandably speak the scriptural witness to contemporary hearers.¹⁰⁷

By the same token, metaphorically speaking, classical theism is to current theism what an old big tree is to its individual leaf. Since the latter without the former or the former without the latter is without doubt ugly, the “ugly ditch” between both of them must be overcome. Just as “the symbolism gives rise to thought”¹⁰⁸ and thought always returns to the symbol, so the Bible and tradition give rise to current theism and current theism should return to the Bible and tradition. This means a hermeneutical circle.

¹⁰⁵ Min, *Paths to the Triune God*, 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ Karkkainen sharply points out that existing theology has neglected the theological contexts of what is called the third world. “During a time when the majority of Christians lives outside Europe and North America, it is scandalous that African, Asian, and Latin American theologies are hardly mentioned in textbooks” (emphasis is mine). Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 12.

¹⁰⁷ Ogden, *The reality of God*, 120.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 347.

However, the direction and task of theology¹⁰⁹ should not return to classical theism, or simply revisit, repeat, or reproduce the biblical ideas,¹¹⁰ but rather should properly overcome the problem or limitation of classical theism and suggest a new, constructive alternative “from roots to relevance,” or “from scripture and tradition, by means of reason and experience, to application in the contemporary world,”¹¹¹ as classical theism lacks the ability to explain various current issues or skeptical challenges today. Nevertheless, it does not mean that skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism are the alternatives, because they just confirm an affirmation, “there is no God.” However, we have to ask a proper question as to how Christianity could survive in this pluralistic society? Gordon Kaufman’s main concern can be a proper attitude to answer the question through “the ongoing imaginative construction and reconstruction of the basic Christian symbols,”¹¹² since, as Whitehead maintains, “A new idea introduces a new alternative.”¹¹³ When theology is a work in which we put our imaginations into the diverse, theological sources, the theology could be made differently. The only concern we have is not that this kind of attempt brings about disorder to theology or shakes the foundation of theology, but rather, the opposite side; we constrain theology within the frame of tradition without imaginative attempt. Thus a forced binary choice between classical theism and a new, alternative theism is meaningless.

¹⁰⁹ Ogden notes that “the whole task of this theology is to provide a critical, constructive interpretation of the understanding of faith in God to which witness is borne in Holy Scripture. To accomplish this task, however, requires a fully developed conceptuality which is understandable in the present situation and appropriate to the essential claims of the scriptural witness.” Ogden, *The reality of God*, 67. In the same vein, theology’s quest should continue to be to find models that are adequate both to its traditions and to the best of contemporary science, models that elucidate, in a coherent and rational manner, the set of beliefs associated with the Christian tradition, models that are transformative. Philip Clayton, “God and World,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* ed, Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 216.

¹¹⁰ Gordon Kaufman, *God, Mystery, Diversity: Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 7, 49.

¹¹¹ Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology*, 89, 93.

¹¹² Kaufman, *God, Mystery, Diversity: Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World*, 71.

¹¹³ PR, 11.

Whitehead maintains, by the same token, that religion, like science, cannot retain its old power if it faces changes. Although its principles may be eternal, the expression of those principles needs to be continually developed.¹¹⁴ This approach is opposite to Barth's particular path which is revelation, rejecting a general way of theological thinking.¹¹⁵ Whitehead in this way provides us with a good attitude regarding the relationship between philosophy and theology. Whereas the task of philosophical theology is to "provide a rational understanding of the rise of civilization," theology has failed because of the "notion of the absolute despot." Insofar as both the "doctrine of Grace" and the "doctrines of the Atonement" neglect the task of philosophical theology, neither can provide a new direction to civilization;¹¹⁶ we need to listen to Peacocke's acknowledgement that theology is "the investigation of all things in relation to God."¹¹⁷ In this sense, in order to develop this philosophical theology, we need to focus on Tillich's theological method called "the method of correlation,"¹¹⁸ between faith (theology or revelation) and reason (culture or secularism), that is, between Christian theology and modern secular philosophy,¹¹⁹ because he attempts a method that is both faithful to the original "Christian message" and reasonable to the "contemporary culture." In this way, Tillich uses an "apologetic" approach with which even secular people can

¹¹⁴ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), 270. Quote from Clayton, "On Divine and Human Agency: Reflections of a Co-Laborer," in Arthur Peacocke, *All That Is* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 163.

¹¹⁵ Jüngel, *God is in Becoming*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 170.

¹¹⁷ Arthur Peacocke, "Introduction: 'In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being?'" *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*. Eds. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), xviii.

¹¹⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 59.

¹¹⁹ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 130. Karkkainen sees the entire structure of Tillich's three-volume *Systematic Theology* as follows: "First there is a question related to the intellectual and cultural context; this is followed by a theological answer. For Tillich, reason does not resist revelation, but rather asks for it; revelation entails the reintegration of reason." *Ibid.*, 131.

understand religious symbols and find answers to their questions.¹²⁰ Apologetics as an “answering theology” to the “questions implied in human existence”¹²¹ is not a special section of systematic theology but “an omnipresent element.”¹²² By the same token, we need the spirit of theology as continuing inquiry which is “interrogative rather than doctrinaire; it presupposes a readiness to question and to be questioned.”¹²³

The method of correlation replaces three inadequate methods in relating the Christian faith to human existence. The first method is supernaturalistic and entails “docetic-monophysitic traits,” because human beings must become something else than human in order to receive supernatural divine oracles, so that human receptivity is overlooked. Unfortunately, based on the method of humane asking and divine answering, Tillich notes that human beings have no answers to questions they did not ask.¹²⁴ The second method is “naturalistic” or “humanistic,” and derives its answer not from God but from human existence. However, asserts Tillich, it does not realize that “human existence itself *is* the question.” In this sense, Tillich criticizes liberal theology, because it is “humanistic” and overlooks self-estrangement between our existence and our essence, so that our religious self-realization can explain our faith. That is, since everything can be said by humans, not to humans, questions and answers can be the products of the same level of human creativity. But revelation for Tillich is “‘spoken’ to man, not by man to himself.” The third method is “dualistic,” because “it builds a supranatural structure on a natural substructure.” This method finds a positive relation between human spirit and

¹²⁰ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 130.

¹²¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 6, 61. Tillich further argues that the answers in the event of revelation are meaningful only when they are correlated with questions in our existence. And for Tillich a wo/man “is the question.” Ibid., 62.

¹²² Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 31.

¹²³ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 1.

¹²⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 64-65.

God's spirit through one's own efforts or "natural revelation." The arguments for "the existence of God" can be true and false, insofar as they analyze finitude and the question, and insofar as they find an answer from the form of the question. The method of correlation solves this problem of mixture of truth and falsehood "by resolving natural theology into the analysis of existence and by resolving supranatural theology into the answers given to the questions implied in existence."¹²⁵ Tillich's method of correlation needs "a genuinely integrative theology" which has an open-ended dialogue between contemporary philosophy (science) and the Christian tradition.

We need to recognize both that the Christian tradition is not in an untouchable holy place and that liberal theology is not the only alternative. Then, is it true to say that "*tertium non datur*—there is no third option?" Is there no *via media*? Are evangelicals and liberals always confronting each other in opposite ways? We may find "progressive evangelicals" and "evangelical liberals" as alternatives of "the new networks." Thus we are certain that the theologies of integration are "the natural next step" in theologies of mediation and that these integrative theologies will contribute to "the viability of a critical religious faith."¹²⁶ In what follows, I would like to find an alternative as *via media* from the perspective of panentheism.

¹²⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 65-66.

¹²⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, vii-ix.

Chapter II: Joseph Bracken's Neo-Whiteheadian Perspective

In chapter two, we shall see Bracken's neo-Whiteheadian view which synthesizes between classical theism and orthodox process theology through the concept of intersubjectivity in society, that is, a structured field of activity as a new metaphor beyond the limitation of substance and soul-body analogy.

Mediation in Process Thought

In the discussion of the relationship between God and the world, argues Bracken, one tends to identify "God with the world" (pancosmism) or "the world with God" (pantheism). Whereas the former is pancosmism, since it means that "God is the name for the transcendent dimension of the world process as a cosmic whole," the latter is pantheism, because "while they clearly affirm the ontological independence of the world from God, nevertheless, the finite components of the world are perpetually perishing, so that in the end God is the sole entity (or, for Hartshorne, the only set of actual occasions) that survives." In that sense, Bracken maintains that Whitehead's thought is in "the direction of pantheism."¹²⁷ In the same vein, whereas Charles Hartshorne returns the reality of the world into reality of God, Bernard Meland and Bernard Loomer reduce the reality of God into the reality of the world.¹²⁸ On the one hand, Whiteheadian rationalists who follow Hartshorne maintain that "the world is the 'body' of God." Just as the soul is "a society of personally ordered actual occasions" that gives unity to the societies of actual occasions in the human body, so God gives unity to the societies of occasions in

¹²⁷ Joseph Bracken, *Society and Spirit: A Trinitarian Cosmology* (London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 15.

¹²⁸ Bracken, "Panentheism from a Process Perspective," in *Trinity in Process: A Relational Theology of God*, eds., Joseph A. Bracken and Marjorie Suchocki (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 95.

the world. However, Bracken points out a difference between two analogies that whereas the human soul disappears with the death of the body, God does not disappear with the end of the world, since God procures a new world. Although actual occasions are partially incorporated into the next occasions, they are entirely prehended in God. On the other hand, Meland and Loomer who are the leaders of Whiteheadian empiricists assert that “the world is God,” because the world is the source of meaning, because the creative advance of the world is the “supreme cause,” because the world is holy ground, and because the world retains the ultimate mystery within itself.¹²⁹ Bracken attempts to mediate these two perspectives, i.e., “rationalists” and “empiricists.” With regard to the rationalists, the reality of God contains the reality of the world, in that the world as a finite cosmic society participates in the three divine persons as the all-comprehensive society. With regard to the empiricists, human beings are participated in community of the three divine persons who functions as “a principle of creative transformation operative within the matrix or field of activity proper to this world.” When human beings experience the triune God (the entitative reality of God as three persons) through their faith (e.g., prayer), the divine persons are “the subjects of ongoing activities in their lives,” in other words, “*subsistent relations*; that is, subsistent acts of relating to one another and to all their creatures” and their being is “their ongoing process of becoming.”¹³⁰ Thus a trinitarian understanding of God as a community suggests a panentheistic understanding of the God-world relationship.

Limitation of Substance and Soul-Body Analogy

¹²⁹ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective, 95-96. For example, Meland identifies “the empirical reality of God” with “Creative Passage” or “the Ultimate Efficacy within relationships.” Ibid.

¹³⁰ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective, 97.

Bracken doesn't simply describe both pantheism (monism) as God's identification with the material universe and classical theism (dualism) as God's separation from the world, since, on the one hand, many scientists consider God not in personalistic terms but as "cosmic force or principle of order within the universe" and, on the other hand, in Aquinas, although God is more transcendent than immanent, God is the "subsistent act of being" as an agent in creatures and the primary cause of creatures. In the relation between classical theism and panentheism as an alternative of pantheism, Bracken points out the limitations of both the concept of substance in classical metaphysics and the soul-body analogy which is one of the most common analogies in panentheism. Classical metaphysics, which is grounded in the Aristotelian concept of substance, cannot explicate a "nondual" relationship between God and the world, since a substance cannot exist at the same time within another substance.¹³¹ The soul-body analogy as an integral reality, which respectively represents God and the world, also restricts both God's ontological freedom and creatures' ontological independence, because God must have a body to exist and creatures must be body parts of God.¹³²

The Shift to Intersubjectivity

Mediating these two extreme positions and preserving both God's transcendence of the world and God's freedom to create or not create a world,¹³³ Bracken explains the God-world relation in a conceptual scheme, say, "a metaphysics of universal

¹³¹ Joseph Bracken, "Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach," *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*. Eds. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 211. "God is in all things; not, indeed, as part of their essence, nor as an accident; but as an agent is present to that upon which it works." *ST*. 1.8.1.

¹³² Bracken, "Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach," 212. Gregersen also points out the limitation of this analogy. Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 20.

¹³³ Bracken, "Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach," 248.

intersubjectivity,” whereby subjects of experience co-create a common task in dynamic interrelation between God and the world, although there is an ontological distinction between the two of them as different centers of activity. Bracken’s main task is to reconstruct metaphysics, but he still recognizes “the situatedness and contingency of all reflection” such as our social condition and historical location, so that his methodology emphasizes “communities, dialogue, and interrelationship” and suggests “a metaphysics of community,” or “metaphysics of intersubjectivity.” To that extent, then, Bracken criticizes both those who overemphasize substance and Being and those who insist on community without subjects in intersubjective dialogue.¹³⁴ Thus we can call Bracken’s theology as “we theology” which does not neglect even individual subjects.

Bracken explicates a paradigm shift in contemporary Roman Catholic theology away from Aquinas’ theological worldview and near to Rahner’s attention to “God’s self-communication to creatures” (the economic trinity). However, Rahner never solves the tension between this new interpersonal approach and the classical Thomistic understanding in the God-world relationship. That is, since Rahner’s understanding of God is “*Ipsum Esse Subsistens* or the unchanging ground of being for all creation,” God’s relation to the world is not interpersonal, but “the impersonal ‘horizon’” which retains “divine immutability.” Bracken makes a distinction “between person and nature within God” in order to resolve this tension. Human beings relate to the divine persons “only in and through their created participation in the divine nature, the unchanging divine act of being.” The divine nature is first “the enabling principle of existence and activity for the three divine persons in their mutual interrelation,” and then is “the enabling principle or

¹³⁴ Philip Clayton, “Foreward,” in Joseph Bracken, *The One in the Many* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), viii-x.

ground of being for all creatures in their relationships to one another.” However, this distinction is rejected by Rahner’s concept of the God-world relationship.¹³⁵ Rahner and Bernard Lonergan as Neo-Thomists starting from the individual human being toward transcendence through dynamic relation to both divine and human still follow “the individualistic substance-oriented metaphysics of Aquinas and Aristotle.” And Although LaCugna substitutes person for substance as the first category of being, Bracken’s “social ontology or metaphysics of intersubjectivity” does not begin with an individual person, but with multiple persons. Thus Bracken maintains that “metaphysics of intersubjectivity” alone can succeed “the all-embracing metaphysics of being” by Thomas Aquinas.¹³⁶

Depending on Aristotle, in fact, Thomism maintains that nothing can have its own cause in itself, since causes and effects are distinguished from each other, so that “whatever is moved is moved by another” (*Quidquid movetur movetur ab alio*). However, God for Aquinas, or the Unmoved Mover for Aristotle, does not have its cause of existence from an outside agent, because it is “pure actuality” which does not allow any potency, but is always in act. It is neither a self-actualizing reality nor a dynamic subject of experience, but a “fixed objects of thought,” and governs all entities in the world, so that nothing avoids divine providence. This perspective is a kind of theological determinism.¹³⁷ Since actual entities for Whitehead, on the contrary, are not recognized as objects of thought, but as momentary subjects of experience, everything ultimately

¹³⁵ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 16-17.

¹³⁶ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 17-18. Weakness of LaCugna: person is not being or ousia, since being describes all of reality, not just the reality of a person. For Whitehead being is intersubjective since every actual occasion is internally related to every other subject of experience. Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 40.

¹³⁷ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 19-20. God orders even evil action of human beings to the universal good of the world order. Ibid.

exists by “self-causation,” (“a self-constituting decision”): “*Quidquid movetur movetur a se, non ab alio* (whatever is moved by itself, not by another).”¹³⁸ And since the individual has moral responsibility for evil, although God provides “initial aims,” in this sense, God cannot know what will happen in the world until the each individual creature makes a decision.¹³⁹

Process theologians such as Charles Hartshorne, David Griffin, and Sallie McFague have criticized classical theism’s dualism between “God as Pure Spirit” and “the world as pure material,” and its sacrifice of the immanence of God to divine transcendence. Bracken disagrees with this kind of stereotypical analysis of classical theism, however, because it over-simplifies its theory. Take, for example, Aquinas’ theory. First, in part one, question eight, article one of the *Summa*, Aquinas asserts that God’s presence in a creature is “not as part of its essence, nor as one of its accidental modifications, but as an agent” who acts, since God is “the Subsistent Act of Being” (“ongoing cause of being”), by which the creature exists. Second, in article two of question eight, Aquinas argues that God is everywhere, not as a physical body but as the transcendent cause of physical existence and activity. Third, in article three, Aquinas affirms that God is everywhere in creation, “through his essence as the cause of the existence and activity of creatures,” “through his presence since all creatures are present to his knowledge and love,” and “through his power insofar as all creatures are subject to his power.”¹⁴⁰

Nonetheless, Bracken points out the limitation of Aquinas in that whereas God is immanent in the world, the world is not immanent in God, since God as the “transcendent

¹³⁸ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 21-22. Nonetheless, this self-causation is confined by its social context. Ibid.

¹³⁹ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 22-23.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph A. Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 247.

First Cause” must be different from the world. That is to say that, for Aquinas, the relation between God and the world is that between cause and effect, or, activity of creating and being created. To that extent, then, Aquinas cannot assert that “we live and move and have our being” in God (Acts. 17:28). However, process thinkers maintain that “God is present to the world as its ‘soul’ and the world is present to God as God’s ‘body.’” This position maintains the mutual immanence between God and the world, but, at the same time, reduces the transcendence of God to the world, because God must have “an intrinsic relation to some world” in order to be God as the “‘soul’ or organizing principle for a finite world.” In this case, it could lead classical Christian beliefs into problems, because, first, in order to exist, God acts “out of a necessity of nature,” “not out of self-giving love” to the world, and, second, a God who is the “soul” of the universe is not itself a Trinitarian perichoresis, but a unitary agent within the body. There may be a counter argument. Whereas the inner life of God may be Trinitarian, God’s relation to the world (God *ad extra*) is unitary in a single personal agent. However, this is not in agreement with “Rahner’s Rule”: identity between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity.¹⁴¹

Society: A Structured Field of Activity as a New Metaphor¹⁴²

Bracken uses a basic concept to explain this metaphysical task, namely, the category of “society,” which is borrowed from Whitehead, but needs more elaborate explanation than Whitehead, because Whitehead does not clarify “the ontological basis for the agency of societies.” For Bracken, society does not simply mean “aggregates of ‘actual occasions’”

¹⁴¹ Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 247.

¹⁴² The term field is “something more philosophical and strictly analogical, namely, a generic principle or structure for the unity and intelligibility of reality at different levels of existence and activity within this world.” Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 249.

but “structured fields of activity” (SFA) that endure as successive actual occasions. That is, whereas Whitehead maintains that the ultimate components of society are individual actual entities, Bracken emphasizes a “correlative notion of society” which endures over time.¹⁴³ Hartshorne’s explanation is proper to this argument, suggesting that “the agency of a more complex (‘structured’) society is generally provided by the agency of the current actual occasion within a key subsociety or ‘soul,’” and “at any given moment is then communicated to all the other actual occasions constitutive of the structured society in the following moment.” Making a distinction between “compound individuals” (a unitary reality) and “composite individuals” (lower-level animal organisms and plants), Hartshorne argues that these composite individuals need to keep “enduring physical characteristics over an extended period of time” and even inorganic composites need to retain “a minimal cohesiveness over time.” Whereas for Whitehead all societies “exercise a type of collective agency,” which needs “the unity of the society as a whole” and “belongs solely to actual occasions,” Bracken asserts that there is “a derivative agency” appropriate to various societies. For example, stones need the minimal agency which sustains a certain pattern of constituent occasions, plants and lower-level organisms need the agency which sustains “a democratically organized structured society,” and animal organisms need the agency which is “the conjoint activity of all the member societies” that produce the unity appropriate to the organism as a whole. However, Bracken points out Hartshorne’s weakness in the sense that although the dominant subsociety has the agency, “this dominant agency has to be coordinated with all the other subordinate

¹⁴³ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 216. Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 97-98. Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 248.

agencies within the organism so as to achieve the unity and collective agency of the whole.”¹⁴⁴

Whiteheadians consider societies as layered, hierarchically structured aggregates of actual entities rather than as environments or SFA for actual occasions. However, Bracken notices Whitehead’s mention of society as “an environment with some element of order in it” and describes the reciprocal relationship “between a society and its constituent actual occasions” as SFA for successive generations of occasions. In the sense whereas the field retains “the pattern from one generation to the next” and is the “enduring reality,” the occasions are “psychic energy-events come and go.” Although the field does not make decisions, since it is not a subject of experience, it functions as “a collective agency” which “determine[s] the laws for subsequent generations of occasions,” and “the field proper to the subsociety is then coterminous with the field proper to the organism as a whole.”¹⁴⁵

Since SFA is open to gradual transformation, it has two meanings with regard to a classical Aristotelian substance. On the one hand, insofar as Whiteheadian society is “a principle of continuity” in a constantly changing world, it has resemblance to substance. On the other hand, insofar as it can undertake “significant transformation” without losing ontological identity, it does not have resemblance to substance.¹⁴⁶ That is, although insofar as societies are aggregates which endure over time, it could be similar to substance, lower-level of societies contributes to the higher level of society because the one can be within the other. Accepting Whitehead’s concept of “society” as that which is transmitted from each previous actual entity to next actual entity, Bracken uses the

¹⁴⁴ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 98-99.

¹⁴⁵ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 99-100.

¹⁴⁶ Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 248.

concept of “field” in explaining a continuum-like substance in classical metaphysics. But there are differences between field and substance: First, whereas substance is the active organizing principle, SFA is passive in that it is the consequence of the actual occasions. Second, agency in SFA is “the collective agency” working in harmony rather than single agency. Third, there is in SFA the possibility of change and becoming rather than being.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, societies for Whitehead are the “layers of social order” which coexist with the actual occasions in the universe¹⁴⁸ or “a functioning ontological totality with a unified collective agency derived from the interrelated individual agencies of its constituent actual occasions from moment to moment.”¹⁴⁹ This is what Bracken calls “a new social ontology” in which societies or SFA are the units of reality. Although actual entities are the basic elements or “the final real things of which the world is made up,” actual entities quickly come and go. Therefore, societies, or SFA, are the “‘building blocks’ or enduring constituents of reality (both physical and spiritual).” In this sense, Bracken accepts “systems philosophy” explicated by Ervin Laszlo.¹⁵⁰ Laszlo’s natural system is analogous to a process in Bracken, in that, first, a natural system is a whole (totality) rather than a heap which is the sum of its parts and, second, the parts of a natural system are actual entities as well as parts of the broader actual system.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 213-214.

¹⁴⁸ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 3. A society for Whitehead is “a nexus with social order.” “A nexus enjoys ‘social order’ where (i) there is a common element of form illustrated in the definiteness of each of its included actual entities, and (ii) this common element of form arises in each member of the nexus by reason of the conditions imposed upon it by its prehensions of some other members of the nexus, and (iii) these prehensions impose that condition of reproduction by reason of their inclusion of positive feelings of that common form.” PR, 34

¹⁴⁹ Bracken, *Society and Spirit: A Trinitarian Cosmology*, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, viii-x.

¹⁵¹ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 223-224.

Following a principle of intersubjectivity, Bracken shifts “from the subjective unity of the individual actual occasion” (Whitehead) “to the objective unity of the society (societies).” In this neo-Whiteheadian logic, God is a society, not a cosmic soul or personally ordered society of conscious actual occasions in Hartshorne, but “a structured society, a more complex society of coexisting subsocieties (the divine persons).” In God-world relationship, the world as a structured society is incorporated into the “already existing societal reality of God.” And “the net effect” focuses not on the individual actual occasion but on the cosmic society.¹⁵² By the same token, Gordon Kaufman argues that God is not a transcendent personal being but “the symbol for ‘the complex of physical, biological and historico-cultural conditions’ which have created human existence and then sustained human life on the earth.”¹⁵³ In the sense, Bracken’s emphasis on social groupings or systems rather than individual being in his metaphysical structure may neglect uniqueness or particularity of an existence. However, Bracken argues that the particularity (the individual entity) in this mutual relatedness or system is not reduced to the universal (the overarching structures of society).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 106. Since creativity and the extensive continuum are the ground of the all finite entities as well as the divine being, in this sense, human beings experience God “not in an entitative sense” but in the divine nature. God is not personal but impersonal, or transpersonal reality which is the “foundation of the intersubjective existence of the divine persons and all their creatures.” Ibid.

¹⁵³ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 108.

¹⁵⁴ Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 5. Bracken develops Colin Gunton’s three ‘transcendentals’: “perichoresis, substantiality, and relationality.” Nancy Murphy also recognizes a shift “from an individual as such to individuals as dynamically interrelated members of various social totalities.” Their differences are that whereas Gunton focuses on “metaphysical issues” (God-world relationship), Murphy emphasizes “epistemological issues” (truth and objectivity in the natural sciences and in the interpretation of Scripture). Calvin Schrag focuses on human beings, “a who discourse, engaged in action, communally situated, and tempered by transcendence,” and, who are conditioned “by historico-cultural tradition.” Bracken’s perspective focuses on Whitehead’s metaphysics. Bracken reads Schrag by Whitehead’s metaphysical structure in which actual occasions are socialized and nevertheless have their individual originality. Bracken more emphasizes the importance of societies than Griffin. Robert Neville argues that postmodernism is not against “modernity,” but against “modernism,” which rejected traditional cultural values. In rejecting modernism, postmodernism ignored “experientially-based metaphysics” both of American pragmatists like Peirce, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and of Whitehead. Whereas Bracken argues that creativity is the principle or ground for the existence of three divine persons and for the existence of all created entities, Neville considers creativity as “an underlying activity for the cosmic process which transcends the created order and is thus divine but cannot be ascribed to God as a personal

Bracken's main point is that the three divine persons "co-constitute an all-inclusive divine field of activity" which functions as the "matrix or womb of creation." In this matrix creation gradually emerges and lower-level fields exist within higher-order fields without any conflict. Thus there is "the ontological independence" between God and the world. In this model, Bracken defends two classical Christian beliefs: Trinity and *Creatio Ex Nihilo*, in that creation emerges from the divine matrix at every single moment and endlessly integrates into the "communitarian life of the three divine persons."¹⁵⁵ Despite these arguments, since metaphysical concepts are analogical, Bracken honestly acknowledges that this model for God-world relationship is "at best an imperfect symbolic representation of what... is humanly incomprehensible."¹⁵⁶

The Trinity and Panentheism

Considering Whitehead's society as SFA and understanding God as triune rather than unipersonal, Bracken asserts that since each of the three divine persons is "an enduring or personally ordered society of fully living, conscious actual occasions," and three divine persons "necessarily occupy the same field of activity," although each of them has "a different subjective focus" in prehending the field, they are one God. How can we understand or harmonize between three different or separate centers of activity and one and the same field of activity in Trinity in Whiteheadian terms? First, all three divine persons "participate in the divine primordial nature, the divine consequent nature, and the superjective nature of God." The Father alone in the primordial nature decides which

(or tripersonal) being." William Desmond also reconstructs postmodern metaphysics against postmodernism. He explicates four senses of the "being": "univocal, equivocal, dialectical, and metaxological." In the metaxological meaning of being, Desmond analyzes "the between" in dynamic interrelation. Ibid., 5-9.

¹⁵⁵ Bracken, "Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach," 212.

¹⁵⁶ Bracken, "Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach," 249.

possibility is more appropriate to their common ground and history. Second, in the divine consequent nature, the Son alone decides to actualize the possibility chosen by the Father. Third, in the superjective nature, the Spirit alone decides to use “principle of activity” in order to sustain the endless “conversion of potentiality into actuality.” This view enables us to understand the Trinity as a divine community of three divine persons who “co-preside over” a single unboundedly infinite field of activity from three relationally distinct perspectives. Keeping the ontological independence of God, the world can be participated in the community of three divine persons. The Father is the “subsistent principle of potentiality for the world of creation,” in that the Father gives an “initial aim” to the divine Son and to all finite occasions. In responding to the Father’s offering of the initial aim, the Son is the “subsistent principle of provisional or current actuality for the world of creation,” in that the Son “actualizes what was merely potential in terms of the ‘Father’s’ offer.” And the Spirit is “the subsistent principle of ultimate actuality within creation,” in that the Spirit prompts the ‘Father’ to offer and the ‘Son’ to respond, so that “the joint process of the divine life and of all creation will be sustained.”¹⁵⁷

Bracken here vindicates panentheism in that the three divine persons and all creatures together share a common life. That is, the world “is structured according to the trinitarian pattern of life for the three divine persons” and any process of creatures involves three roles of divine persons, i.e., a principle of potentiality, of a current actuality, and of ultimate actuality. The Father’s presence in the world is a kind of the “lure” for the “achievement of higher ethical and religious values in our lives at any given moment.” The Son is current actuality for the world in that all finite occasions “are

¹⁵⁷ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 100-102.

united with the ‘Son’” in responding to the Father. The Son and the world are “only instrumental to the achievement of further goals and values in the light of the ‘Spirit.’”¹⁵⁸

Insofar as God’s nature is “a principle of creative transformation operative within an all-encompassing matrix or field of activity,” Bracken refers to this image as “divine matrix,”¹⁵⁹ which is the “intentional field of activity” by the divine persons and by the myriad finite actual occasions from time immemorial. In the sense, this image is similar to Whitehead’s “extensive continuum” which is in the form of “the more special societies being included in the wider societies,”¹⁶⁰ that is, of “the all-encompassing ‘relational complex’” underlying “the whole world past, present, and future.” Since this field of activity or extensive continuum is not itself an ontological actuality but only in the actual entities it enables actualities or actual occasions to emerge endlessly, it must primordially exist in God. Nonetheless, it is real in that it expresses a fact related to the actual world. Thus, it is part of both God’s nature and actual occasion’s nature, since it is “an indispensable condition for the existence and activity of every actual occasion, finite and infinite alike.”¹⁶¹

Although the community (person-members) is more than the sum of its members, it is not separable from them. Using a new term *The Divine Matrix*, Bracken explains how the One can be simultaneously transcendent as well as immanent in the Many.¹⁶² Constituting their ontological unity, three divine persons share “a common all-inclusive

¹⁵⁸ Bracken, “Pantheism from a Process Perspective,” 102-103.

¹⁵⁹ Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 248. Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 214-215. Bracken, “Pantheism from a Process Perspective,” 103.

¹⁶⁰ PR, 92.

¹⁶¹ Bracken, “Pantheism from a Process Perspective,” 103-105. Jorge Luis Nobo asserts that “creativity and extension [i.e., the extensive continuum] are aspects of one ultimate reality underlying God and all actual entities. Although Nobo does not identify this “ultimate ground of the organic universe” with “the divine nature,” God is “product of the action of of creativity” and “exists within the extensive continuum,” since otherwise God cannot be connected with finite occasions. Thus creativity and the extensive continuum are the ontological ground of the divine being and all finite beings. Ibid., 104.

¹⁶² Bracken, *The One in the Many*, 18.

field of activity” as one God. Classical trinitarian theology argues that three divine persons share everything in common except their appropriation. By the same token, Bracken also develops his theory in trinitarian structure: three divine persons share everything in common except their respectively different roles within an infinite field of activity.¹⁶³ In dealing with the Trinity, we are usually faced with trinity’s abstractness, because it lacks connection with the faith-life of the Christian community. Catherine LaCugna and others have pointed out that the classical doctrine of the Trinity has become more and more a “museum piece.” However, Bracken does not forget to point out the danger of the opposite side. If we move to “a phenomenological understanding of God” as exclusively “for us,” there is an equally serious danger that the reality of God will eventually be seen as simply “a projection of human wishes and desires.” That is, God will become only a function of our human efforts to understand ourselves and the world. In that sense, metaphysics, which focuses on the issue of human being and being as such, would make God an ontological reality quite independent of the world.¹⁶⁴

At this point we should acknowledge how Whitehead’s metaphysically relational theory relates to the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. Which of these two forms of knowledge ultimately serves as the criterion of truth for the other? If they are in conflict in their truth-claims, should each one modify the other’s understanding of the Trinity in order either to be consistent with Whitehead’s metaphysical system, or, to remain faithful to the classical doctrine of the Trinity?¹⁶⁵ Bracken argues that Whiteheadian process

¹⁶³ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 215. With regard to trinity, Bracken writes, just as the three divine persons continually objectify their relationship to one another and to the world so as to “constitute the infinite field of activity” and in order to make “an ongoing cosmic process,” so creaturely subjects of experience objectifies themselves in order to “achieve full actuality within the conditions of space and time before they can be incorporated into the divine communitarian life.” Ibid., 219.

¹⁶⁴ Bracken, “Concluding Remarks,” in *Trinity in Process: A Relational Theology of God*, eds., Joseph A. Bracken and Marjorie Suchocki (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 222.

¹⁶⁵ Bracken, “Concluding Remarks,” in *Trinity in Process*, 215.

thinkers can accept the doctrine of Trinity of such German theologians as Jürgen Moltmann, Heribert Mühlen, and Eberhard Jüngel, who consider God as “an interpersonal process or a community of three coequal persons.”¹⁶⁶ However, Bracken points out some limitations in their perspectives. Although all three have kept a distance from the classical doctrine of the Trinity based on Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, they hesitate to say that “the nature of God is to be an interpersonal process and that the divine persons exist by reason of their common participation in the process.”¹⁶⁷ For German theologians the inner life of God is “not an ongoing process of interpretation” but “a process of self-giving love.”¹⁶⁸ What Bracken emphasizes is that communities (the whole), that is, “structured societies of a particular complexity,” exercise an agency which is not reduced to their individual actual entities, but is more than their sum of parts.¹⁶⁹ The unity is not the unity of a substance but the unity of a process, since whereas

¹⁶⁶ Joseph A. Bracken, S.J., “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” in *Process Studies* 8/4, (1978). 217. Moltmann understands God’s suffering or compassionate love for creatures through the cross of Jesus. “The Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son. The grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son.” Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 218. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 243. Through forsakenness and separation between the Father and the Son, they experience “a new unity” in the Spirit.” In the sense, indicates Bracken, although Moltmann moves toward a process concept of God in ongoing mutual relationship (participation), he cannot relate dipolar God to three divine persons: “the community life of the three divine persons is understood to be a process, partly identical with the process of human history but also partly distinct from it.” Heribert Mühlen understands Being in interpersonal terms. In interpreting *homoousios*, Mühlen argues that it does not mean the same substance between the Father and the Son, but equal being (*gleichseiendlich*). The union is not a substantial union but “a moral union within a community and the Spirit is the personified bond of love, who unites humans with one another and with the triune God. Understanding God as “*Weggabe des Eigensten*,” i.e., the giving away of one’s own,” he sees God as a process of self-giving love. Finally, Eberhard Jüngel notes that genuine love consists of “both selflessness and self-relatedness,” that is, self-giving to the beloved and a free gift from the beloved. Love is a dynamic unity and a processive reality “as an ascendancy (*Steigerung*) in one’s being.” Bracken points out that Jüngel also “confuse(s) person and nature within the Godhead,” neglecting God as interpersonal process. Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 218-220.

¹⁶⁷ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 220.

¹⁶⁸ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 226.

¹⁶⁹ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 220. The whole is more than the sum of its parts, so that the whole exercises an agency which transcends the specific interaction of individual parts with one another. Ibid. Turning the interest into Whiteheadian, according to Bracken, Lewis Ford claims that the God-world relationship is essentially triunity which shows three principles: “the primordial envisagement or the nontemporal activity of divine self-creation” (the Father), “the primordial nature or atemporal objectification of this nontemporal act” (the Son), and “the consequent nature of God’s intimate response to the temporal world” (the Holy Spirit). This triunity does not mean “a plurality of subjects in personal interaction within the Godhead.” Ibid., 220-221.

a substance “reduces its parts to its own subsistent actuality,” a process is only “its parts in dynamic interaction,” and “the parts of a process create something bigger than themselves as parts.”¹⁷⁰

Bracken maintains that the role of the Spirit as the bond of love within the Trinity should not be overemphasized, since “God is by nature community or interpersonal process.” Their plurality as separate persons is grounded in their “unity as a community.” Thus God can be genuinely triune, “one in three.”¹⁷¹ In the sense, Bracken considers the doctrine of the Trinity of the German’s theologians as “tritheism, i.e., that the three divine persons first exist in their own right as separate beings and that the Spirit somehow exists as mediator between the other two.” Instead, Bracken maintains that the interpersonal process is the “real bond” (mediator) between the persons.¹⁷² Hence, the scheme of the Trinity is as follows: The Father is God who is “Primal Cause or Originator”; the Son is “the One Originated or the Primal Effect”; the Spirit is the “Primordial Condition for the interaction between the Primal Cause and the Primal Effect within the Godhead itself.” This can be translated into Whiteheadian terms: the primordial nature of God, the consequent nature of God, and the superjective nature. The Father proposes a new possibility and “qualifies the presence and activity of Creativity.” The Son says yes to the Father’s proposal, so that he converts “possibility into actuality.” The Spirit urges the Father toward a new possibility of existence moment by moment and keeps converting possibility into actuality.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 222-223.

¹⁷¹ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 226. Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II,” 84.

¹⁷² Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II,” 83. Nevertheless, if the Spirit plays a role as the bond of love, it is because the common nature in the Spirit becomes personalized. Ibid., 83-84.

¹⁷³ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II,” 87. Bracken interprets Whitehead’s “superjective nature of God” as Spirit in the pattern of trinitarian hypothesis that is the character of the

Furthermore, Bracken relates Whitehead's "four creative phases in which the universe accomplishes its actuality" to three divine persons. The Father initiates the first phase of conceptual origination in that the Father proposes initial aim. The Son initiates both the second phase of physical origination in that each actual occasion with the Son responds to the Father's initial aim, and the third phase of perfected actuality in that it relates "perfectly to the society of all other occasions in union with the Son." Since the fourth phase is the creative action for the world, that is, "the love of God for the world," the Spirit appears in all phases, between God and the world, bringing about the movement (reconciliation) from one phase to the four phases.¹⁷⁴

However, the divine persons are not three gods, but one God. They are so coequal that none of them is first, but "all exist in 'dependent coorigination' from moment to moment." Thus all three divine persons are involved in the creation (the primordial), redemption (the consequent), and sanctification (the superjective) of the world.¹⁷⁵ Thus God is a society in that He is "three persons who are one God by reason of their intrinsic relatedness to one another within the divine being."¹⁷⁶ In order to understand and articulate the doctrine of the Trinity, we need to emphasize the necessity of "prayer and reflection on the Christian Scriptures," because it is the "starting point for both prayer and rational reflection,"¹⁷⁷ and to recognize that no single system of Thomistic metaphysics, German Idealism, or process-relational metaphysics contains the whole

pragmatic value "qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal instances." Ibid., 91. PR, 88.

¹⁷⁴ Bracken, "Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II," 92. Whitehead's insight is that "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 word." PR, 351.

¹⁷⁵ Bracken, "Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II," 84-85. God is in Whitehead's terms the "aboriginal instance of this creativity," not in the sense that God exists first and then causes everything to exist, but in the sense that God is "the aboriginal instance of this power of being and... qualifies its existence and activity in all other existents." Ibid., 86.

¹⁷⁶ Bracken, "Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II," 94.

¹⁷⁷ Joseph A. Bracken, *God: Three Who Are One* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 124. Bracken, "Panentheism from a Process Perspective," 102.

truth about reality, since each possesses its own strong points and weak points. In this sense, synthesized insights will produce “a system of thought truly responsive to contemporary desires for ultimate meaning and value.”¹⁷⁸

Creatio Ex Nihilo

Based on the field-oriented approach, Bracken accepts and explicates *creatio ex nihilo*: society as a field of activity in the Trinity serves as the ground of being for the world of creation within a hierarchically ordered field for actual occasions “from the submicroscopic (subatomic particles) to the intergalactic.”¹⁷⁹ There are four grades of actual occasions which coexist in dynamic interrelation here and now in Whitehead’s system: “empty space,” “enduring non-living objects,” “enduring living objects,” and “enduring objects with conscious knowledge.”¹⁸⁰ Given this Whitehead’s grades of actual entities, Bracken enables us to imagine how they have emerged since the big bang: initially, “virtual particles,” “subatomic particles” and “societies of atomic and molecular actual occasions,” “plant life” and “animal life,” finally, human species with the development of the brain and nervous system. These are all interrelated in the universe.¹⁸¹ Although each field retains its ontological integrity, fields can overlap and interpenetrate within one another in such a way that lower-level fields can contribute to the upper-level fields and upper-level fields can control the lower-level fields. In this sense fields entail “interlocking and hierarchically ordered systems.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Bracken, “Pantheism from a Process Perspective,” 102. Bracken, “Concluding Remarks,” in *Trinity in Process*, 222-223.

¹⁷⁹ Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 248.

¹⁸⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (Corrected Edition. Edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Pub. Co., 1978), 177.

¹⁸¹ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 215-216.

¹⁸² Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 248.

Although the world is created by God's free decision in order to share the trinitarian life with creatures, Bracken accepts *creatio ex nihilo* only in a qualified sense, namely, creation out of "no-thing," since creation comes forth from the divine matrix of the non-personal or "transpersonal dimension of the divine being." Since creation cannot survive apart from God but enjoys its own ontological integrity as fields of activity in God, we "live and move and have our being" within God.¹⁸³ Just as three divine persons are endlessly interrelated andprehend their divine life, so all created actual entities share "an intersubjective world." In so doing, all created actual entities also "implicitly"prehend the three divine persons and their relation pattern. When created entities respond to the divine initial aim, it is similar to the Son who responds to the Father in the Spirit. Borrowing from Harold Morowitz a trinitarian structure to the cosmic process, although his trinity is purely naturalistic, in which evolution involves immanence (the origin of the universe), emergence (the origin of life), and transcendence (the origin of mind), Bracken identifies transcendence with the Father who provides initial aims to all creatures, immanence with the Son in creation who responds to the Father, and emergence with the Holy Spirit as the divine force, in the form of the "creation of new and higher unities among lower-level systems," who mediates and sustains the unity between Father and Son. From this scheme, Bracken draws "emergent monism" that "the world somehow exists in God and is sustained by the power of God." When Bracken here considers Arthur Peacocke's argument that "everything can be broken down into fundamental physical entities," it reminds us of Whitehead "atomistic" actual occasions as basic constituents. Whereas these foundational entities for Peacocke are matter, for Bracken are spiritual entities (momentary subjects of experience), because spirit "is constitutive of

¹⁸³ Bracken, "Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach," 248-249.

physical reality at all levels of existence and activity; matter is a by-product of spiritual entities in dynamic interrelation.” It would be awkward, but when we reflect on panentheism and the relationship between three divine persons and the world, we can recognize that the very nature of spirit is “to objectify itself in what we loosely term matter.” That is, in order to keep creatures’ own right, just as three divine persons continually and gradually “objectify” their mutual relationship in the field of activity and in the continual process of creation, so creatures also have to “objectify” themselves so as to achieve their full actuality in their own right.¹⁸⁴

Divine and Human Creativity

Bracken relates “the power of being” or “the act of being” to creativity in Whitehead. The act of being in Aquinas is “the principle whereby entities, both finite and infinite, exist.” Whereas finite beings participate in the act of being in limited ways, God exists without limitation. The divine nature enters into the “nature of self-constitution” for all finite occasions. Bracken refers to this “a principle of creative transformation,” in that “whereby the three divine persons and all finite occasions continuously come into existence.” Bracken relates this principle of creative transformation to Whitehead’s creativity. In fact, Whitehead does not consider creativity as the principle of the divine nature or the nature of all finite occasions, but as “a metaphysical given”: “that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively.” However, since creativity exists as primordial instantiation with God and as derivative instantiations with all finite occasions, it can be part of the underlying nature of God and all finite occasions. Thus creativity or

¹⁸⁴ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 217-219.

the act of being brings about the “unity of the universe and the unification or self-constitution of each of its member actual entities.”¹⁸⁵ Thus insofar as three divine persons work in the world without interfering the creatures’s freedom and the laws governing the cosmos, Bracken supports a process-oriented panentheism without collapsing the world into God or God into the world.¹⁸⁶

Since creativity and the extensive continuum are the ground of the divine being and the ground of all finite entities, if human beings experience the ground of their own existence, they at the same time experience God not in an entitative sense but in the divine nature. That is, insofar as the divine nature is “the indispensable condition for God to be God and for all finite entities to be themselves,” it is not personal but an impersonal or a “transpersonal reality, the foundation of the intersubjective existence” of the divine persons and all creatures.¹⁸⁷

With regard to the God-world relationship, Bracken notes that because the nature of God is “an ongoing process of interpretation,” the process of creation can be contained within the divine life and “a partial expression of the exchange of love between the three divine persons from all eternity.”¹⁸⁸ Bracken shows us the God-world relationship with a diagram. There are three circles touching one another: two at the base (Father and Son) and one (Spirit) between and above the other two. There are three circles within the Son circle: from the innermost circle, the Church, the human community, and creation as a whole. Whatever happens in these circles influences the Son and through him, it also

¹⁸⁵ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II,” 86-87. PR, 21. Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 104.

¹⁸⁶ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 109.

¹⁸⁷ Bracken, “Panentheism from a Process Perspective,” 106.

¹⁸⁸ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 226-227. This is similar to German theologians’ ideas when they maintain that “all three divine persons are intimately involved in Jesus’ passion, death, and resurrection. In and through Jesus the divine life is fulfilled in creation, and creation is taken up into the ongoing life of God.” Ibid.

affects the Father and the Spirit.¹⁸⁹ Bracken argues his strong point in two ways: His God-world relationship, first, “reinforces traditional Christian belief in God as a Trinity of three divine persons,” and, second, gives much deeper societal interpretation of reality than Whitehead.¹⁹⁰

God’s Power and the Problem of Evil

If all creatures are interrelated with the divine communitarian life, how can we understand the problem of evil? Where does it come from? Bracken argues that since human communities are “a mixture of good and evil,” that is, a grace-filled side and a sinful side, we need to investigate “collective” power of good and evil.¹⁹¹ Bracken does not accept God’s unilateral power vis-à-vis creation, but through the scheme of universal intersubjectivity bilateral power between God and creatures in different ways. Whereas God allows creatures to make their own decisions and accept responsibility by efficient causality, God leads creatures’s decisions into the ongoing cosmic process and lures for further action to the next occasion by final causality.¹⁹² Thus both good and evil in this world are decided “by actual occasions or momentary subjects of experience in their process of self-constitution.” Although these decisions are not self-conscious, since objective patterns are “recorded” in the SFA, a decision is never deleted. We can see the decision diachronically and synchronically. Whereas diachronically the decision of an actual occasion is conditioned by the antecedent structure of the field out of which it arises, synchronically the decision of an actual occasion is conditioned not only by its

¹⁸⁹ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology,” 227-228.

¹⁹⁰ Bracken, “Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology II,” 93.

¹⁹¹ Bracken, *Christianity and Process Thought*, 41, 43. Reinhold Niebuhr argues that “a group can be ‘more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centered and more ruthless in the pursuit of its ends than the individual.’” Ibid., 42.

¹⁹² Bracken, “Creatio ex nihilo: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 249.

own field, but also by the entire cosmic process within the divine matrix or divine communitarian life. The divine persons either “confirm” productive decisions or “reorient” disruptive decisions not by the coercion but by persuasion. In the sense, since human beings are related to themselves, to fellow creatures, and to the triune God “[as a] full acceptance into the divine communitarian life,” they may need “a period of purgatorial self-reflection” before accepting divine forgiveness and there would be hell for those who do not make that decision, thereby they are “in a state of permanent psychic estrangement from God and their fellow creatures.” And although God will save those who can be saved, even God cannot interrupt “the power of choice inherent within human subjectivity in forcing an individual to accept an objectively greater good.”¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 220-221.

Chapter III: Philip Clayton's Panentheism

In chapter three, we will recognize Clayton's generic panentheism as an alternative between classical theism and pantheism, illumine Clayton's self-limiting God who created the world from nothing in kenotic trinitarian panentheism, and apprehend dipolarity of divine agency and human agency in God-world relationship.

Generic Panentheism as a Panentheistic Umbrella or a Big Tent

Clayton has defended panentheism in modern philosophy, in modern science, and in Christian systematic theology.¹⁹⁴ In the eyes of many contemporary philosophical theologians, panentheism is considered to be a third way between classical theism and pantheism. Panentheism means, simply speaking, that "even though God is more than the world, the world is within God."¹⁹⁵ Another definition by Clayton is that "there is a divine reality that is the ultimate explanation of the existence of our universe. The observable or 'natural' universe is inseparable from that divine reality, although the divine reality itself is not simply identical to that universe."¹⁹⁶ Clayton more concretely defines the range of panentheism: "panentheism is located as part of continuum that runs from classical philosophical theism to pantheism."¹⁹⁷ The expression, "continuum that runs from... to," emphasizes more connection (although they are not fully connected) than separation from both sides, seeking to avoid a dualistic logic like "black or white."

¹⁹⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 118.

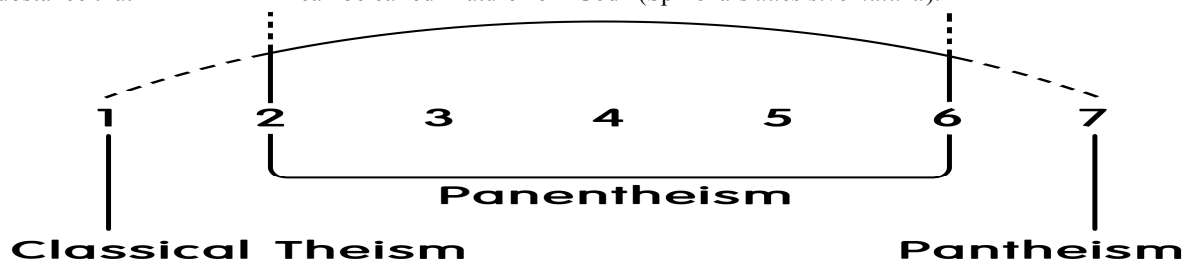
¹⁹⁵ Philip Clayton, "The Case for Christian Panentheism," in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 37, (Summer 1998). Philip Clayton, "The Panentheistic Turn in Christian Theology," in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 38, (Fall 1999).

¹⁹⁶ Clayton, "Systematizing Agency", 222.

¹⁹⁷ Clayton, "Panentheism Today," in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*. Eds. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 251. Panentheism for Griffin is "a movement from 'early modernity's supernaturalism' through 'late modernity's atheism' to process panentheism." Ibid., 254-255.

With this perspective, Clayton shows us a generic panentheism.¹⁹⁸ If drawn as a picture, it would be roughly like the picture below, which I call the panentheistic umbrella or a “big tent.”

1. God created the world as a distinct substance. It is separate from God in nature and essence, although God is present to the world (classical philosophical theism in the West).
2. God is radically immanent in the world.
3. God is bringing the world to Godself.
4. The world is in God—at least metaphorically, and perhaps also in a stronger sense.
5. God’s relation to the world is in some sense analogous to the relationship between mind and body.
6. The world and God are correlated (contingently for some authors, necessarily for others).
7. The world and God are “nondual” (Shankara’s “Atman is Brahman”), or there is only one substance that can be called “nature” or “God” (Spinoza’s *dues sive natura*).



This perspective of Clayton’s is similar to Griffin’s process panentheism: “Panentheism brings out the fact that it combines features of both pantheism, which regards God ‘as essentially immanent and in no way transcendent,’ and traditional theism, which regards God ‘as essentially transcendent and only accidentally immanent.’”¹⁹⁹

God and the World

¹⁹⁸ Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 251-252. In fact, I have tried to connect classical theism to panentheism, because I did not consider pantheism in my panentheism. However, while reading Schleiermacher and Clayton’s generic definition of panentheism, I have found a clue, overarching and penetrating, between classical theism—panentheism—pantheism, even though classical theism and pantheism are not pure panentheism. Clayton introduces other three kinds of generic panentheism: “Generic panentheism according to David Griffin,” “Generic panentheism according to Niels Gregersen,” and “Emphases of Panentheism according to Michael Brierley.” Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ David Griffin, *Reenchantment Without Supernaturalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2001), 141. Quoted from, Philip Clayton, “God Beyond Orthodoxy: Process Theology for the 21 Century,” (Sept. 9, 2008), 8. In addition, if I make my generic panentheism, I would like to add two elements into Clayton’s panentheism: becoming God (similar to David Griffin’s generic panentheism’s number 4) and God’s passibility (similar to Michael Brierley’s). Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 251-252.

Panentheism does not demand to choose one side between unity and difference but accepts a dialectical answer, namely, “unity-in-difference.”²⁰⁰ Insofar as the world is open “from the top” for God’s activity, God can influence the world as a whole, because the world is not outside of God, just as our mind influences our body. There are analogies and disanalogies between God and the world. The God-world relation is fully compatible with the traditional affirmation that “God did not have to create the world.” However, after having created a world, God is now dependent on it. The potentials for experience within God become actuality only through the God-world interactions. Contrasted to classical theism that God is fully actual, panentheism asserts a potentiality in God that is actualized in relation to the world. Although it is “a contingent dependence, one that did not have to happen,” after a free decision to create the world, God’s dependence is necessary. We cannot imagine total identity between God and world, infinite and finite, necessity and contingency, and creator and creatures.²⁰¹

With regard to the notion of the world, we can say that everything that we know is not an abstraction but a component of the world. The world is not a unidimensional edifice but a multilayered structure which includes the complexity of all things. To know the world is to know a synthesized account through the prism through which diverse phenomena are filtered. Clayton explains two notions of the world: “regulative or transcendent (Schleiermacher’s term)” and “constitutive notion.” The one is that the world is “the anticipated realization of unity in a de facto plurality.” Nevertheless, we cannot fully understand the world, since the world entails “an epistemic ideal,” since the

²⁰⁰ Clayton, “Panentheism in Metaphysical and Science Perspective,” 82. Clayton points out a weakness of dipolar theism from Whitehead to Hartshorne: “insufficient emphasis on the dialectical nature of the relationship.” Instead Clayton accepts a Hegelian revision as a third moment: “the movement of relation between them.” Ibid., 83.

²⁰¹ Clayton, “God and World,” 212-215.

world transcends our knowledge, and since the world itself in any sense is “a future and a transcendent concept.” Since there is something to which their knowledge refers, “the quest to know the world regulates the practice of science.” The other one is the world as “a constitutive notion.” The knowledge we possess refers to the world we know. If there is an object to which we refer, it is not simply fictional. Thus, “world” gives us at least both sides: future and present, transcendent and immanent, and a whole and parts. Thus the world is “the epistemic goal toward which science is working, its *terminus ad quem*.”²⁰²

Clayton asks a question concerning “the world as the totality of what would be (finally) knowable.” Whereas Peirce emphasizes “‘knowability’ in terms of the activities of the ideal community of inquiry,” Schleiermacher emphasizes a “psychological idea of the world as the ‘driving force behind knowledge.’” It is not easy to make a balance “between present appearances and our epistemic goal,” or “between knowledge as ideal and knowledge as actuality.” Refusing to accept both the notion of world as fiction and the notion of world which has no further theory, because of the identity between present theories with final outcome of science, Clayton follows Schleiermacher’s idea of the “world” as the “transcendent ground for all thought about nature, that is, for all representational thought (*abbildliches Denken*), including both physical and ethical perspectives, both world order and law.” Even though we have the idea of a highest unity in all specific knowledge, “we cannot actualize [this idea] either in thought or in deed.”²⁰³

Panentheistic Analogy

²⁰² Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, 367. “*Terminus ad quem* means ‘end to which’; aim; terminal or latest point in time.”
<http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/dictionaries/difficultwords/data/d0015184.html>.

²⁰³ Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, 366-368.

In order to explain panentheism, we need to think of a presupposition, “In.” In etymology, the “in” links “all” and “God” in “pan-en-theism=all-in-God.” “In” is not a literal meaning but a metaphor, since it applies spatiality to God who essentially cannot be spatial. There are double possibilities of “in”: the world in God and God in the world (the interdependence of God and the world like mind/body relation). On the one hand, the world depends on God, since without God the world cannot exist. On the other hand, God depends on the world since God’s actual experience is possible in relation to finite creatures.²⁰⁴ The “‘embedded systems’ description of the natural world” suggests that the emergence concept is a viable means for expressing the relation ‘in’ or ‘is internal to.’ If the same structure could be applied to God’s relation to the world, it would comprehend the world as internal to God.”²⁰⁵

Clayton argues that we need to use an analogy or metaphor to explain the God-world relationship, although all human analogies are inadequate to describe the infinite God.²⁰⁶ What could be the best analogy? An example that “the world exists in the womb of God” is very concrete, but it is too specific to be applied to generality.²⁰⁷ The God-world relation is analogous to mind-body relation. Clayton calls it the “panentheistic analogy” (PA): “The world is in some sense analogous to the body of God. God is analogous to the mind which dwells in the body, though God is also more than the natural world taken as a whole.”²⁰⁸ We can say that mind is in body and body in mind. However,

²⁰⁴ Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 253. Clayton affirms the world in the divine only in the sense that “the divine is omnipresent within it, and in the sense of ontological dependence: no finite thing would exist at the next moment” unless there is no continuing divine concurrence. Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 150.

²⁰⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 130.

²⁰⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 129. “Every analogy used in understanding God must also be negated as soon as it is applied to God.” Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 173.

²⁰⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 128.

²⁰⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 128. Ogden explains this analogy: “Because his love or power of participation in the being of others is literally boundless, there are no gradations in intimacy of the

can we say that body can go beyond mind, although mind can go beyond the body? That is, a body is in a specific place, but mind can go all over the world. Just as God is more than the world, so mind is more than the body. Clayton explains that although mental causation is a part of the natural world, it is more than physical causation (e.g., mind-to-raise your hand). By the same token, there is the possibility of divine actions, without breaking natural law. Thus there would be “no qualitative or ontological difference” between natural law and special divine actions.²⁰⁹ Panentheists usually contend that the world is open “from the top” for God’s activity: God can influence the world as a whole because the world does not lie outside of the divine, just as one’s mind or mental self can influence one’s body.²¹⁰

According to Cooper, Clayton’s mind-body analogy expresses “the world’s effect on God, God’s agency in the world, and God’s transcendence of the world.”²¹¹ First, the world affects God and God responds to it, because God is present in each physical interaction which is a part of the divine being, so that it is “in him [that] we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).”²¹² In this sense, God depends on the world. Second, God also affects the world. Just as mental properties influence both other mental properties and the physical world (brain), God also exercises genuine agency in the world “without supernatural intervention.” To that extent, then, Clayton’s position is very similar to Peacocke’s notion of “God’s ‘top-down’ causality in the world.” Third, there are differences between God and the world, for example, God’s transcendence, in that

creatures to him, and so there can be nothing in him corresponding to our nervous system or sense organs. The whole world is, as it were, his sense organ, and his interaction with every creature is unimaginably immediate and direct.” Quote from Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 234.

²⁰⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 128.

²¹⁰ Clayton, “God and World,” 208.

²¹¹ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 312.

²¹² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 148.

God is a distinct being, preceded the world (creation), and has different attributes such as eternity, omnipotence, and moral perfection that humans do not have.²¹³

Hence, there are analogies and disanalogies between God and world. On the one hand, analogies mean that God's causality in the world is like mental experience above physical functioning. On the other hand, disanalogies mean that one cannot find God's central nervous system in the cosmos, since spirit is different from mental properties.²¹⁴ Considering spirit as "an emergent phenomenon" which is not reduced to the physical system,²¹⁵ Clayton explains divine Spirit. Whereas vitalism and pantheism introduce God at a lower level, dualism makes a separation between God-language and human spirit. Instead of either position, Clayton draws God-language "from below," that is, theology of immanent Spirit²¹⁶ and "from above" which is the "non-reducibility of emergent levels." Thus the divine agent must be characterized "not only in psychological (human-spirit) terms, but also in terms of a level of pure Spirit that transcends the universe as a whole." In this sense, Clayton affirms classical theological concepts: "God is not contingent but necessary, not mortal but eternal, not finite but infinite." The infinite (Spirit) must include the finite (personal predicates and qualities) within it as well as transcend it (personal) simultaneously.²¹⁷ We need both "pneumatology from below" and "pneumatology from above" so as to establish the concept of divine Spirit.²¹⁸

Creatio Ex Nihilo

²¹³ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 312.

²¹⁴ Clayton, "God and World," 210-211.

²¹⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 145. Clayton affirms "psychophysical unity: spirit and body are not two substances, nor is the one reduced to the other, but both are dimensions of the one existing person." Ibid.

²¹⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 146.

²¹⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 149. Clayton maintains in this sense that "God consists of three divine persons rather than that God is a personal being." Ibid.

²¹⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 150.

Since God freely, not necessarily, created the world, which is not only contingent but also “might not have existed,”²¹⁹ Clayton rejects Michael Brierley’s fifth theme, “God’s dependence on the world,” among eight common aspects in panentheism, if it means that “God must necessarily create a (contingent) world.” He draws supporting ideas from both the Christian theological tradition (God’s free creation) and process traditions (the emergence of God).²²⁰ In the sense, according to Cooper, Clayton’s panentheism is *unusual* in that “it does not entail, even implicitly, the inevitability of the world or a compatibilist view of divine freedom.”²²¹ Furthermore, he still emphasizes an ontological difference between God and the world and multiple disanalogies between divine and human nature.²²² What makes Clayton keep *creatio ex nihilo*, i.e., the radical contingency of this world including our being, the disanalogy between God and human beings, and a self-limiting God, not a metaphysically powerless God? In a sense, although Clayton explains his theological position in terms of logical, coherent, and systematic methods, is it not for him the result of a presupposition of faith? His confession would support this conjecture: “The creation of both ourselves and the universe, being completely free and unconstrained, was a sign of God’s grace, that is, of God’s eternal character.”²²³

With regard to the God-world relation, although Clayton depends on Whitehead’s cosmology, which must be both “scientifically informed” and “inherently metaphysical,” he breaks with Whitehead to endorse *creatio ex nihilo* which rejects the world’s

²¹⁹ Clayton, “Systematizing Agency,” 223. Clayton asserts that as long as God can be conceived as a divine community of persons, prior to and apart from creation, the metaphysical requirement that persons exist in a society of interrelation can still be met. *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Whereas Clayton accepts contingent relation between God and the world based on Schelling and Samuel Alexander, Brierley supports necessary correlation of God and the world from Hegel and Whitehead. Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 254.

²²¹ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 313. (Emphasis is mine).

²²² Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 44, Number 3 (Fall 2005), 254.

²²³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 183.

coeternity with God but accepts “the radical contingency” of our world.²²⁴ God’s creation is free, not constrained by necessity, because such a metaphysical constraint “actually decreases the free responsiveness and relatedness.” In the sense, there must be a disanalogy between the contingent human agents and the ontological self-sufficient divine agents. That is, whereas the divine nature is “pre-given” necessity, human nature is “freedom-in-thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*).²²⁵ Since the ultimate reality is the ground of the universe (“ground-of-being cosmologies”), but this universe does not contain the ultimate reality within itself, the universe needs a deeper level of reality as personal. Not in the Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*, but through the divine dipolarity of Whitehead, Clayton reaches for the concept of God both as “the ground of being” and as “an existing being” (*der Grund des Seins and das höchste Seiende*), that is, the antecedent (primordial) nature as the “function of eternal grounding” and the consequent nature as “person-like interaction with creatures.”²²⁶

Clayton attempts to solve some tension between *creatio ex nihilo* and God’s intrinsic love, tension that if God has unlimited love, God always relates to the world. Although Clayton accepts “inter-personal relations within God” and God’s relation to creation “as love,” he adds, God’s love can be expressed more deeply in that God created a finite world, although God did not have to create the world. God’s love for the world as no necessity is deeper than God’s love for the world as necessity. This logic is also in Bracken’s process theology. Bracken argues that God has existed eternally “as a trinitarian field of forces, as tri-personal identity,” and “as a single unbounded field of activity.” Clayton adds here that God “at some point” freely created the world, the finite

²²⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 175-176.

²²⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 180-181.

²²⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 176-177.

centers of activity within the space of the divine being to share the divine life. This means that the finite created world is different from infinite God in essential nature. Clayton emphasizes this difference, because it is vital.²²⁷

Clayton relates creation to kenosis in the name of “kenotic creation,” that is, “creation is itself a kenotic, relational act.” It means that God freely limited God’s omnipotence and allowed non-divine creatures. Clayton calls it “open kenotic panentheism.” God’s self-limitation as creation entails God’s primordial nature and God’s consequent nature in process theology. Once God created the world, two natures cannot be separated, so that God invites creatures to work in the divine action and we become “created co-creators with God.” Since God experiences all creatures’ experiences such as joy and suffering and gives back to creatures continual initial aim “for the common good,” God manifests the highest love. *Creatio ex nihilo* expresses the most radical contingency of created beings, because they exist not out of necessity but in the relationship with God. In this kenotic *creatio ex nihilo*, insofar as God freely creates centers of activity of others within divine life, creatures are *imago Dei*, since they are also centers of activity. Although we can accept or resist God’s will, we need to remember that “we exist contingently and might not have existed at all.”²²⁸

Emergentist Panentheism

Then what is the best analogy to speak of God? Clayton finds a model for the divine nature in the “the highest level of emergence,” that is, “the level of human personhood”: “the emergence of mind (or mental properties) from the most complicated biological

²²⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 181-182.

²²⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 182-183.

structure yet discovered, the human body and brain.” Emergence is the best means to explain God’s immanence in the world, since if God is transcendent and the world is fully explained by natural law without God, how can we explain divine place in the world of modern science and modern philosophy? Instead of neglecting these phenomena, accepting modern science and philosophy, Clayton seeks for “a new conceptual basis” for maintaining the immanence of God in panentheism, so that Clayton calls it “emergentist panentheism.”²²⁹

Arthur Peacocke describes emergent systems with conceptions of parts and wholes: “parts are contained within wholes, which themselves become parts within the greater wholes, and so forth.” In the God-world relationship, the world is metaphorically internal or belongs to God. Emergence means the “set-inclusion relation, ε , which is read ‘belongs to,’ ‘is a member of,’ or ‘is an element of.’”²³⁰ Mentality such as thoughts and wishes is, over the history of evolution, influenced by brain and in turn influences bodies (brain). Clayton makes a distinction between mind as property and mind as object. Mind as object occurs dualism, because it is *res cogitans*, which is “an object that is nonphysical, immaterial, not composed out of parts, and not located in space and time.” Thus we have to say, “mental properties: complex, emergent properties predicated of the brain as an object.”²³¹

Nonetheless, Clayton does not fully agree with Samuel Alexander’s radically emergent theism, which asserts that God is the final product of the evolution of the

²²⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 129.

²³⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 129-130. Whereas the “in” in actual objects is locative, for example, atoms are in molecules, molecules in cells, cells in organs, organs in organisms, and so on, “organisms are ‘in’ an ecosystem.”

²³¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 131. Clayton makes a distinction between mind as property and mind as object. Mind as object occurs dualism, because it is *res cogitans*, which is “an object that is nonphysical, immaterial, not composed out of parts, and not located in space and time.” Thus we have to say “mental properties: complex, emergent properties predicated of the brain as an object.” Ibid.

cosmos, that there was one time when God had not existed, and that there is “an increasing ‘deification’ of the universe over time,” since God is not only an emergent property of the natural world, but also an existing agent or Ground of Being.²³² Although we can understand God who has properties such as reproduction (cell), life (organisms), or thought (minds), the properties of divinity—“eternity, perfection, love, justice, and the role of Creator and Source of all that is—are different in kind from such intra-mundane properties.” Then, how can God be both the source of all things and agent that arises in history of the cosmos? Although emergence as a conceptual structure can reach to the category of divinity in evolution, Clayton acknowledges that since emergence cannot fully explain the emergent property of evolution, we need metaphysics beyond the logic of emergence and in turn metaphysical reflection implies panentheism as a theological postulate. Thus God is the source and “ultimate culmination of this cosmos, the Alpha and Omega, the Force or Presence within which all is located.”²³³

Panentheism and Trinity

What would be the relation between panentheism and the Trinity? Clayton argues that “a ‘salvation economy’ (Heilsökonomie)” cannot be reached without grasping some characters of the One. We cannot make a sharp distinction between God in the world or the economic Trinity and God in its own nature or the immanent Trinity.²³⁴ What is necessary about the three-fold-ness? Clayton finds an answer in panentheism, since “The panentheistic structure is inherently trinitarian.” We can think God as the second person in the world, but if we identify God with the world, God would lose God’s infinite

²³² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 131-132. For Alexander, God is only part of its whole body and radically dependent on the world. The subject is not God but the world. Ibid.

²³³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 131-132.

²³⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 150-151.

property and become finite. Thus the infinity of God as the first person is a necessary part of God's nature. God as the third person unifies the first and second persons. Clayton asks: "Is the immanent or the economic Trinity prior?" His answer is this: Whereas if we mean philosophical or logical priority, then the immanent Trinity is prior, if we mean salvifically, then the economic Trinity is. Clayton describes more radically: There is only the potential structure in God beyond God's actions in the world. Since God created the world not outside of God but inside the divine by God's free decision, we can say that "all is God" or "all actions are God's." Nonetheless, we are also agents who are "free, moral, and responsible." Whereas epistemologically the God-world relation is first, ontologically the inner-trinitarian relations are first. The three divine persons have separate centers of activity, but together they form "the unity of the trinitarian God." While for traditional Trinity God chose to create a world outside Godself, trinitarian panentheists affirm "the participation of the created order in God."²³⁵

Clayton recognizes three central disanalogies in Trinitarian panentheism. First, since there is difference between the divine essence and human essence, our participation within God is achieved not by our nature but rather by the grace of God. Second, since God *is* God and humans cannot be God, God existed before the world and will continue to exist even after the world exists no more. Our existence within God is "a gift of grace from God." Third, every action of the trinitarian God reflects the "full moral perfection of God: giving, accepting, glorifying." Whereas most classical theists have denied placing sinful humans within God, panentheists accept that God can embrace even the darkest of human actions within the divinity. Thus we can reach a conclusion that only by divine

²³⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 172-173.

grace does God allow us to exist within God.²³⁶ Clayton considers Whitehead's philosophy as "dualistic rather than dialectical,"²³⁷ in that he makes a distinction between the philosophy of organism and philosophies of the absolute: "One side makes process ultimate; the other side makes fact ultimate." However, Clayton suggests a third position that makes "both fact and process ultimate, both primordial envisagement and resulting actuality, both ground and consequent." Although these pairs are incompatible, we need a dialectical third moment: "philosophically speaking, God's panentheistic appropriation of the world as God's other; theologically speaking, God's salvific and self-sacrificial love for the world."²³⁸

Divine Action

Then, how does God act in the world? There seems to be conflicts or contrasts between the presuppositions of science and divine action: a closed physical system of the universe vs. openness of the universe; regular and lawlike interactions vs. occasional action by God according to particular purposes; all traceable causal histories vs. the divine will as the ultimate source of these actions; ultimate possibilities of physical explanations to anomalies vs. earthly accounts insufficient to explain God's intentions.²³⁹ This symmetrical contrast gives rise to a question: what is the role of divine action in a closed system of natural causes? Clayton explains God's influence and action on creatures without breaking nature law.

²³⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 173.

²³⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 174. "In our cosmological construction we are, therefore, left with the final opposites, joy and sorrow, good and evil, disjunction and conjunction—that is to say, the many in one—flux and permanence, greatness and triviality, freedom and necessity, God and the World (PR 341)." Ibid.

²³⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 174.

²³⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 186.

In order to show the possibility of divine action, Clayton points out the problems of “determinism and causal closure” in science. Determinism, according to William James, “professes that those parts of the universe already laid down absolutely appoint and decree what other parts shall be. The future has no ambiguous possibilities hidden in its womb: the part we call the present is compatible with only one totality.”²⁴⁰ This theory denies that there will be other than one specific future, since there is the “ontological thesis” that the physical state of the world at a given time together with efficient causes determines the physical state of the world for all future times as a necessary effect.²⁴¹ Thus, inasmuch as $t+1$ is determined by t in physical state of the world, proponents of this theory argue that there is no plausibility of divine action, and that even divine existence is “not just unknowable but physically impossible.” Some Christian biologists including Arthur Peacocke insist on God’s initiative in a process of cosmic evolution, but that perspective faces a dilemma between necessary results of the Big Bang and God’s intervention. Is there any possibility of harmony between evolution and theism or evolution and divine providence?²⁴²

Rethinking the issue of divine action alongside the scientific explication, Clayton argues that it is not easy to choose one position between two uncomfortable alternatives: “God acts as the Divine Architect only” and “God becomes the Divine Repairman.” Clayton finds “a new theory of causation” in quantum physics, which “reveals a world that is both law-governed and ontologically indeterminate,”²⁴³ so that he finds a clue to

²⁴⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 187. William James, *The Will to Believe*, 150.

²⁴¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 187. According to Clayton, “the ontological thesis usually begets an epistemological thesis: that future states could be predicted if one had enough knowledge of the past and present.” Ibid.

²⁴² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 188.

²⁴³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 189. “[U]nobserved subatomic events do not have a precise location and momentum, and probabilistic laws leave some room for chance.” Ibid.

explain “an opening between quantum physics and divine action.” Since physical causation cannot determine each individual case, i.e., since all causes are not always “physically reconstructable causes,”²⁴⁴ some thinkers find other possibilities in mental causation or non-physical types of causation: the “agent causation” of Richard Taylor and the “double agency” of Austin Farrer. In these views, since mental or divine causes can appear in the physical world, there is a possibility of both human and divine agency.²⁴⁵

Then, Clayton uses a new theory of causation in order to develop an argument that “God acts as a causal force within the world.”²⁴⁶ Prior to the argument of the divine causal activity, Clayton deals with the phenomenon of emergence in the natural world.²⁴⁷ There are some examples to explain divine causal influence which can be called “future causality”: Aristotle’s four causes to explain emergence: material causes, formal causes, efficient causes, and final causes; Aquinas’s purpose of God as one of the causal forces in every event; Pannenberg’s power of the future as a causal constituent in every event; Lewis Ford’s lure of the future. Clayton develops a possibility not from Aristotelian-Thomist theory but from emanation theology. This emanation model can explain both “downward movement of differentiation and causality and an upward movement of increasing perfection.”²⁴⁸

Quantum physics is not enough to explain causal problems until the theory of emergence. There is another cause beyond physical cause, i.e., a psychological cause which is the “emergence of consciousness from the human brain.” Clayton shows us the

²⁴⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 190.

²⁴⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 189.

²⁴⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 190.

²⁴⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 190. “(1) quantum physics to macro-physical systems and chemistry, (2) chemistry to complex biological organisms and ecosystems, (3) the brain and central nervous system to the phenomena of consciousness or ‘mind,’ and (4) the emergence of spirit within the natural order, including the question of its ultimate nature and origin. Ibid., 191.

²⁴⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 192. “diminishing distance from the Source will lead to a final mystical (re)unification with the One.” Ibid.

opposite direction or “‘downward’ causal effects” from “psychological causes”²⁴⁹ or mental phenomena to physical reality. Human beings are a kind of psychosomatic unity: “mental and physical attributes are interconnected and exhibit causal influences in both directions.”²⁵⁰ Thus, personhood cannot be completely translated into “‘lower-level’ terms,”²⁵¹ since it must be multilayered as physical, biological, psychological, and spiritual levels. From this perspective, our behaviors cannot be totally explained by a “bottom-up” manner, but need “top-down causal effects.”²⁵²

Clayton maintains that a divine influence in human moral intuitions and religious aspirations is different from the divine alternation of purely physical events. As a downward mental causation, divine causal influence on the human thought, will, and emotions could change an individual’s subjective dispositions without breaking natural law in physics and biology.²⁵³ It is right to say that God cannot interrupt natural law. Clayton explains divine causal influence through the “double agency” of Austin Farrer. Every action in the world has both a causal role for agents in the world as secondary causes and a causal role for God as the primary cause. Kathryn Tanner also defends two different orders: a “horizontal’ plane” (an order of created causes and effects) and a “vertical plane” (an order of divine agency). If there are two orders, how can the vertical plane influence the horizontal plane? Clayton talks about God’s action in the world as divine persuasion, by quoting from Tom Tracy: “God’s action goes before our own,

²⁴⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 195. According to Clayton, “If there are genuinely psychological causes, then there is at least one type of causality that stretches beyond physical causality. If so, it would appear that the genus ‘cause’ may include species of influences that can’t finally be parsed in terms of physics.” Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 195. Psychosomatic unities mean that “we are complexly patterned entities within the world who evidence diverse sets of properties and causes operating at different levels of complexity.” Ibid.

²⁵¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 196.

²⁵² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 196. For example, “the structure of DNA... contains a record of the top-down action of the environment on cells and organisms through evolutionary history, and gene expression is environmentally influenced throughout ontogenesis.” Ibid.

²⁵³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 197.

preparing us... for the unsurpassably great good that God has promised us.” This perspective is different from the most classical views in that the latter needs God’s decision alone in explaining an effect in the world, whereas the former explains God’s persuasion of the agent to act in a particular way which implies a special role for mental causes. In sum, God’s causality for human actions should not be understood as God’s command alone, but as divine preparing and persuasion in “luring” humanity. To that extent, then, the world has openness, so that we cannot know in advance God’s final ends.²⁵⁴ This perspective is obviously similar to process theology.

In the sense, we can question origination from the perspective of bottom up and top down. Is evolution compatible with theism? Clayton suggests “a two-way interaction” to explain evolution: top-down and from below through which he finds a possibility to reconcile evolution and theism from the “compatibility of evolution and conscious mental causation.” Divine influences on psychological process are analogous to mental influences on biological processes. Although divine cause is different from natural cause, God cannot break any natural laws, since God’s direct intervention would be “a troubling miracle.”²⁵⁵ Explaining the relation between transcendence and immanence, we have to remember that “if God is transcendent and the world is fully explained by natural law, there is no place for any divine involvement in the world.”²⁵⁶ If we still insist that God is omnipresent, we should not take the position of conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists who ignore modern science, but rather accept “the firm results of modern

²⁵⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 198.

²⁵⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 200.

²⁵⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 129.

science.”²⁵⁷ Although science contributes to the human science, it is not science but theology that is a key player for the interpretation of scientific results.²⁵⁸

Emergent Causality

As we noted, Clayton suggests a new theory of causation, not a linear chain of events from the bottom, a new causation which can be found “in quantum mechanics, mental causes in psychology, information theory and epigenesis in biology, and the structure of emergence.” Emergence shows not only upward propagation of causes but also the whole organism’s affection to the particles, so that Clayton does not accept “*weak emergence*, emergence without downward causation,” but “*strong emergence*,” which has “the notion of a downwardly propagating causal influence.”²⁵⁹ With regard to the relation between evolution and theism, Clayton asks, “what is the rational response to a problem that cannot be solved either from the bottom alone (that is, through genetics and biochemistry), or from the top alone (that is, by negating biology and imposing a theological answer)?”²⁶⁰ Clayton answers this question not in an incompatible or contradictory way but in a complementary dialectical or systematic way. There might be divine intention to create rational, moral creatures who relate to God consciously in the evolutionary process. God could contribute to the process of emergence, first, through the introduction of new information (formal causality) and, second, without changing the systems of evolution from the bottom (final causality).²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 129.

²⁵⁸ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 161. Clayton notes that theologians need to listen what the physical world discoveries, since knowledge of the universe contributes to the doctrine of creation. *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 201.

²⁶⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 202.

²⁶¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 202. Clayton humbly puts three limitations to his argument. First is limitation of science, because of its ambiguous evidence for final causality, so that finality language

Divine action presupposes a divine agent which must have the same meaning as “some of the things.” If it does not, it is impossible to attempt a theology of divine action. Since divine action would make human beings “puppets, mere instruments of the divine purposes,”²⁶² action must be both the one of a finite agent and the one of God. Inasmuch as divine action should not neglect the evolution of the cosmos based on the natural law in the world,²⁶³ what is important is how we can find and distinguish divine action from natural law. In order to complete this condition, Clayton uses panentheistic-participatory theory of agency based on Schleiermacher and Whitehead.²⁶⁴

Literally Divine Action?

What does God do now? Since, as Paul Gwynne argues, God’s continual involvement as creator and sustainer of the cosmos and Jesus’ powerful miracles in the Bible show us divine action in the world, how can we say that “God exists but never actually does anything.”²⁶⁵ However, David Hume argues that although the Almighty do miracles, we human beings cannot know the attributes or actions of the Almighty, so that a miracle is only an exception of the human experience.²⁶⁶ Clayton responds to Hume’s challenge.

is metaphysical or theological. Second, guidance of emergence is not a form of efficient or determining causation, but a lure-like nature of final causality. However, Clayton argues that “it is sufficient to provide an updated version of what was once meant by divine providence, albeit without the omnipotence and predestination claims that often undergirded this doctrine.”²⁶¹ Third is the epistemic ambiguity, which, Kant appropriately argues, is called “purposiveness without purpose,” i.e., “quasi-purposiveness.” This can be expressed: “the biological world develops *as if* it were being guided by a divine hand.” Ibid., 202-203.

²⁶² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 204.

²⁶³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 205. Clayton gives some examples: “lawlikeness and regularity reflect the enduring character of God. Big Bang cosmology is consistent with the creation of the universe by a conscious intelligence. And the Anthropic Principle, which holds that many variables are ‘fine-tuned’ for the production of intelligent life, suggests a possible structuring of the universe for the evolution of consciousness.” Clayton emphasizes that there is no God’s intervention into the natural world in these features. Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 204-205.

²⁶⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 217. William Paul Griffin shows us the image of God as an acting agent in the Hebrew Scriptures: “God is ‘a thinking, valuing being who acts in ways which affect the physical and mental well-being of others,’ as well as being ‘the recipient of mental and physical activities by others.’” Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 217-218.

Clayton sees three reasons for theists to be skeptical about divine action in the world. First is the problem of evil. God did not prevent widespread suffering of the people. If God can prevent evil but neglects it, God must be responsible for this evil. The second reason has to do with religious pluralism: “Is God acting to reveal the law through the Jewish people, or to reveal the means of salvation through the church, or to reveal the divine will for humanity through the five pillars of Islam?” The third reason is the confliction between divine action and the scientific explanation. God’s direct supernatural intervention in the world raises “the problem of intervention.”²⁶⁷ However, scientific research does not have evidence of divine action, since the presumption of naturalism is that “naturalistic explanation is true, but also that one is justified in so thinking.”²⁶⁸

What is the liberals’ response to the Humean challenge? Liberals criticize the Thomistic notion of miracles as: “[A] direct special divine act that bypasses natural causality.” Since such a notion of miracle is possible only in a belief that God is omnipotent, even Karl Rahner rejects the notion of miracle as “an occasional suspension of the laws of nature.”²⁶⁹ By the same token, Walter Kasper also notes that “divine intervention in the sense of a directly visible action of God is theological nonsense.” Most modern theologians give metaphorical interpretations with regard to God’s action: for Schleiermacher, miracles were later additions; for Bultmann, the essential message is

²⁶⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 218-219. Clayton suggests four principles of scientific method: 1) If science is to be successful, it must be able to explain all empirical events. 2) A scientific explanation of an event can be given only if the full causal history that produced that event is accessible to scientific research and reconstruction. 3) Science presupposes regularities in the natural world that can be formulated in terms of natural laws. 4) science must assume that the natural world is autonomous, closed, and physically self-explanatory. Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 220.

²⁶⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 220. Karl Rahner, *Foundation of Christian Faith*, 258. “most miracles which occur in the actual history of salvation and revelation as signs which ground faith can never or extremely rarely be shown certainly and positively to be a suspension of the laws of nature.” Ibid.

not special divine action but the idea of existential wholeness; and for Tillich, the heart of the Christian message is the existential attitude.²⁷⁰

However, although this metaphorical manner is appropriate, it seems to agree with the critics' attack, so Clayton asks, is this metaphorical interpretation enough? Clayton again questions divine action: Can we still support God's action; is it not strange to believe that "God exists, but never does anything?"²⁷¹

Special Divine Action

Divine action cannot arbitrarily interrupt the natural law. Then is there not any possibility of special divine action (SDA)? Clayton claims that "God (at least occasionally) carries out direct actions at specific times and places within the world." However, God's initial action in creating the world, or God's intention in history is not properly SDA. Then what do we need to complete some conditions of special divine action? Christoph Schwobel explains that action needs four criteria in order to satisfy the conditions of being "the result of intentional action": an agent as the necessary condition for the event; particular purpose for the action; a conscious choice of purposes of action; and regulation of action by conscious choice. Actions are intentional.²⁷² Thus, the following question is this: can we explain any event in the world by "God's intentional action?"

Clayton argues that some affirm it "by faith alone," but that is not enough, since it cannot be reconciled with modern science. Others affirm that divine primary cause and the human insight of Jesus as secondary cause are together in Jesus, but this is not valid, since they coincide. Clayton attempts to find a more appropriate way to explain divine

²⁷⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 220.

²⁷¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 221.

²⁷² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 221.

action.²⁷³ Clayton finds an alternative event where Jesus is said to have a “religious genius view” in which Jesus has “a divine power or knowledge that is available to all humans.” Jesus knew how to connect to God, so that he knew God’s will. In this view, it is not resurrection of the individual Jesus, but the “mind of Christ” that is important and that is permeated into his disciples and followers. However, a weak point of this genius view is that it does not justify “spiritual truth as God’s act.” That is, we cannot count it as an act of divine revelation, since God cannot be responsible for what Jesus did. Thus we cannot find God’s direct role in the Christ event. Then, asks Clayton, what would be the necessary conditions in order to relate the life of Jesus to an act of God? First, there must be God’s invitation or response to those who seek for divine connection. That is, if God allows someone who seeks divine knowledge to have it, it is a divine action. Second, if a human agent can act according to divine action, the actions can be called “both human and divine.”²⁷⁴

Problem of Evil and Self-limiting God

The problem of evil is in a sense one of the stumbling blocks in explaining divine action. Clayton argues that “God’s limiting God’s own interventions into the natural order” can explain this problem in that God’s self-limitation (*kenosis*) allows independent finite agents to have their own choice. However, this self-limitation can raise a problem of God’s inconsistency or God’s moral responsibility for the suffering, as Griffin asks, since this God can metaphysically eliminate the suffering. That is, even though God did not have any direct responsibility, God must have a moral responsibility, because God can stop the

²⁷³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 222.

²⁷⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 223.

evil. Clayton answers this question from the perspective of open panentheism.²⁷⁵

Clayton's position is different from Bracken's and the open theists. He comes perhaps closest to Moltmann's self-limiting God, since neither emphasizes necessity but, rather, voluntary limitation and kenosis. God who is "a not-less-than-personal reality" is essentially not contingent on the world, although God's real experience is so because God is in the contingent world.²⁷⁶

Following Schelling, Clayton subordinates God's nature of love to God's freedom or will: "hence the cosmos represents the preexistent God's free choice to create, and God, who can exist without a cosmos, is only dependent on it after this free decision." It is proper to say logically that the fact that a contingent world must necessarily exist is incoherent. Brierley connects necessity and dependence through love: "God, through love, needs a world that (by nature) is radically dependent on God." In other words, "Love demands that God and cosmos are both in some way dependent on, and necessary to, the other; but the difference in natures demands that they are not dependent on, and necessary to, the other *in the same way*."²⁷⁷

Brierley interestingly notes, "Clayton's position would therefore be more secure if his interpretation of freedom followed more Augustinian lines, as for Macquarrie and Moltmann, so that God was indeed freely dependent on the cosmos, with no other option and without any outside force."²⁷⁸ Is this not a real panentheism which runs from classical theism and pantheism? Furthermore, "a freely self-limiting God" is also a significant concept. Even though both finite agents and the divine agent are "semi-

²⁷⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 179.

²⁷⁶ Clayton, "Systematizing Agency," 223. Clayton asserts that as long as God can be conceived as a divine community of persons, prior to and apart from creation, the metaphysical requirement that persons exist in a society of interrelation can still be met. *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology," 10.

²⁷⁸ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology," 10.

autonomous,” while the former is so by nature, the latter is so “only because of a prior decision to self-limit.”²⁷⁹ Thus Clayton’s thesis contrasts with Whitehead’s perspective of a limited and powerless God, to the extent that God for process theology is necessarily or metaphysically limited by other actual entities or agents, since God has to respond to the process of the concrescence of every other actual entity. Thus the world is “a metaphysical necessity” for God, and the freedom of creatures has a necessarily ontological distinction from God.²⁸⁰ Whitehead’s “the reformed subjectivist principle”²⁸¹ explains the importance of experience of every subject, so that “apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness.”²⁸²

Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism as a Synthesis

In Clayton’s theology, kenosis, Trinity, and panentheism are synthesized. Clayton’s perspective at this point contrasts with Whitehead’s view. For Whitehead, since God is eternally limited by the world and the world is metaphysically necessary for God, God is always already responding to the world. For Clayton, through God’s kenotic act of creation and a freely self-limitation, the divine agent causes other agents to have freedom of activity.²⁸³ God gives every actual entity initial aims at every single moment and every actual entity freely chooses his or her responses. That is, God allows creatures to join in

²⁷⁹ Clayton, “Systematizing Agency,” 223.

²⁸⁰ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 87n.103.

²⁸¹ *PR*, 166. Whitehead mentions that “the reformed subjectivist principle adopted by the philosophy of organism is merely an alternative statement of the principle of relativity (the fourth Category of Explanation). This principle states that it belongs to the nature of a ‘being’ that it is a potential for every ‘becoming.’ Thus all things are to be conceived as qualifications of actual occasions. According to the ninth Category of Explanation, *how* an actual entity becomes constitutes *what* that actual entity is. This principle states that the being of a *res vera* is constituted by its ‘becoming.’ The way in which one actual entity is qualified by other actual entities is the ‘experience’ of the actual world enjoyed by that actual entity, as subject. The subjectivist principle is that the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects. Process is the becoming of experience.” *Ibid*.

²⁸² Clayton, “Systematizing Agency,” 224.

²⁸³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 210.

God's own action within the world.²⁸⁴ Clayton's constructive Christian theology has some characteristics such as the world of emergence and contingency, the world's continuation within the divine presence, God more than the world (panentheism), and relational God.²⁸⁵ Even though there are disanalogies between God and world because God is necessary but world is contingent, the two of them are really related. Clayton explains the relation between God and world from the perspective of Panentheism, especially *Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism*²⁸⁶ (KTP) whose concrete ground could be seen through creation as God's self limitation.

Clayton asks an important question: what does it mean to do theology in the form of kenosis?²⁸⁷ Clayton finds the most attractive model in kenotic Christology.²⁸⁸ When Jesus submits his will to the divine will, he has power, but Jesus died powerlessly in God's silence. How can we explain the Father's direct action in Jesus' death?²⁸⁹ When believers share the kenotic mind, "not my will, but Thine be done," that is, Jesus' submission to God's will, they realize that "there are not two actions, but one," so that Jesus manifests the divine power and God acts through Jesus. This manifestation of divine power is analogous to divine luring in process theology and to unseparation of the act of God and the revelation of God in classical theism, so that God intentionally reveals the divine nature through human agents "who really submits themselves to the will of

²⁸⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 183.

²⁸⁵ The problem of divine agency: how can we agree with the causal activity of God when science might fully explain each event? Philip Clayton, "God and World," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* ed, Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 206.

²⁸⁶ Philip Clayton, "Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism," in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 44, Number 3 (Fall 2005).

²⁸⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 36.

²⁸⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 223. "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself..." (Phil 2:5-7, RSV).

²⁸⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 223.

God as the essence of divine action.” In this sense, this divine action is “both specifically human and specifically divine.”²⁹⁰

This “mind” is not only a philosophical concept in Jesus, but needs God’s manifestation “in particular situations through particular persons.” In the case, individual agents can participate in the movement of divine self-manifestation and be part of the divine action. By an intentional act of self-limitation (Kenosis), God can achieve divine purpose in the world through the creatures’ actions.²⁹¹ With regard to Jesus, God does not physically cause Jesus to move, but has given “information, guidance, and motivation to the mind of Jesus,” so that the man Jesus is “open to the will of God, and the divine will fills him.”²⁹² However, we have to recognize that human wills cannot be perfectly submitted to the divine will.²⁹³ Clayton here explores the divine action as physical miracles in Jesus and accepts it; if God could *metaphysically* intervene in natural laws, God could stop the self-limitation if God wished. But Clayton denies it.²⁹⁴ Thus the human being Jesus’ entire personality, including the body, brain and mind, must respond to the divine action. Then, like Clayton, we can ask: “In the kenotic view, can Jesus still be the ‘firstborn of all creation’?” The answer is “Yes,” since Jesus uniquely and perfectly submitted his individual will to the divine purpose. If someone does as Jesus did,

²⁹⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 224. Jesus is the exemplar for humanity in that he lived perfect life. Ibid., 173.

²⁹¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 224-225. Clayton gives a metaphor to explain both divine action and human action: “You are an extremely gifted painter, able to create beautiful works of art through subtle movements of your hand. But one day you decide to take the hand of your friend at the wrist and, using verbal cues and guiding his hand across the paper, to compose artwork. (Let’s assume for the moment that he is particularly ungifted in artistic matters.) Your friend must use the muscles in his hand and be responsive to your guidance and direction. But he must also set aside (release) his desire to control his hand on his own and allow your will to act through him. The resulting painting becomes a product of his action and your action together.” Ibid.

²⁹² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 225. “In principle, this unity-without-dissolving-the-twoness could approach the ‘two-natures’ doctrine of traditional Christian theology.” Ibid.

²⁹³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 225-226.

²⁹⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 226.

s/he has “the mind of Christ” which refers to “perfect fusion of finite human will and divine will.”²⁹⁵

We need to reflect Clayton’s question: “what does it mean to do theology in the form of kenosis?”²⁹⁶ In the last chapter, “The Many Faces of Integration,” he talks about “a radically incarnational theology”²⁹⁷ as an attempt to integrate based on the “Wesleyan quadrilateral.” If this is a “new liberal theology,” I am willing to involve myself in this movement. In any sense, his theology is really unusual, because he is a kind of liberal, but I would like to add two adjectives, “[evangelical], faithful, and rational liberal,” or, more correctly, he has “liberal faith.”²⁹⁸ Clayton calls his position “liberal Christian faith,” rather than “liberalism” and this is a Christian faith, “not something “after” or beyond Christianity.”²⁹⁹ Our faith is not only a given but also a quest to build walls against possible falsification.³⁰⁰ The quest of liberal theologians is to integrate science and religion into “the full harmony between the two without the reduction of the one to the other.”³⁰¹ As we confront the pluralism of modern societies, we need to listen to Berger’s insight that “we must ‘steer a course between a limitless tolerance which passively and yet ‘progressively’ reads the signs of the current age but surrenders to it with ‘nothing to say,’ on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a conservative fanaticism that denies the current age by writing about it ‘without having ever listened’ to it.”³⁰²

Keeping the balance in our theological situation and remembering kenotic life, the church

²⁹⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 226. In a sense, Jesus mind can be understood “in purely immanent terms” or “purely human events” without divine action. However, Clayton affirms that “the opposite is also possible.” Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 36.

²⁹⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 263.

²⁹⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 262.

²⁹⁹ In Clayton’s email.

³⁰⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 262. “Such liberal thinkers vehemently reject a pseudo-science that is custom-designed to support supernaturalism, just as we resist a religion that is stripped of all its convictions and reduced to its purely naturalistic functions.” Ibid.

³⁰¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 262.

³⁰² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 260.

also needs to listen to Reinhold Niebuhr's warning to the church: The gospel needs to challenge the pride of our life systems. If the Christian church does not bring down every high thing against the knowledge of God, the church becomes "not merely useless but dangerous."³⁰³

Clayton's Genealogy of Panentheism

Whence comes Clayton's panentheism? I would like to find panentheistic genealogy which influences Clayton's panentheism chronologically: Plotinus → Nicholas of Cusa → Spinoza → Scheleiermacher → Schelling → Whitehead → Hartshorne → Tillich → Clayton.

First is Plotinus.³⁰⁴ The world for Plotinus emanates from the Good, the divine One which is both infinite and transcendent, but includes everything.³⁰⁵ It could be a form of "monistic pantheism," because all are extensions of the one God. In this sense the world is not necessary but contingent since it relies on the One. Although this seems like pantheism, Plotinus's doctrine of the World-Soul is panentheism, since "it is divine, it includes the world, but it is distinct from and transcends the world." All things are not God, but participate in God.³⁰⁶

Second is Nicholas of Cusa's model of God which is theo-phony, that is, self-giving. God is non-other. God is non-other than us. This must be immanent God, or God

³⁰³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 261.

³⁰⁴ Although we can find the source of classical theism, "God is Perfect Being" or "the wholly transcendent Highest Good," in *The Republic*, notes Cooper, we can find another source, panentheism that "the world has a divine Soul," in his *Timaeus*. Cooper, *Panentheism*, 31-32. Clayton's dialectical model between God and the world reminds us of Plato's doctrine that "the universe is a living being contained within the World-Soul." Cooper, *Panentheism*, 312. 37.

³⁰⁵ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 39.

³⁰⁶ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 42-43. Plotinus overcomes Plato in terms of participation. Whereas for Plato things in the world participate not in the ideal existence of the divine Mind, but in the divine Mind by reflecting, for Plotinus participation means "taking part" in it—"directly in the World-Soul, mediately in the Intellect, and ultimately in the One." Ibid.

is not the other. Clayton finds the intuition of panentheism from “Nicholas of Cusa’s understanding of creation occurring ‘within’ God and Descartes’s replacement of the scholastic notion of infinitude with a participatory one.”³⁰⁷ For Cusa God is all-inclusive infinite being.³⁰⁸ In this sense, Cusa is “an early precursor of the theology of panentheism.”

Third is Spinoza. In fact Spinoza supports theory of substance, arguing that there could be only one substance, “God or nature,” that is, “that is in itself and is conceived through itself” and all other things are “modes of one single substance.” Thus, notes Spinoza, “Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God.” In other words, a personal substance is no more a substance but modes with characteristics.³⁰⁹ By influence of Spinoza, Lessing recognizes that “God’s unity” is a transcendental unity which includes plurality, and like Spinoza, Mendelssohn suggests that the world is internal to God, but, unlike Spinoza, God has “consciousness, intentionality, and agency,” since God must be able to represent to “himself (*sich vorstellen*) all finite things, together with their moral qualities, beauty, and order.” At this point this suggested a theory of subjectivity that could be applied “both to God and to finite subjects,” beyond Spinoza’s pantheism toward panentheism.³¹⁰

Fourth is Schleiermacher. For Schleiermacher, the infinite can be recognized in and through the finite. The finite, the Spirit, moves upward, “seeking to understand the

³⁰⁷ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology,” 2.

³⁰⁸ Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*, 53.

³⁰⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 138-139. A living thing is to “strive to persist in its own being,” Spinoza calls it *conatus*. Ibid.

³¹⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 139-140.

infinite; and religion lives in the ‘infinite nature of the Whole, the One and All.’”³¹¹ In this sense, the one unity of/in the Spirit is prior to the differentiation of individuals.

Fifth is Schelling. With regard to divine freedom, Clayton affirms Schelling’s personalistic panentheism rather than Hegel’s rational determinism.³¹² Clayton follows God’s duality in Schelling in that God has “the potential freely to create or not to create a world” in his eternal nature.³¹³ Insofar as such eternal power has God’s self-knowledge and will, God as the Ground of being is personal. In order for infinite God freely to choose to create, God must have the world within himself. Thus God’s personhood will be affected and changed by the world’s action. Cooper considers Clayton’s theology as “neo-Schellingian emergent personalist panentheism,” since Clayton, like Schelling, affirms that God is freely developing himself as a person in his body, when the world affects God, although God’s personhood is essentially transcendent. Thus Cooper defends Clayton’s Christian mind: “As a Christian, Clayton construes God’s personhood in terms of the Trinity and the incarnation of Jesus Christ.”³¹⁴

Sixth is Whitehead. Although humans cannot change the essential nature of God, our action can affect the responsive nature of God. Since God is the all-embracing presence, God continually responds to the world, so that togetherness of our action and God’s response of grace is more abundant than either of them. Clayton calls this “the

³¹¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 139-140. “All finite things exist only through the determination of their boundaries, which must be ‘cut out’ (*herausgeschnitten*) out of the Infinite. Only in this manner can anything within these boundaries itself be infinite and formed on its own.” Ibid., 143.

³¹² Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*, 313-314. Nonetheless, Clayton denies Schelling’s necessity of the world, God’s dark side, and creation’s negative fall from God. Ibid.

³¹³ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 314. Whereas if God exists, God must generate a world, if the world does not exist, it is because God has not chosen. Since God is good and wills to actualize good, God freely chooses to create although there are evils. Ibid.

³¹⁴ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 314. According to Cooper, Clayton is similar to the “voluntarism of the Scotist-Calvinist tradition of classical theism,” when he affirms that God’s personal reality is independent of creation. Cooper, *Panentheism*, 314. Although Clayton revises classical theism, he does not go too far away: “the more the tradition is revised, the less justification one has in continuing to call the resulting beliefs ‘Christians.’” Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 222.

miracle of creation and of history.” In the sense, we can see eschatological hope: “in the end, God will be able to say, ‘Behold, it was good, yea it was very good.’”³¹⁵

Seventh is Hartshorne. Hartshorne argues that although we are in God, since God is the supreme and all-comprehensive person, the essence of God does not contain universe, that is, we are outside the divine essence. All panentheism considers God as “Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, Knowing and Including the World.”³¹⁶ God’s absolute is consistent with creaturely freedom. Without the freedom, God is impersonal or could be the cause of evil, and finally the only real being or substance in Spinozian pantheism. However, it is different from panentheism which affirms “creaturely self-determination.” In the sense, whereas Schleiermacher’s absolute dependence on God is ‘ancient,’ Schelling’s notion of divine and human freedom is modern.³¹⁷ Hartshorne’s concept of freedom plays an important role in Clayton’s panentheism. Hartshorne’s “dipolarity” or “correlativeness,” like Macquarrie’s “dialectics,” is analogous to Clayton’s “identification *and* the distinction, the inclusion *and* the separation, of God *and* cosmos.”³¹⁸

Eighth is Tillich. Clayton accepts Tillich’s ideas in many ways. In God-world relationship, Tillich emphasizes the mutual participation of God and the world, especially

³¹⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 173-174.

³¹⁶ Hartshorne distinguishes three kinds of panentheism. First, Modern panentheism: “God includes the world ‘in His own Actuality [but not in His Essence].’” This means God’s dipolarity. Second, ancient or quasi panentheism: It simply puts the world in God. If God is absolute and necessary, the world is “extension of the divine essence.” Third, limited panentheism: William James. It limits God’s knowledge and inclusion of the world. This God is finite. Cooper, *Panentheism*, 184. Hartshorne, *Philosophers Speak of God*, xiii.

³¹⁷ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 185. Griffin notes that “Panentheism is crucially different from pantheism because God transcends the universe in the sense that God has God’s own creative power, distinct from that of the universe of finite actualities. Hence, each finite actual entity has its own creativity with which to exercise some degree of self-determination, so that it transcends the divine influence upon it.” Griffin, *Reenchantment*, 142. Quoted from Cooper, *Panentheism*, 185.

³¹⁸ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology,” 9.

“existential participation in God.”³¹⁹ Insofar as God and the world mutually are transcendent and mutually immanent, they cannot be outside of each other. Although God and the world are not identical, they are intertwined.³²⁰ Clayton’s insistency of contingency of the world may be from the Tillich’s recognition of finitude that “Man is a creature. His being is contingent; by itself it has no necessity, and therefore man realizes that he is the prey of nonbeing.”³²¹

Evaluation of Clayton’s Panentheism

1) For Clayton the world is not “a sign of eternal necessity,” but “a consequence of the initial free decision.” God’s involvement in history does not change God’s essential nature, but shapes God’s own history.³²² According to Cooper, Clayton is similar to the “voluntarism of the Scotist-Calvinist tradition of classical theism,” when he affirms that God’s personal reality is independent of creation.³²³ Although Clayton revises classical theism, he does not go to the other extreme by saying that “the more the tradition is revised, the less justification one has in continuing to call the resulting beliefs ‘Christians.’”³²⁴ In this sense, one can find Clayton’s contact point with Barth: not necessity but grace.³²⁵

2) Clayton tries not only to overcome the limitation of classical theism but also illuminate *creatio ex nihilo* and the omnipotence of God from the perspective of a

³¹⁹ Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*, 210. Tillich’s panentheism is from “Plato’s World-Soul through Plotinus’s dialectically emanating One, Nicholas of Cusa’s ‘coincidence of opposites,’ Bohme’s ‘eternal unity of the Yes and No,’ Hegel’s dialectical trinitarianism, and Schelling’s divine-human self-actualization in history.” Ibid., 210.

³²⁰ Stanley Grenz, *20th Century Theology*, 126. This reminds us of Hegel’s assertion: “Without the world God would not be God.” Ibid.

³²¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 270.

³²² Cooper, *Panentheism*, 313.

³²³ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 314.

³²⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in Spirit*, 222.

³²⁵ Jüngel, *God is in Becoming*, 121-123.

modified process theology. However, if God freely chooses to limit himself, then God should also freely choose his infinite power. In this case, we cannot help asking again, “Why does God not stop evil if God could freely choose his unlimited power?” How is this different from the way of overcoming evil in process theology? Clayton’s argument is similar to process theology’s insufficient answer to the problem of evil even though the two are different insofar as God is metaphysically powerless in process theology, and God is self-limiting in Clayton.

Chapter IV: Open Theism

In chapter four, we shall examine open theism which attempts to find a new perspective of God from the evangelical camp. Open theism denies God's determinism but accepts the openness of the future. In this sense, even God does not have the fixed knowledge of the future.

Definition of Open Theism

Open theism is a kind of movement within the evangelical camp to challenge the essence of classical theism and to explain it in contemporary languages.³²⁶ "Openness of God," which is the main idea of open theology, appeared for the first time in the title of a book, *The Openness of God*.³²⁷ Insofar as many ideas of open theology are found in the Bible, open theism is called "a biblically oriented theology"³²⁸ and pursues a "conceptually sound understanding of God."³²⁹ In an attempt to overcome traditional views of God, open theism pursues a theology that is "biblically faithful and intellectually consistent."³³⁰ If we describe God in "biblically flawed, rationally suspect and

³²⁶ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 186. Further reading for Open theism, Clark H. Pinnock in *Most Moved Mover* claims "A theology of God's Openness"; Richard Rice, *God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will*; John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*; William Hasker: *God, Time, and Knowledge*; David Basinger: *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment*; Gregory A. Boyd: *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God*. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 186.

³²⁷ This book was written by five scholars: Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger. This work arose within the evangelical circles in 1994. It means that they also want to look for a theological alternative which can overcome classical theology and is proper to their theological perspectives. Open theism has affinities with "Philip Clayton, Terrence Fretheim, Randy Maddox, Jürgen Moltmann, John Polkinghorne, Richard Swinburne, and Keith Ward. Thomas Jay Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 3. Besides these people, Pinnock includes Paul Fiddes (social trinitarianism), Nicholas Wolterstorff, J. R. Lucas, W.H. Vanstone, and Eberhart Jüngel. Clark H. Pinnock, "Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics," in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 44, Number 3 (Fall 2005), 238.

³²⁸ Thomas Jay Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 1. Rice argues the importance of the Bible: "agreement with Scripture is the most important test for any theological proposal. By definition, the task of Christian theology is to interpret the contents of the Bible." Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *The Openness of God*, 16.

³²⁹ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," in *The Openness of God*, 101.

³³⁰ John Cooper very aptly points out this stream. Several distinct theological positions on the God-world relation are: "classical Christian theism, modified classical Christian theism, revised classical Christian theism, Christian panentheism, and non-Christian panentheism." John Cooper, *Panentheism: The*

existentially repugnant ways,”³³¹ how can we establish philosophical theologies? On the one hand, open theism is contrasted to the Greek metaphysical tradition of classical theologies as “a pagan inheritance,”³³² which describes God as a wholly transcendent one who is unrelated to creation. Instead, it deals with a God who is personal and who is deeply involved with the world. On the other hand, open theism is contrasted to atheism. When atheists such as Freud and Nietzsche reject God’s existence, their concepts of God are ironically very similar to those of the God of classical theisms, which is contradictory to the dynamic God of the Bible.³³³

Distinguishing “the God of Greek philosophy” from “the God of the Bible,” because Greek metaphysics dominates the dynamic biblical view on God, open theists do not accept God as “an aloof monarch,” but the God as “a caring parent with qualities of love and responsiveness, generosity and sensitivity, openness and vulnerability.” God’s openness means that God is open to give and take relationships with us and cares for creatures.³³⁴ Within the same line, emphasizing more scripture, experience, and reason than traditions, open theism follows traditions not from St. Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin, but from James Arminius’s rejection of divine predestination³³⁵ or of God’s “sole final cause of every event,”³³⁶ and acceptance of creaturely freedom, which makes open theism free will theism, from John Wesley’s emphasis on divine love and on “free

Other God of the Philosophers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 321.

³³¹ Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” in *The Openness of God*, 104.

³³² Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 188. Pinnock explains the reason: “Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Greek, and the Bible was written in Jerusalem not Athen. The Christian doctrine of God was, however, shaped in an atmosphere influenced by Greek thought.” *Ibid.*, 188-189.

³³³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 188.

³³⁴ Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” in *The Openness of God*, 104. 7.

³³⁵ Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 1. Open-theism rejects Augustine’s view that God is the all-determining and sole final cause of every event, instead asserts “human freedom and the idea of cooperation with God’s will.” Open theism calls this “evangelical synergism.” By the same token, claiming for “specific sovereignty,” Calvinists is compatibilities which affirm that God controls over everything. We can read divine interaction with creatures in the Bible. Pinnock, “Open Theism,” 238. Basinger, “Practical Implications,” in *The Openness of God*, 157.

³³⁶ Pinnock, “Open Theism,” 238.

creaturely response to prevenient grace,” and from process theology, Feminist and Womanist theologies, and Jürgen Moltmann.³³⁷

Main Ideas of Open Theism

Although there are multiple voices in open theism,³³⁸ their core ideas are follows: 1) God’s primary characteristic as love; 2) theology’s humble speculation about God’s nature and God’s works; 3) creatures’ genuine freedom to choose their lives; 4) God’s similarity with creatures in experiencing others; 5) give and take relationships between God and the world; 6) change of God’s experience and unchange of God’s essence; 7) God’s creation of all nondivine things; 8) God’s resistance to control everything; 9) creatures’ vocation to please God and to make the world better; 10) openness of the future which is even fully unknown by God; 11) God’s expectations about the future partly dependent upon creaturely actions; 12) God’s experience of time similar to creatures’ experience of time.³³⁹

³³⁷ Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 1-2.

³³⁸ Pinnock lists the nature of God: God is a personal, a loving person, communal, changeable, relational, sharing power, and wise. According to Pinnock, in relation to the open nature of God, Open theism is first “a relational and Trinitarian doctrine” in which God relates to creatures. Second, although God can control the world, God gives up complete control because of our libertarian freedom so that human beings can follow God’s will or not. Third, God is not ontologically limited but limits voluntarily Himself so that “freely chosen loving relations might be possible.” Although God could have created a world very different from this real world, he made this world “by an act of self-limitation,” in such a way that God’s will is *not* being done on earth as it is in heaven. Fourth, whereas Calvinists asserts God’s meticulous sovereignty, free will theists do not accept it because it makes God “the author of evil.” Fifth, with regard to divine omniscience, open theists claim the “present knowledge” of God: “God knows everything that can be known.” Since human beings have libertarian freedom, God cannot know fully the future. If God knows completely what will happen in the future, it means that everything is determined. Clark H. Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 44, Number 3 (Fall 2005), 237-238. John Sanders also proposes four principles: First, God loves us and wants mutual relationship with us; second, God makes his actions dependent on our action; third, God exercises a general providence, working with our actions; fourth, God bestows us the relative freedom in genuine give and take relationships. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 187. David Basinger gives five common characters: First, God’s creation *ex nihilo* but occasional divine intervention in earthly affairs; second, God’s voluntary and free creation of the world; third, no God’s arbitrary control over the freedom of creatures; fourth, God’s interdependence with the world; fifth, no God’s full knowledge of future. Basinger, “Practical Implications,” in *The Openness of God*, 156.

³³⁹ Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 2-4.

Oord extracts three main tendencies from those ideas. First is method. Open theology considers the Bible as the primary source rather than reason, experience, and tradition, in its methodology. Whereas since open theists do not insist on biblical inerrancy, they are different from Fundamentalism, since they give priority to the Bible, they are not liberal theologians. Second, social location is in the Evangelical Christian tradition. Third, in epistemology, open theists are “realists or critical realists.” Although human languages have limitations in knowing God and the world, open theism is different from negative theology, because open theism accepts positive arguments about God.³⁴⁰ With these tendencies, open theism calls for reformation in the doctrine of God, reformation that is away from, as Walter Kasper calls it, “the solitary narcissistic God who suffers from his own completeness”³⁴¹ and seeks a more coherent doctrine of God in conceptual intelligibility. Thus Pinnock claims God’s unity which is not oneness in mathematics, but “a living unity which includes diversity,” God’s dynamic constancy, not a dead immutability, God’s power not in omnipotence but in a sovereignty of love, God’s grace and righteousness, and God’s omniscience not in all knowledge but in “a deep wisdom accompanied by infinite resourcefulness.” In this sense, maintains open theism, we can make a difference and change the world.³⁴²

Reference of Open Theism in the Bible

Gregory Boyd explicates examples of Open theism from the Bible.³⁴³

³⁴⁰ Oord, ed., *Creation Made Free*, 4-5. Nonetheless, Open theists confess that we can know God “only in part.” Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” in *The Openness of God*, 102. Romans 11:33 supports their view: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”

³⁴¹ Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” in *Dialogue*, 239. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 189.

³⁴² Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” 239-240.

³⁴³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 190.

- God's regret: Pre-flood humanity (Gen. 6:6); Saul's kingship (1 Sam. 15:35).
- God's questions about the future: Num. 14:11³⁴⁴; Hosea 8:5³⁴⁵
- God confronts the unexpected: wild grapes rather than good fruit (Isa. 5:2-4); expectation but not (Jer. 3:6-7, 19-20).
- God's frustration: Exodus 4.
- God's tests for people: Genesis 3:22.
- The future is open: 2 Peter 3:12.

Dinve Love

In explanation of the open theism, argues Oord, the theo-logic of love, "God is love," is more important affirmation than open theism's well known ideas such as God's relation to the world or God's dependence on the world, God's openness to the future, and genuine freedom of creatures, because "love is the central theme of Scripture, the core ethic for humans, and God's reigning attribute." Insofar as God's omniscience means that the future is settled and God's omnipotence controls everything, God would be the author of evil and those ideas are contradictory to the love of God. However, open theism, honestly speaking, also cannot completely answer why a loving God does not prevent genuine evils. With regard to the problem of evil, whereas open theism respects God's persuasion in the process thought, it thinks that process thought makes God overly limited by creation and contradicts "biblical accounts, the resurrection of Jesus, and eschatology."³⁴⁶

The triune God for open theism is obviously relational and interactive and in God-world relationship, God is not a timeless and unchanging substance in monarchistic

³⁴⁴ "The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"

³⁴⁵ "Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria! My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of purity?"

³⁴⁶ Oord, "An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation," in *Creation Made Free: Open Theology Engaging Science*, 28-29.

attitude, but “personal, relational, and triune” in self-sacrificing love.³⁴⁷ Insofar as “God is love” is the most significant definition which expresses the divine reality,³⁴⁸ love rather than freedom for open theism is the divine essence that discloses God’s inner reality³⁴⁹ and the leading motif in the doctrine of God. (God as Abba: Mark 14:36, God as Father: Luke 15:11-32).³⁵⁰ Insofar as love without relationship is impossible, explains Oord, “To love is to act intentionally, in response to God and others, to promote overall well-being.”³⁵¹ In the sense, God’s love is vulnerable, since God is “affected by his creation, delighted by its beauty, grieved by its tragic aspects,” so that the life of Jesus for us manifests the greatest of God’s love in the world’s suffering.³⁵² God as a loving, caring parent is a more proper image than God as a king, since God does not just command to the world, but is affected by it.³⁵³ However, we can see also God’s wrath in the Bible. Then how can we harmonize the contrast between God’s wrath (Nahum 1:2) and God’s love? Abraham Joshua Heschel properly asserts that whereas “God’s anger is temporary, his love is permanent” (Ps. 30:5, Is 54:8, Ex. 34:6, Ps 103:8). Heschel argues that God’s normal pathos is love and anger is never an attribute or a quality inherent in the nature of God. Thus love incorporates all of God’s attributes. God’s love, *agape*, means that God loves us, “not because we are lovable but because he is loving.”³⁵⁴

³⁴⁷ Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” 239.

³⁴⁸ Rice, *The Openness of God*, 18. Open theists consider Eberhard Jüngel as a friend of them in that Jüngel also values this expression “God is love.” Besides, God’s love for us (1 John 4:9-16), God’s abounding in steadfast love (Ps. 103:8), everlasting love (Is. 54:8), God’s love for the Israelite (Deut. 7:8, Jer. 31:3, Is. 63:9). Rice, *The Openness of God*, 18-19. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 314.

³⁴⁹ Rice, *The Openness of God*, 18.

³⁵⁰ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 190.

³⁵¹ http://thomasjaylor.com/index.php/blog/archives/love_in_relational_theology/

³⁵² Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” 239. God’s love for us through Jesus Christ: Rom. 8:32; Rom. 5:8, Jn 3:16.

³⁵³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 187.

³⁵⁴ Rice, *The Openness of God*, 19-21. Many theologians also consider God’s love as valuable. Barth expresses that God is “the One who loves.” For Brunner we can see “God is love” through Jesus Christ who gives himself. Walter Kasper also holds that God is self-communicating love from eternity. Pannenberg asserts that God’s essence is revealed only in the love of God. Ibid.

Power of God

Divine omnipotence has, holds Hasker, two requirements: logical possibility and consistency with God's perfect nature. First, God's possible action does not violate logical possibility. For example, God cannot create a square circle, not because God is not powerful, but because the idea is self-contradictory. Second, God's actions are limited by God's perfect nature. For example, God cannot climb Mt. Everest, because only a physical being can perform this act. This does not mean there is weakness in God.³⁵⁵ Pinnock argues that although God is superiorly powerful, God does not determine everything by Himself but accomplishes His work through creatures, since God voluntarily surrenders power and gives creatures their power to live or even rebel against God. However, this does not reduce God's omnipotence, since "If Plan A fails, God is ready with Plan B." God paradoxically expresses God's condescension of power in the form of servanthood, that is, in the cross of Christ. It is not by force but by love (the primary perfection of God) that God overcomes evil, in that "love is the mode in which God's power is exercised," and so that God "combines love and power perfectly." In the sense, Pinnock defines omnipotence not as the power to control everything but as the power that "enables God to deal with any situation that arises," because "total control is not a higher view of God's power but a diminution of it."³⁵⁶ We need to consider God's power not as coercion but as persuasion. However, if we emphasize persuasion alone, it may be "an overreaction against almightiness."³⁵⁷ Thus we need to make a balance or tension between love and power.

³⁵⁵ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," in *The Openness of God*, 135-136.

³⁵⁶ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," in *The Openness of God*, 113-114.

³⁵⁷ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," in *The Openness of God*, 116. When God calls Moses, God does not call him coercisively. If Moses does not accept God's call, God has to find another option.

Although open theism does not deny God's occasional intervention in human freedom and/or the natural order, since it happens quite infrequently, we cannot assure that what happens is God's will. Rather, it could be the result of human decision. Thus, we need to make a distinction between God's will and human choice.³⁵⁸ In this perspective, unlike either classical theism or process theism, open theism explains the problem of evil. Evil in classical theology is necessary in order to accomplish God's preordained will or a greater good, but in process theology it is the result of faulty human decision. Unlike process theists, open theists believe that God *could* have stopped giving all actual entities their respective freedom in order to block evil and *could* sometimes allow evil to accomplish some greater good. However, unlike classical theism, open theism maintains that God chooses to let individuals possess their freedom, so that humans may choose "less than the best option available." In this sense, open theism argues that evil can occur due to human affairs.³⁵⁹ That is, if God determines everything, God must take responsibility for evil in the world. However, since God gives us freedom, we have to accept the problem of evil along with our freedom.³⁶⁰

Divine Providence

Open theism does not accept God's will, if it is defined as the final explanation for everything, as a kind of *Amor Fati* (love of fate). William Hasker suggests five theories in divine providence. First is theological determinism, or Calvinism: God determines everything that happens. Second is middle knowledge, or 'Molinism': although human

According to Pinnock, although God aims for the best in every situation, if it does not work, God works with other options that are less than the best. *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁵⁸ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 168.

³⁵⁹ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 169-170.

³⁶⁰ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," 117.

beings have freedom, God still controls strongly since God has a special kind of knowledge. Third is simple foreknowledge: God has not the special kind of knowledge but has complete knowledge of the actual future. Fourth is the openness of God theory, ‘free will theism’: God has some “logical limitations” in knowing the future. Fifth is process theology: God does not know the future and has intrinsic limitations.³⁶¹

First, Calvinism’s main idea is that everything is determined by God. Nevertheless, there is an idea of free will in the sense of a compatibilist conception that people have freedom to choose what God already predetermined, not some other possibility. Hence, even when a person rejects God, it is also the achievement of God’s will.³⁶² In the sense, the God-human relationship for Calvinists is analogous to “a puppet-master” relationship, although they do not agree with it. With regard to the problem of evil, all the evil in the world is “what God wanted to happen” in the unknowable wisdom of God. However, does this not make God the author of evil?³⁶³

Second is middle knowledge or Molinism.³⁶⁴ Thomas Flint argues that “middle knowledge” is located “between knowledge of what *could* happen (knowledge of what’s possible) and knowledge of what *will* happen (knowledge of what’s actual).”³⁶⁵ It means that middle knowledge affirms both “free will in the libertarian sense” and “divine providential control” (counterfactuals of freedom). In this situation, we can ask “how God can know with certainty the future free actions of his creatures.” The answer is that God can know exactly “which choices will be made in each such situation.” Unlike

³⁶¹ Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 134.

³⁶² Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 141-142. Calvin explains this in terms of two different will: God’s secret will and God’s revealed will. Ibid., 142.

³⁶³ Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 142-143.

³⁶⁴ Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 143. This theory was devised by Luis de Molina in sixteenth-century. Ibid.

³⁶⁵ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/03/13/how-could-god-know-the-future/>

Calvinism, God's choice in Molinism is constrained by counterfactuals of freedom.³⁶⁶ If Adam is free to eat the apple, we can say that he might eat the apple or not. If he might eat it, it is false to say that he could not eat it, and vice versa. Thus if he is free to eat the apple, then "it is true that he might eat it and also true that he might not eat it, but it is not true either that he (definitely) would eat it or that he (definitely) would not eat it." However, Hasker points out a weakness: "if he is free in his decision to eat it or not, then there is no true counterfactual of freedom," so that the theory of middle knowledge is not proper.³⁶⁷ With regard to the problem of evil, if God planned and ordered everything, how can God intentionally bring about such evils as the Holocaust and wars? The Molinist affirms "meticulous providence" that even some evil is necessary for some greater good.³⁶⁸

Third is simple foreknowledge. This does not accept middle knowledge but accepts libertarian free will of human beings and God's comprehensive knowledge of the future. Then how does God know the future? God has direct vision of the future. If God knows already what will happen in the future, the future is also fixed, so that human beings cannot change it. It is not proper to say that God has foreknowledge of a free action. However, it does not reduce God's omniscience, since God cannot know what logically cannot be known.³⁶⁹ Jonathan Edwards suggests a unified idea that "God knows

³⁶⁶ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 143. This theory was devised by Luis de Molina in sixteenth-century. Ibid. Alfred J. Freddoso defines: "God, the divine artisan, freely and knowingly plans, orders, and provides for all the effects that constitute His artifact, the created universe with its entire history, and executes His chosen plan by playing an active causal role sufficient to ensure its exact realization. Since God is the perfect artisan, not even the most trivial details escape His providential decrees." Ibid., 144-145.

³⁶⁷ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 145.

³⁶⁸ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 146.

³⁶⁹ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 147.

and shapes our every motivation, so that we act as God wills—yet we act freely, since our will guides our action.”³⁷⁰

Fourth is the openness of God. God can do anything “that is logically possible and consistent with God’s perfect nature.” This perspective is not less than Calvinism in God’s power. Hasker asks the Calvinist: Is God unable to create a world in which creatures have voluntary relationship with God? Although God knows about us, God does not override our actions, but opens himself to the real freedom which can be followed by even failure, so that, in the sense, God is a risk-taker. If we voluntarily understand and follow God’s will, God rejoices, but if we reject God’s will, God is saddened.³⁷¹ With regard to the problem of evil, although God knows that evil will occur, God has not planned the concrete instances of evil, but rather “general strategies” for the common good of the world. In this sense, open theism rejects “meticulous providence.” However, critics of the open theism ask: “if God does not know everything about the future, how can [God] tell us about it?” Open theism has three different ways of understanding prophecies: based on the human actions; based on existing tendencies; and based on God’s intention.³⁷²

Fifth is process theology which asserts that God and the world are interdependent. God is the Creator, not in the sense that he creates out of nothing, but in the sense that he “guides the development of the cosmos.” Since human beings have freedom in the libertarian sense, the future is inherently unknowable. God’s power is not coercive, but persuasive, by presenting creatures his “initial aim” in order for them to follow God’s rich and intense values in ultimate harmony. With regard to the problem of evil, evil

³⁷⁰ Placher, “Is God in Charge?” in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 99.

³⁷¹ Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 150-151.

³⁷² Hasker, “A Philosophical Perspective,” 152-153.

occurs not because God permits it, but because creatures act differently from God's plan and because God could not prevent the evils.³⁷³ However, Hasker points out that God's persuasive power for process theology is a "plus" to understand a concept of God, but limiting God's actions makes another problem, since *creatio ex nihilo*, partition of the Red Sea, and Jesus' resurrection are impossible for such a kind of God. Just as classical theism is overly dependent on Greek philosophy, so process theology does overly rely on process philosophy, so that process theology is more damaging to the biblical concept of God than neo-Platonism.³⁷⁴

Divine Knowledge

According to David Basinger, with regard to divine omniscience, open theism maintains divine knowledge in the following way:

A: "God can know only what can be known."

B: "[W]hat humans will freely do in the future cannot be known beforehand."

C: Therefore, "God can never know with certainty what will happen in any context involving freedom of choice."³⁷⁵

One of the most important insistences in open theism is the relationship between free will and predestination. Open theists ask this: If God knows and determines everything, how can we speak of human freedom? If God totally knows and determines our future, we cannot help asking what God is doing now. Why do we pray to God, if everything is determined by God? That is, if God determined everything, there is nothing God can do

³⁷³ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 138-140.

³⁷⁴ Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 140-141.

³⁷⁵ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 163. Pinnock insists that this is not limited foreknowledge for God, since God know everything that can be known. Pinnock, "Open Theism," 240. By the same token, asserts Hasker also, that "at any time God knows all propositions such that God's knowing them at that time is logically possible." Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 136.

for the world.³⁷⁶ Isn't this, in a sense, a kind of deism? Open theists believe "current omniscience or present knowledge" for God, since God is surprised by something, regrets or changes God's mind or shows anger or disappointment, although God has massive knowledge of the future. If we really possess libertarian freedom, we cannot assert "exhaustive definitive foreknowledge," since the future does not exist as a reality, actuality, or "a fixity of events."³⁷⁷ This means that the future is formed "in part by human choices" which even God cannot touch.³⁷⁸ Even God learns through a dynamic and changing world, since he is open to the world. God does not know the future outcome, but is "all-knowing in the sense that he knows all that it is possible to know."³⁷⁹

Keith Ward also argues that although God could know the future entirely, God rejects such knowledge because of a world of free agents. John Polkinghorne also recognizes such an idea with regard to modern science; quantum physics and chaos theory assert that the future is open. Although God knows what can happen and what He is to do for that, God accomplishes his purposes "by contingent paths."³⁸⁰ They believe that God knows only "present knowledge" through which God knows all that has occurred in the past and is occurring now. The Bible does not talk about complete knowledge of God, but about an open future, so that God's total omniscience is not a biblical idea but an old tradition. In this sense, the main thesis of open theism is that "freedom of choice" makes God not know the future before it happens. Divine guidance is not a means of discovering "what will be best in the long run," but a means of

³⁷⁶ Pinnock, "Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics," 242.

³⁷⁷ Pinnock, "Open Theism," 240. Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," 121.

³⁷⁸ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," 123. Pinnock explains this with the analogy of parents and children. "As a parent, God knows what he needs to know to deal with any contingency that might arise but does not know or need to know every detail of the future. God is a person and deals with us as persons. This means that God understands us, has intuition into every situation we face and is able to deal appropriately with every situation." Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," 123-124.

³⁸⁰ Pinnock, "Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics," 240-241.

determining “what is best for us now.”³⁸¹ God does not have a specific, perfect, or preordained plan for our lives, or “exhaustive knowledge of the future,” but “a general will for each of us.” Thus it is reasonable for open theists to wonder whether they are within God’s will, to attempt to actualize this ideal in the future, and to recognize that we have failed to follow God’s will.³⁸²

What if God’s prediction was wrong in the long run? In what way(s) does God share his will with us? Process theology argues that God attempts to share his will with us at every moment, giving to each of us the best option. This is not at the conscious level but below the level of consciousness. Open theism also accepts that God always persuades each individual at the subconscious level to act according to divine general will. However, like classical theism, open theism believes that God sometimes intervenes to give specific guidance to individuals with regard to their important affairs.³⁸³ Thus open theism attempts to make a balance between process perspective and classical theism. On the issue of this relation between free will and divine foreknowledge, Bruce Ware’s insight is proper: “If you want libertarian freedom, you can’t have exhaustive definite foreknowledge; and if you want exhaustive definite foreknowledge, you can’t avoid determinism.”³⁸⁴

Prayer

How can we connect with God? Prayer is one of those ways. Considering prayer as “genuine dialogue with God,” asks Richard Foster, if everything in the universe cannot be changed but is already settled, why do we pray? Stoicism changes an open universe in

³⁸¹ Basinger, “Practical Implications,” 163.

³⁸² Basinger, “Practical Implications,” 164.

³⁸³ Basinger, “Practical Implications,” 166.

³⁸⁴ Pinnock, “Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics,” 242.

the Bible into a closed one, so that it perverts God's constantly changing mind within God's unchanging love. We have to realize that we, along with God, can change the future along with God. That is, prayer allows us to enter into a genuine dialogue with God and bring about change to the future, as it is not fixed.³⁸⁵ According to David Mason, God "hears, is affected by our importunities, and responds adequately to them."³⁸⁶

Here we can see the attitudes of two groups with regard to prayer. On the one hand, there is a perspective of "specific sovereignty" that God totally preordained and controls everything and that human decision-making and choices cannot hinder God's perfect plan. It claims that petitionary prayer is proper because God has requested us to petition him. That is, "we always freely make the exact decisions that [God] would have us make." It is impossible that God is hindered from doing something specific "because we have not requested that he do so."³⁸⁷ On the other hand, for process theists, although God bestows on all entities the best alternatives, since all entities have the power of self-choice, this perspective rejects God's unilateral intervention in the world. And since God is already and always involved in the world, process perspective asserts that petitionary prayer cannot make God more involved in the world.³⁸⁸ However, unlike God's unilateral control in classical theism, open theism insists that we can have freedom in the world, since the future is open. Unlike process theism, open theism believes both that human freedom is God's gift to us and that God has the authority and the power to occasionally intervene in our voluntary choice. How can open theists satisfy both perspectives? Open theism maintains that prayer can affect both petitioners and those who are referred to

³⁸⁵ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 35. Quote from John Sanders, "Historical Consideration," in *The Openness of God*, 97. Basinger, "Practical Implications," 156-157.

³⁸⁶ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 156.

³⁸⁷ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 156-158.

³⁸⁸ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 159.

petition, and that God can use petitionary prayer to accomplish God's goals. Since God gives us freedom, God neither forces us to perform God's will nor arbitrarily manipulates natural laws. Since God values our freedom, God does not act for us until we ask such assistance.³⁸⁹

Mutable God

In spite of the fact that God changes God's plan, there must be multiple evidences for God's predestination and God's plan which means that God will not change his mind and his intentions in the Bible. For example, "I the Lord do not change" (Malachi 3:6); says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17); "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8); "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19).³⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Richard Rice argues that these evident verses of the Bible do not show the focal point of proper understanding of divine reality in the Bible.³⁹¹ There are some examples which indicate that God changes God's mind: "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10); "Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity" (Joel 2:13). In Exodus 32:12-14, when God destroyed a stiff-necked people, Moses sought the favor of the Lord, "why should your anger burn against your people,

³⁸⁹ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 159-161.

³⁹⁰ Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *The Openness of God*, 46.

³⁹¹ Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," 15.

whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?” Moses asks again, “Turn from your fierce anger, relent and do not bring disaster on your people.” Moses begs, “Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.” Then God changes his mind: “Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.” Sodom and Gomorah (Gen.18) reveal that God sometimes changes his plans in response to human requests.³⁹²

Then, how should we interpret immutability of God? How can open theism interpret this obvious fact? Pinnock holds that immutability means “the faithfulness of God as a relational, personal being,” but the tradition considers it as “immobility and inertness” and equates faithfulness and God’s immutability. Pinnock judges this as error, since the God of the Bible is active. Whereas we can ascribe God’s immutability to God’s essence and trustworthiness, God changes, in that God experiences and learns new facts in history. Thus, God’s immutability in nature cannot be possible without God’s responsiveness in history. Nevertheless, God’s changing is “a uniquely divine kind of changeability,” and this does not mean that God changes involuntarily, as a contingent being.³⁹³ Furthermore, argues Rice, God’s repentance is not an exceptional action in God but his very nature, in that “God does not repent in spite of the fact that he is God; he repents precisely *because* he is God.”³⁹⁴ What happens to nations is not from God’s decision alone, but rather from people’s decisions on which God depends. Thus since divine judgment is not unchangeable fate, but “a call to repentance,” “God sends

³⁹² Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 29.

³⁹³ Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” 117-118.

³⁹⁴ Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 31.

predictions of judgment precisely in hopes that they will not be fulfilled.”³⁹⁵ Then in what situations will God change his mind? There are possibilities of changing God’s decision.³⁹⁶ “If that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned” (Jeremiah 18:8); on the other hand, “If it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it” (Jeremiah 18:10).

Because “the very concept of an act involves change,”³⁹⁷ the fact that God changes God’s plans, means that there is a mutual relationship between God and the world. Rice argues that this mutual relationship can be described as anthropomorphism in the Bible and that if human beings have no mutual experience in common with God, then we cannot talk about God.³⁹⁸ In this sense, God is open to other free agents and “not only directs but interacts.”³⁹⁹ Furthermore, God sometimes act by his own initiative and power and sometimes by and through the cooperation of human agents. God sometimes overcomes and sometimes uses human opposition to accomplish God’s intention, and Sometimes God is hindered by human opposition. The will of God is not an irresistible or determining force, because not only God but also other agents can decide and act.⁴⁰⁰

This idea of God’s mutability reminds of us God’s dipolarity which is both transcendent and immanent. That is, although God is sovereign, God is present everywhere in the world. Creation is “an ongoing process” and the whole world is “God’s continuous activity.” Unlike process theology, open theism asserts an asymmetrical

³⁹⁵ Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 32.

³⁹⁶ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 97.

³⁹⁷ Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 36.

³⁹⁸ Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 35. The Bible describes God as walking in the Garden of Eden and as a king, a shepherd, and a potter and ascribes to God “human body—eyes, ears, hands, an arm, a mouth, a face and even a backside.” *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁹⁹ Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” 124-125.

⁴⁰⁰ Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” 38.

relation between God and the world, maintaining “social trinitarian metaphysics (a relational ontology)” which describes God both as ontological other and as relating one to the world. Pinnock maintains God’s creation (transcendence) and God’s sustenance (immanence) through Genesis 1:1-2.⁴⁰¹ Pinnock asserts God’s dipolarity as follows: “God is high above all yet fills all things. God is unchanging yet relates to us in a changing world. God cannot be perplexed but suffers with his people. God’s power is limitless but is deployed in ways that may appear weak. God is not subject to change or decay but can relate to temporal passage. God knows everything but is still learning what the world is becoming.”⁴⁰²

Doctrine of Creation

God’s relation to the world appears concretely in creation. With regard to the origination of the universe, holds Oord, “God is the original and ongoing creator.” Here Oord endorses Nancey Murphy and George Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*. Oord supports creaturely freedom and indeterminacy, rejects *creatio ex nihilo* (instead accepts the alternative creation doctrine of Griffin and Keller), and concludes divine self-limitation (essential kenosis) which solves the problem of evil and affirms God’s persuasive creative activity at the beginning.⁴⁰³ A universe finely-tuned theory leads Murphy and Ellis to hold the “hot big bang theory of the origin of the universe.”⁴⁰⁴

Although scientists explain the origin of the universe through “the anthropic principle,”

⁴⁰¹ Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” 111-112.

⁴⁰² Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” 125.

⁴⁰³ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” in *Creation Made Free*, 30-31.

⁴⁰⁴ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 31. This big bang theory is that “our universe exploded into existence about 10 to 20 billion years ago. Within the first second after that explosion, basic physical forces and fundamental particles of matter emerged. Over time, fundamental elements of existence were drawn together by gravity and other forces. From this emerged the basic and the massive structures of existence, including nuclei, atoms, molecules, dust, rocks, planets, stars, galaxies, galaxy clusters, and superclusters.” Ibid.

which states that since life “required very specific laws and conditions in the beginning of the univers,” if there had been slight changes in these laws and conditions, there would be no life.⁴⁰⁵ However, Murphy and Ellis are aware that since the anthropic principle alone cannot explain the ultimate origin of the universe, it needs “a general theory of design” and fine-tuning theory. Furthermore, it needs “noncoercive, self-renouncing love,” namely, *kenosis*, that God and at least some creatures can love by giving themselves, suggesting that “the kenotic ethic reflects the moral character of God, and divine kenosis is the basis for creaturely kenosis.” God’s kenotic plan is already in the structures of universe itself, so that they claim that whereas the fine-tuning does not logically presuppose a designer (God), the existence of a God can properly explain fine-tuning.⁴⁰⁶

In order for the universe to make free and moral responses, the universe needs order. That is, any moral response needs “an ordered and predictable universe,” and “creatures with free will.” However, this does not explain emergence of freedom from indeterminacy. Oord relates this argument to open theology in that when creatures are not determined even at the micro-level and “freedom is present among at least humans,” open theism holds “the necessity of freedom for love.” Freedom is important in love, because love means intentional action, “in sympathetic response to others (including God), to promote overall well-being.” Thus coercion is antithetical to love. God’s action is “the revelation of God found best in Jesus,” that is, “the relevant feature of God’s action is its self-sacrificial and noncoercive character,” so that “Jesus was self-sacrificial and noncoercive.” Murphy and Ellis reject God’s intervention in the world, because God does not override creatures, but rather carefully planned system. The problem of evil asks

⁴⁰⁵ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 32. Paul Davies calls the anthropic principle “the Goldilocks factor,” since it means that our universe is “just right” for life. Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 32-33.

“why God does not occasionally intervene in the natural order by ‘overruling natural processes when greater good will come from the exception than from following the rule.’” Murphy and Ellis argue that God voluntarily limits divine power (noninterventionist) because of freedom of the creatures. Otherwise, “a free response to God’s action is not possible.” Although this entails divine risks, it is proper to open theology in that God accepts these risks in order for creatures to cooperate with the divine activity. In this sense, evil occurs through human freedom. This noncoercive action by God goes well with the freedom of the creatures for “God’s eighteen-billion-year project.”⁴⁰⁷

Paul Davies suggests six main ideas for cosmology:

1. An absolute beginning to the universe and subsequent everlasting expansion; 2. An absolute beginning to the universe followed by the termination of the universe after a period of expansion; 3. An absolute beginning to the universe, expansion to a maximum state, and a return to a state identical to the absolute beginning; 4. An everlastingly cyclic universe, in which expansion and contraction is followed by a ‘big bounce’ into another cycle of expansion and contraction; 5. A steady state universe with no beginning or end but everlasting expansion; 6. An everlasting multiverse in which our universe is one among others.⁴⁰⁸

These lists are not incompatible with the biblical notion that God is creator, although some are more compatible with big bang theory. Options one through three, which have a common ground, “an absolute beginning to the universe,” cohere with *creatio ex nihilo*.⁴⁰⁹ Polkinghorne also argues that the world is “the consequence of a free act of divine decision,” since “the divine will alone is the source of created being.”⁴¹⁰ Jon D. Levenson argues that the main concern of creation theology is not *creatio ex nihilo* but

⁴⁰⁷ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 34-36.

⁴⁰⁸ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 37.

⁴⁰⁹ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 37-38. Option five is contradictory to big bang cosmology, because it rejects a beginning to the universe. Ibid., 37.

⁴¹⁰ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 38.

the “establishment of a benevolent and life-sustaining order.” Levenson explains the essence of creation with the word, “mastery,” thereby “God is the victor in combat, but God’s foes continue to survive.”⁴¹¹

Suggesting an alternative with regard to creation, love, and evil, Oord denies *creatio ex nihilo*, because while it requires God’s power and sovereignty to create the world from nothing, it cannot explain genuine evil in the world. In order to explicate an adequate view of the origin of the universe, Oord needs “divine power that accounts both for the big bang and for why our loving God does not prevent the occurrence of genuine evil.” Oord finds a clue from Griffin and Catherine Keller. God loves perfectly and created the universe, asserts Griffin, not in the sense of *creatio ex nihilo*, because if God created the cosmos from nothing, God could also prevent any evil. However, because there is evil in the world, God does not have such a kind of power. And *creatio ex nihilo* denies the cosmos’ own power. Insofar as we insist on *creatio ex nihilo*, we cannot explain the origin of evil.⁴¹² Instead, Griffin suggests creation “from the relative chaos” (chaosmos) of a previous universe: from a chaotic state to very low-grade serially-ordered societies to more complex societies. With regard to divine power, God cannot unilaterally contravene the freedom and creativity of the creatures even in creation, because God is not coercive, but God’s power is always and necessarily persuasive. Thus the necessity of God entails the necessity of a world.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 40. Theophilus of Antioch was the first Christian theologian to use the terminology, *creatio ex nihilo*. Irenaeus solidified it in the church. It fit well with the Neo-platonic doctrine of God who is “eternal, self-sufficient, simple, impassible, omnipotent, immutable,” and the omni-sovereignty. However, Oord holds that Open theism is against the Neo-platonic perspective of God. Ibid., 40-41.

⁴¹² Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 41.

⁴¹³ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 42-43.

Keller also denies *creatio ex nihilo* and suggests “a tehomic theology of *creatio ex profundis*,”⁴¹⁴ that is, “the Genesis motif of God creating from the watery depths.” God is “an indeterminate creativity,” which is “never before or outside time and space,” but always relates to others including creaturely suffering. *Creatio ex chaosmos* does not mean that chaos is essentially evil, but instead that the chaosmic other relates to God and chaos is not prevenient, but is created. There is interaction between God and the *tehom*, which is called to be *creatio cooperationis*. Creativity is “the active potentiality for both good and evil.” Keller considers Genesis 1 as “seven days of self-organization,” which is not *creatio ex nihilo* but “emergence as creation from the chaos of prevenient conditions.” However, self-organization needs divine influence or cooperation. Since this God is described as divine love, “to love is to bear with the chaos.”⁴¹⁵

With regard to Davies’ lists above, while Griffin and Keller deny options one through three, “an absolute beginning to the universe,” their ideas are compatible with option four, “an everlastingly cyclic universe,” since God always and necessarily relates to the universe. Oord relates this option four to open theism’s claim that God is creator. However, it does not mean “a Nietzschean eternal repetition of the exact same” in a closed circle, but a model in which the most basic metaphysical characters are transmitted from one universe to a following one. This model entails “the emergence of genuine novelty while maintaining metaphysical continuity.” To that extent, then, Oord affirms a cyclic model which denies both “an absolute beginning from absolutely nothing” and

⁴¹⁴ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 44. The word “tehomic” is from *tehom* (the deep). *Profundis* means the chaos. Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 44-45.

Nietzschean eternal recurrence of the same, since a universe which repeats endlessly does not offer “purposive, proanthropic, and hopeful” transformation.⁴¹⁶

Attempting to solve the problem of evil with a doctrine of “essential *kenosis*,” Oord does not follow the concepts of divine power in process theology, since it makes God overly limited. Essential kenosis affirms both that God is not coercive, in agreement with process theology, and that God is the most powerful being, against process theology. Oord indicates the notion of kenosis that Murphy, Ellis, and Polkinghorne suggest, since their kenosis means a voluntarily self-limited God and thereby makes God unable to prevent genuine evils. Thus a voluntarily self-limited God should logically become “un-self-limited, in the name of love, to prevent the suffering and pain.” It does not make sense to insist on God’s self-limitation from preventing evil in order to keep the freedom of the creatures, since insofar as there is evil in the world, a voluntarily self-limited God is culpable and not a perfectly loving God.⁴¹⁷ Essential kenosis means God’s inability to stop the freedom of creatures not because of external conditions but because of “God’s essence of relational love,” so that this God of essential kenosis should not be criticized for failing to stop evil. Essential kenosis means God’s self-giving love. God has been providing freedom to creatures forever, since there was no beginning and will be no end. That is, God can love necessarily both within Trinity and the world. The God of essential kenosis is the almighty God who is expressed in resurrecting Jesus, in biblical miracles, and nonviolent eschatology. Thus Oord’s essential kenosis can be summarized as follows: 1) God does not depend upon creatures to exist; 2) God is not limited by external

⁴¹⁶ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 45-48.

⁴¹⁷ Oord, “An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation,” 49-50.

forces; 3) God's essence as self-giving love makes God unable to stop evil.⁴¹⁸

Furthermore, Oord relates this kenosis to God as the "ideal contributor" who empowers and inspires creatures and who gives "the gift that creatures need to live, love, and have their being," so that "all creatures feel God's oscillating and diverse, yet direct, causal call." Oord calls divine action "prevenient grace" or "cooperation-empowering grace" and Randy Maddox calls it "response-able grace."⁴¹⁹

Evaluation of Open Theism and Responses

Open theists want to position themselves intermediately between classical theism and process theism. Pinnock asserts that the opennees of God emphasizes "generosity, sensitivity and vulnerability more than power and control." God is in history and rejoices when creatures are happy and suffers when creatures suffer, always responding to events. God is the author of history, not vice versa.⁴²⁰ Open theism accepts crucial points from both process theism and classical theism. Like process theism, open theism accepts that God always persuades individuals, and like classical theism, open theism accepts that God sometimes intervenes in individual's affairs.⁴²¹ However, open theism has been criticized by both classical theism and process theology. On the one hand, classical theism criticizes open theism because it is "a process wolf in evangelical sheep's clothing,"⁴²² or "a thinly disguised version of process theology." Thus classical theism criticizes open theists when they deny God's ultimate power, ignore the biblical teaching, and diminish God's glory, so that open theism is, to classical theism, heresy as Neo-

⁴¹⁸ Oord, "An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation," 50-52.

⁴¹⁹ Thomas Oord, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 208-209.

⁴²⁰ Pinnock, "Systematic Theology," 125.

⁴²¹ Basinger, "Practical Implications," 166.

⁴²² Cooper, *Panentheism*, 191.

theism.⁴²³ Open theists hold, however, that they share some important issues with classical theism: “the immanent Trinity; the God-world distinction; God’s actions in history; the goodness, unchangeableness, omnipotence, and omniscience of God; and the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”⁴²⁴ On the other hand, another criticism of open theism occurs from process theology. David Griffin rejects free-will theism’s assertions of God’s possibility without a world, God’s power, *creatio ex nihilo*, God’s voluntary interaction with creatures, and God’s necessary love within the Trinity and contingent love for the world.⁴²⁵ Griffin thus considers open theism as “classical free-will theism,” inasmuch as “it is much closer to Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin than to process thought.”⁴²⁶ Thus Open theism is not in the family of process theology.⁴²⁷

Pinnock summarizes thirteen critical points as follows. The first is from theological determinists such as Calvinists, conservative Presbyterian, or evangelicals. Theological determinists reject the ideas that: God takes risks; God’s will is intervened; prayer affects God’s actions; and God and world are in interaction. The second point is from classical free will theists who assert that God is a-temporal and God’s foreknowledge is exhaustive and definite. Simple foreknowledge does not make sense, in that the future is not actualized, since creatures have libertarian freedom. Third is that open theists are process theists. Although open theists agree with divine present

⁴²³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 190.

⁴²⁴ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 190.

⁴²⁵ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 192. Their commonalities produce a work. John Cobb and Clark H. Pinnock, editors *Searching for an Adequate God: A Dialogue Between Process and Free Will Theists* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 10-14. On contrast, Clayton accepts *creatio ex nihilo* and voluntary interactive with the world.

⁴²⁶ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 192. Griffin’s other lists are: that “God can exercise full power of determination over the actions of creatures if he so chooses... that God can and has intervened supernaturally in his normal providence of the universe... that God’s love is necessary internally (within the Trinity) but only contingent externally (for the world that he has chosen to create)... that God will inevitably triumph over evil... Both are forms of classical theism, in that both hold that all power essentially belongs to God, so that God could, if God so chose, create a world in which all events are determined by God. [Griffin] agrees that open theism departs from classical theism in holding that God has chosen to grant freedom to creatures.” Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 192.

knowledge and God's suffering, process theists do not consider them as process theologians. The fourth point raised is God's present knowledge; open theists question how God created genuinely dynamic and historical agents if God has foreknowledge. The fifth point relates to God's reduction to human level because of present knowledge. However, open theists claim that "God knows certainties as certain" (what will occur) and "contingencies as contingent" (what might or might not occur). Thus the God of open theism knows more than the God of classical theism (determinists). Sixth is about libertarian freedom. However, open theists assert that libertarian freedom should be universally presupposed in practice since, if everything is determined, we cannot ask moral responsibility. Seventh is about sovereignty, that is, exhaustive or meticulous control. Open theists use general sovereignty. Eighth is about God's temporal dimension. Open theists think that God is in history and time. Ninth is open theism's literal bible interpretation. Open theists interpret all text seriously and reject differentiated interpretation among some texts. Tenth is about predictive prophecies. If God has only present knowledge, how could God predict? God knows everything that could possibly happen in the future. Eleventh is from process theologians who complain that open theists assert the possibility of God's intervention in history. Twelveth is about God's detailed guidance; open theism says that if God has foreknowledge, everything is determined. Thirteenth is God's reason for all things, regarding which open theists argue that if God has a reason for all terrible things such as Auschwitz, it is appalling. Rather, they say our lives can change the world.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Pinnock, "Open Theism: An Answer to My Critics," 241-244.

Chapter V: Affinities and Differences between These Philosophical Theologies

In chapter five, we can see affinities and differences between Bracken, Clayton, and open theists. That is, they could be conversations among the process theology, panentheism, and open theism.

Pursuit of a Third Way

This dissertation will explore philosophical theologies that are located conceptually between classical theism and process theism. However, we have to say that ‘pure’ or ‘orthodox’ views of these two aspects must be modified, since it is as true to say that if, because the God of classical theism was too much slanted to the transcendent God, this God is not proper, as that because the God of process theology was too much slanted to the immanent God, this God is nor proper. Thus we need to find a third way. Although an attempt to harmonize between classical theology and process theology often “draws the ire of both sides,”⁴²⁹ we have to say that both the conception of God of classical theism and the conception of God of process theology must be reinterpreted. Given this common interest, they can meet at an “Omega point” as panentheism or under the panentheistic umbrella. Analogically speaking, in driving a car, accelerator, foot, and brake are important. The right foot controls both accelerator and brake in keeping the proper speed. Likewise, panentheism plays an important role as a foot in keeping a balance between process theology as an accelerator and classical theism as a brake and vice versa. In this dissertation, I will explain how panentheism harmously can achieve this task.

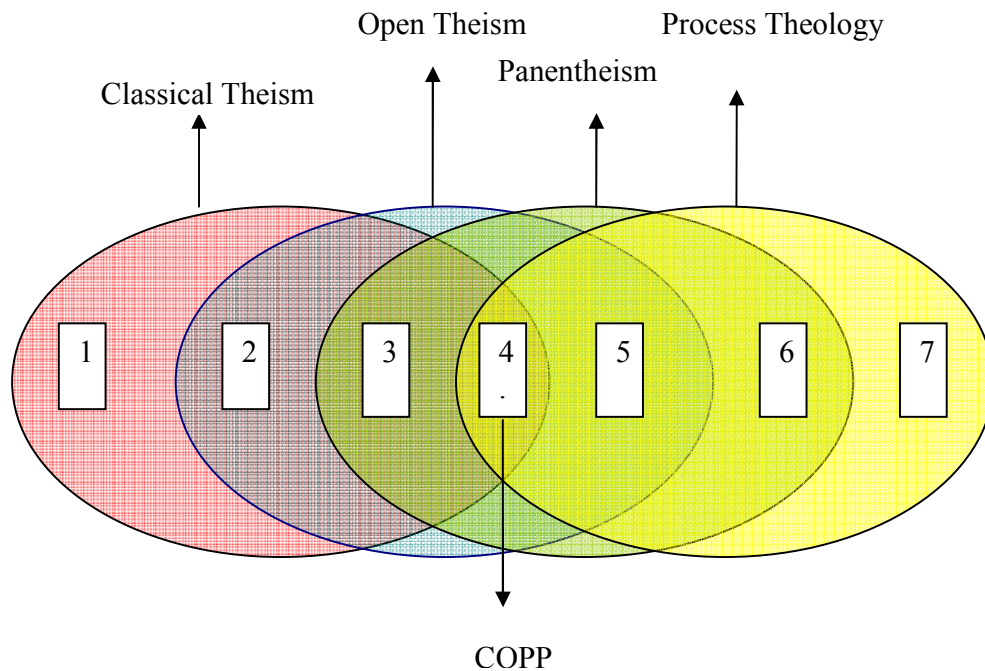
⁴²⁹ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” 250.

Honestly speaking, to choose just one position is comfortable, but if the road is not the way, we have to go through an intersection between them: panentheistic way.⁴³⁰ Just as we cannot easily see something when sunshine is much too bright and darkness is much too deep, so extremism does not open our eyes to see or to our minds to grasp. This is the place where classical theism, open theism, panentheism, and process theology are intermingled. These intertwined areas are not a calm place but the most noisy and uncomfortable but, nonetheless, dynamic one. Just as strong winds in the environment at the timberline make timbers strong, so these multilayered places strengthen theology. Just as contemporary theology is problematic when it neglects challenges of classical theology as if there were no classical theology which had gone before, so classical theology is also problematic when it neglects questions of contemporary theology, as if theology had stopped after classical theology. If classical theism's God is a kind of irrelational God, we have to caricature process theology's God as a hostage of the world, since the followers of process theology cannot imagine God without the world. How can we accept such a God as God? Furthermore, in a sense, just as God in classical theism is far away from the compassionate God, so, *ironically*, in process theology God is not sympathetic but very passive, even in the face of a suffering world (I will develop this argument in the section on Divine Action).

If I draw the relationships among classical theism, open theism, panentheism, and process theology as a picture, it will be as follows:

⁴³⁰ This reminds me of the Big Dipper which is grouping of seven stars in the northern constellation. When we see the Big Dipper, we cannot see easily the fourth star. So we need to see around other places in order to see the fourth one. The fourth one is that which seems to exist or non-exist, but an existing star which bridges or connects three stars of both sides like a stepping stone.

Figure 1: They have a kind of family-resemblance in fellowship.



I would like to investigate the characters of these inter-mingled areas:

1. C: Classical Theism alone
2. CO: Classical theism + Open theism
3. COP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism
4. COPP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism + Process theology
5. OPP: Open theism + Panentheism + Process Theology
6. PP: Panentheism + Process Theology
7. P: Process Theology alone.

Even though there must be nets (like a tennis court) or border lines between them, such lines are not only for blocking in order to keep their respective identities, but also for good communication with each other. Good communication is possible only if there is *ruach*, or wind of spirit, “a vitalizing force,” “life-giving reality.”⁴³¹ There is an old proverb 樹欲靜而風不止 (*su-yok-jeong-yi-pung-bu-ji*) which means “tree wants to be calm, but wind does not stop.” The tree cannot exist without the wind. If there is tree,

⁴³¹ John Shelby Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 60.

there is wind. Likewise, even though theology just wants to be still, human history changes in every new context and new age, and theology also cannot ignore the wind. By the same token, theology needs the creativity of the world: “The creativity of the world is the throbbing emotion of the past hurling itself into a new transcendent fact. It is the flying dart, of which Lucretius speaks, hurled beyond the bounds of the world.”⁴³² We need to wake up, with classical theism, those who are sleeping.

Admittedly, each part needs reasonable interrelationship or debates and these border lines are the creative place where new thoughts arise, although there must be tensions in the interstices, i.e., harmony or disharmony.⁴³³ Numbers 1 and 7 in this figure, on the one hand, directly do not have a deep connection to each other, but they have the family resemblance or perichoresis through 2 and 6. Thus each individual perspective of theism has some characters of the other three theisms in its own domain. On the other hand, number 4 is the place where four different characters of their respective theisms are combined. That is, the area of number 4 is a very complicated and confusing, but the most free place, since the Spirit of God is hovering over the place (Genesis 1:2) and since “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17). Now, I’ll explore

⁴³² Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 177.

⁴³³ Analogically speaking, car horn sounds do not always bother all, although most people do not like them; street sellers like those sounds which call to them and almost reflexively turn their faces toward such sounds. It is a very narrow perspective to consider that others also dislike the sound (theology) which I dislike. The vision of peace of Isaiah 11 shows us the vision of co-existence of different kinds of theology. The wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the goat, the calf and the lion, the cow and the bear live together. Is it possible to live like that if they are as they were? Is it possible for the lion to eat straw like the ox? Is it possible for the cobra not to bite the infant? The Bible tells us that it is possible, insofar as “[t]he Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2). It is possible for them to live together when they are interchanged. Classical theism and Open theism, Classical theism and panentheism, Classical theism and process theism, Open theism and Panentheism, Open theism and Process Theology, and Panentheism and Process theology can live together insofar as the spirit of the LORD rests on them. At that time, “panentheistic vision” will be accomplished: “They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). I have to say that it is impossible to exactly divide differences between classical theism and process theism, inasmuch as they obviously share one another’s perspectives in some parts. Nevertheless, I roughly divide two groups in order to develop my argument.

affinities and differences between those perspectives and the concrete theological form of COPP will be explained in the form of Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology (TPT).

A. Affinities

Roughly speaking, we can see simple affinities between these theisms as follows:

2. CO: Classical theism + Open theism: The Bible, God's power
3. COP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism: God's grace
4. COPP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism + Process theology: Theism
5. OPP: Open theism + Panentheism + Process Theology: Relational Theology
6. PP: Panentheism + Process Theology: Relational Theology

Focusing on number 5, here, I'll find affinities. This can be divided into three parts: Open theism and panentheism; Open theism and process theism; and panentheism and process theism.

First, open theism and Clayton (open panentheism): Open panentheism has a deep affinity with open theism in that both affirm *creatio ex nihilo* and free self-limitation of God.⁴³⁴ They are intertwined in order to complete the grand panorama of relational thought, so that we may not sharply make a distinction between both of them. 1) *Creatio ex Nihilo*: Although Thomas Oord, who is one of the open theists, rejects *creatio ex nihilo*, most open theists accept it. Arguably, in contrast, although many panentheists do not accept *creation ex nihilo*, Clayton assumes this doctrine, arguing that God creates "space within the divine life for other centers of activity or selves." Like God, insofar as these selves are centers of activity, creation is *imago Dei*. Humans are the representative of *imago Dei*, since they are conscious of our relation. And since our existence is

⁴³⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 184.

contingent and we “might not have existed,” our creation is “a sign of God’s grace.”⁴³⁵

Here, open theists and Clayton are mingled with each other. 2) Self-limitation: Insofar as each emphasizes mutual relations between God and the world, as Cooper illuminates, panentheistic elements are in open theism. Open theism proposes “voluntary panentheism,” which denies the world’s necessity for God, but rather means that “God has freely chosen to involve the world panentheistically.” Insofar as “being in God” means not the world’s essential part of God but the interrelation between God and creatures, creatures become “part of God’s life.” If open theism affirms a relational ontology, it could be panentheistic.⁴³⁶ In this sense, Clayton and open theism have family resemblance.

Second, open theism and process theism: Pinnock makes a list of common points which 1) “make the love of God a priority”; 2) “hold to libertarian human freedom”; 3) “are critical of conventional theism”; 4) “seek a more dynamic model of God”; 5) “contend God has real, not merely rational, relationships with the world”; 6) “believe God is affected by what happens in the world”; 7) “say God knows what can be known, which does not amount to exhaustive foreknowledge”; 8) “appreciate the value of philosophy in helping to shape theological convictions”; 9) “connect positively to Wesleyan/ Arminian traditions.”⁴³⁷

In point number 1), love of God is the central theme in both. God is love filled with compassion and suffers when the world suffers. Point 3): Open theism and process

⁴³⁵ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” 253. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 157. Clayton’s Barthian element: creation by God’s grace. Jüngel as an open theist also maintains that “God, then, is first encountered where he allows himself to be experienced as the one who gives. That is precisely what I call revelation.” Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 17. footnotes (God’s grace- “God’s being is in becoming, last sentence: why there is something rather than nothing? God’s grace.

⁴³⁶ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 192, 344.

⁴³⁷ Thomas Jay Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2010), 90.

theology both criticize “classical substantive metaphysics,” that is, the conception of God as an absolute being who is not affected by the world, since both open theism and process theology maintain “a dynamic understanding of the world and God’s interactive relations with it.” Point number 7): The future is open and even change belongs to the divine perfection, because there is the reality of libertarian freedom and thereby the reality of genuine evils.⁴³⁸ Thus, divine perfection “violates both the active and the responsive dimensions of the divine love.”⁴³⁹ Point 8): Pinnock asserts that both process theists and open theists value natural theology which contributes to the Christian faith and message. Cobb argues that since open theists are open to philosophical reflection and since process theists are also interested in biblical discussion, they become discussion partners.⁴⁴⁰ Points 2, 4, 5, and 6): God-world relationship consists in “a succession of concrete experiences,” God’s ongoing experience of the world, so that they both keep a dipolar theism: God as both absolute and relative, eternal and temporal, changeless and changing—“the essential divine character and the concrete divine experience”⁴⁴¹ or “human self-determination, and divine persuasion.”⁴⁴² Based on these affinities, we think that both theisms reduce “mutual suspicion” and increase “closer ecumenical relations.”⁴⁴³ Point number 9): Insofar as both theisms emphasize human freedom, they are nearer to Wesleyan/Arminian traditions rather than Calvinist tradition.

Third, we look at panentheism and process theism. Clayton is not orthodox Whiteheadian. If we accept that there are no orthodoxy process thinkers, as according to Whitehead’s philosophical system, since “orthodox Whiteheadianism” is an oxymoron

⁴³⁸ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 191. Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, ix-x.

⁴³⁹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 11.

⁴⁴⁰ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, ix, xiii.

⁴⁴¹ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 191.

⁴⁴² Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, ix.

⁴⁴³ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, xiv.

and, as Neville argues, “Whitehead’s exact doctrine of God ‘cannot be sustained in critical scrutiny.’”⁴⁴⁴ Clayton can be called a kind of modified process theologian.

Nonetheless, both panentheism and process theism emphasize mutual relation and mutual dependence between God and the world, realize God’s limitation in action and knowledge, and agree on a rigorous understanding of divine action.⁴⁴⁵

Fourth, open theism, panentheism, and (modified) process theism: 1) although all three criticize both classical theism and process theism, they never neglect the sources of traditional theism and the main idea of process theology, but reinterpret and accept them. Each offers a third way between process theology and classical theism, although there must be the differences of degree. Whereas Clayton could be an open theist in that he insists in the self-limitation of God, he also could be a process theist in that he holds God’s mutual relation to the world. Clayton even could have some relationship with classical theism in that he also emphasizes divine grace. In the sense, Clayton, as an open panentheist, attempts to bind process and open theists. 2) Each theology is motivated by a stress on “divine love”⁴⁴⁶ for the world, although there are differences in the relation between love and freedom. This divine love can be expressed as divine grace.

B. Differences

Roughly speaking, we can outline the range of possible differences between these theisms as follows:

2. CO: Classical theism + Open theism: God’s divine action
3. COP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism: Mutual Dependence
4. COPP: Classical theism + Open theism + Panentheism + Process theology:

⁴⁴⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 159.

⁴⁴⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 175.

⁴⁴⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 182.

5. OPP: Open theism + Panentheism + Process Theology:
6. PP: Panentheism + Process Theology: self-limitation and metaphysical limitation in God

Focusing on number 5, here, I'll find differences. This can be divided into three parts: open theism and panentheism; open theism and process theism; and panentheism and process theism.

First, open theism and Clayton (panentheism): We can easily find more affinities more than differences between open theism and panentheism. Clayton mediates between the open theism and process theology. Clayton urges open theism to accept the God-world relation which process thought teaches: "created co-creators with God (Philip Hefner)."⁴⁴⁷ It is very interesting that Oord, as an open theist, does not accept either *creatio ex nihilo* or voluntary self-limitation, both of which Clayton, as a panentheist, accepts. In this sense, since Oord is closer to process theology than Clayton, we should not simply draw a demarcation line but rather see multilayered dimensions between them.

Second, open theism and process theism: Open theism is commonly called "free will theism," but Griffin calls it "classical free will theism," because process theology is also a form of free will theism and, accordingly, Griffin wants to point out a difference between them which he names "hybrid free will theism," since it does not fully consider freedom inherent in the world. Another name is the "openness view" or the "open view of God," both of which mean that the future is open to God and God is open to the world. However, Griffin argues that open theism is a kind of classical theism, because it asserts God's essential power.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ Clayton, "Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism," 252.

⁴⁴⁸ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 7-8.

1) Whereas open theism relies on and dialogues with biblical-historical Christianity or evangelical/fundamentalist groups, who value natural theology and assert that Scripture is fundamental, although they are aware that “no simple Biblicism is possible,”⁴⁴⁹ process theology is based on a natural theology (philosophy) and dialogues with the liberal theologies and with contemporary scientific and historical knowledge even beyond Christianity.⁴⁵⁰ 2) Although both open theism and process theism are engaged in metaphysics, process theology too relies on it, so that open theism worries about “the health of religion.” Whereas for open theists God alone is the ultimate metaphysical fact, for process theology both God and the world are ultimate.⁴⁵¹ Griffin summarizes nine “generic ideas of God” in biblically based religions; God is: (1) alone worthy of ultimate devotion and commitment; (2) the supreme power in reality; (3) the creator of our universe; (4) providentially active in nature and human history; (5) a personal, purposive being; (6) perfectly good and loving; (7) the ultimate source of norms; (8) the ultimate guarantee of the meaning of life; (9) the trustworthy ground of hope for the ultimate victory of good over evil.⁴⁵² Process theism and open theism involve these nine ideas, but their interpretations are different, especially in 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9.

3) With regard to point 2, “the supreme power in reality,” whereas process theology affirms that God is not all-powerful in a literal meaning, open theism asserts that God has the power to control everything.⁴⁵³ Whereas for open theism God can still sometimes control or intervene in everything, although God depends on the creatures’

⁴⁴⁹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 10.

⁴⁵⁰ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, ix, xiii.

⁴⁵¹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, x.

⁴⁵² Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 11.

⁴⁵³ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 11-12.

cooperation by God's persuasive power, process theology affirms only God's persuasive power. Accordingly, whereas open theists maintain that "we must not 'reduce God's power to persuasion,'" ⁴⁵⁴ process theists ask, if God can non-persuasively intervene, why does God not stop evil? ⁴⁵⁵ Clark Williamson asks how God "remains gloriously free" to intervene in the presence of burning children. Could we say this, maintaining love as "the primary perfection of God?" Although open theism does not argue that evil, like classical theism, is "for the greatest possible good," it asserts that God "permits particular evils," while having the power to stop them. However, can we really assert this "in the presence of the parents of burning children?" ⁴⁵⁶

4) With regard to point 3, "the creator of our universe," whereas open theism asserts God's free and sovereign love, although there is another perspective in open theism, process theology affirms the world's necessity for God. That is, open theists reject both God's non-existence without the world and God's creation in necessity, because such concepts of God in process theology deprive God of freedom, of divine initiatives, and of sovereign love, so that process theology makes God passive; this is a different God from the dynamic God in the Bible. ⁴⁵⁷ Open theism affirms that *creatio ex nihilo* is possible, although some open theists do not, because "God is 'an agent unlimited by metaphysical necessities beyond his control'" and, accordingly, God freely acts upon the world. ⁴⁵⁸ However, process theology argues that if God's love for the world is voluntary, the world's affection for God is not necessary. Thus "God could not *not* love

⁴⁵⁴ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 15.

⁴⁵⁵ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, xi.

⁴⁵⁶ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 15-16.

⁴⁵⁷ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, x-xi.

⁴⁵⁸ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 15.

the world.”⁴⁵⁹ In the sense, Cobb argues that whereas process theists argue that God’s act is not different from the divine nature, open theists believe that God’s will is free from the divine nature.⁴⁶⁰

5) With regard to point 4, “providentially active in nature and human history,” whereas process theology holds that God influences every individual event (every occasion of experience), and denies God’s interruption of the world’s normal causal sequences, open theism asserts that God can and does in two ways, i.e., unilaterally and interactively,⁴⁶¹ “intervene in the world, interrupting (if need be) the normal causal sequences.”⁴⁶²

6) With regard to point 5, “a personal, purposive being,” both views hold that God is a personal, purposive being in relation to the world. However, a difference between them rests on whether or not God is essentially personal in responding to the world. While process theology says “yes,” because God is always interrelating to the world, open theism says “no,” because “God’s openness to the world is freely chosen.”⁴⁶³ Whereas insofar as open theism accepts the ontological difference between God and the world, the relationship is asymmetrical, insofar as process theology does not affirm ontological difference, but rather a mutual transcendence, the relationship is symmetrical.⁴⁶⁴

7) With regard to point 6, “perfectly good and loving,” both views accept God’s moral perfection and love as divine essence. However, a difference between them arises on the question as to whether it is divine essence to love the world (process theology) or

⁴⁵⁹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 17.

⁴⁶⁰ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, xi, xiii.

⁴⁶¹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 21.

⁴⁶² Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 13.

⁴⁶³ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 13.

⁴⁶⁴ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 191.

God's love for the world is only by a voluntary decision.⁴⁶⁵ Process theology regards God's voluntary love as "a threat to this good news."⁴⁶⁶ With regard to point 9, "the trustworthy ground of hope for the ultimate victory of good over evil," process theology holds that victory of good over evil is possible by God's persuasive power, while open theism believes that God has all-controlling power by the "full display of God's sovereignty."⁴⁶⁷

Third, panentheism and process theism: Clayton attempts a connection between process and orthodox thought through *panentheism* as a "peacemaker" of mediation. Whereas Clayton preserves the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and Trinitarian models of God, but gives up "the aseity and immutability of God: the understanding of God as self-sufficient and unchanging"⁴⁶⁸ from classical theism, he accepts the supremely related God from the process theology. By supporting the former, Clayton maintains that the world has not always existed, since "the world is not co-eternal with God." It means that since God created the world by free divine decisions, there is a "radical contingency of ourselves, of our world, and of the existence of any world at all."⁴⁶⁹ Regarding Clayton's perspective, some process thinkers ask: if God is intrinsically love and relational, how was there a time when the world did not exist as the necessary expression of the divine love and relation? That is, there must always have been a world as long as there was God. The traditional response of process theology to this question is that God is always internally related within the divine community. However, Clayton argues that this response is not sufficient because God's love should be expressed to agents in the world:

⁴⁶⁵ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 13-14.

⁴⁶⁶ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 18.

⁴⁶⁷ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 14.

⁴⁶⁸ Clayton, "Kenotic Trinitrian Panentheism," 253.

⁴⁶⁹ Clayton, "Kenotic Trinitrian Panentheism," 251.

“finite in comparison with the divine infinity, and morally limited in contrast to the One who is essentially good.”⁴⁷⁰ Clayton’s response to process theology is that process thought, which argues God’s metaphysical requirement to create, ironically “decrease(s) the free responsiveness and relatedness,” because human free response in necessity does not make sense.⁴⁷¹

There are three improper responses to the process objection: 1) Augustine’s response: since time before creation cannot be counted, God is always with creatures after creation. However, it is possible conceptually to make a distinction between two stages; 2) God existed as potentiality before creation and as actuality after creation. How can God create the world, if God existed as potentiality?; 3) The important thing is not whether a world actually exists or not, but whether this divine love was eternally expressed in the inner-trinitarian relations. However, how do we know that love was actually expressed? God is already internally related to others, although they are essentially different from God.⁴⁷² Then, Clayton suggests kenotic trinitarian panentheism, which has affinity with open theists, especially Joseph Bracken, and process resources, as the mediating position. For Bracken, God has existed forever as a “trinitarian field of forces” and freely chose to share divine communitarian life with creatures, so that God created finite beings. More so than Bracken, Clayton emphasizes that these “created centers of activity” differ from God in their essential nature: “we are finite, not infinite; we exist contingently, not in all possible worlds; we place our own limited interests above the divine or highest interests, in contrast to the One who is perfectly good by nature (*ens perfectissimum*).” There is a connection between Clayton and Bracken in

⁴⁷⁰ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” 251.

⁴⁷¹ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” 253.

⁴⁷² Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitarian Panentheism,” 251.

that both affirm that God can create creatures within the divine presence. Here we find a connection between panentheism and trinitarian thought. Creation itself is “a kenotic, relational act,” since God freely and voluntarily limits God’s power in order to make allowance for the existence of creatures. To that extent, then, this self-limitation is a self-emptying (*kenosis*).⁴⁷³ Nonetheless, there are differences of emphasis between Bracken and Clayton. Whereas Clayton emphasizes the difference between finite and infinite, Bracken stresses common metaphysical principles between them.⁴⁷⁴ Clayton questions whether Bracken really solves philosophical theology’s most difficult task: “to conceive God as ‘a non-dual reality,’ both ‘universal ground of being and a personal being at the same time.’”⁴⁷⁵

While process thought maintains that although God is the “all encompassing field of activity,” and “the Chief Exemplification” of all other agents, like open theists, Clayton emphasizes ontological difference, or disanalogy, between human agents and divine agents. Whereas God has “ontological self-sufficiency” in internally related divine nature, human beings are radically contingent, since there is no reason for God to have made the world. That is, whereas the divine nature is pre-given, we are thrown into the world. Even Whitehead explains the difference, in that although consequent nature changes, the primordial nature does not change over time.⁴⁷⁶

Fourth, Open theism, panentheism, and (modified) process theism: 1) unlike process theology, the triune God in both open theism and panentheism does not

⁴⁷³ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitrian Panentheism,” 252.

⁴⁷⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 182.

⁴⁷⁵ Joseph Bracken, *The One in the Many* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), xi.

⁴⁷⁶ Clayton, “Kenotic Trinitrian Panentheism,” 253-254. In fact, almost no process theologian affirms “a full identity” between God and the world. *Ibid.*

necessarily need the world.⁴⁷⁷ This is the one point that is shared between open theism and Clayton but differs from process thought. That is, process theology denies “ontological independence” of God.⁴⁷⁸ In a sense *creatio ex nihilo* and free self-limitation of God may be the “final stumbling block” between open panentheism and process theology.⁴⁷⁹ Process theology wonders: Is the notion of creation “out of nothing” coherent; is the notion of “a self-limiting God” coherent; and is it able to answer to problem of evil?⁴⁸⁰

In conclusion, although there must be differences between them, those are differences within the family resemblance which connects classical theism and process theology. Since differences can expand assertions into “a larger sense of the truth,” argues Pinnock, we should not exclude but embrace the other by “a hermeneutic of charity.”⁴⁸¹

C. Weakness and Strength in Each View

With regard to weakness, first, Bracken defends the ontologically mutual independence of God and the world. This entails mutual transcendence between God and the world in process thought. However, if we accept the definition of panentheism, that although God is in the world, God is more than the world, how can we say *Deus semper major* (God is always more) in this mutual transcendence of God and the world? Second, I greatly respect Clayton’s panentheism, but I retain a certain reserve with regard to his panentheistic analogy. Clayton suggests a mind-body analogy in explaining the God-

⁴⁷⁷ Pinnock, *The Openness of God*, 108.

⁴⁷⁸ Pinnock, *The Openness of God*, 112.

⁴⁷⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 184.

⁴⁸⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 179.

⁴⁸¹ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, xii.

world relationship. This analogy shows us the intimate relation between God (mind) and the world (body). However, a weakness of this analogy may be that, just as, if there were no body, there would be no mind, so if there were no world, there would be no God. However, that conclusion would be contradictory to Clayton's central argument, i.e., the world is not a necessity to God. And I regret not to find Clayton's name in the section of passibility among panentheism's characters which Brierley introduces.⁴⁸² Third, open theism has been criticized by both classical theism and process theology. Classical theism criticizes open theism because it denies God's ultimate power, ignores the biblical teaching, and diminishes God's glory, so that it considers open theism as heresy.⁴⁸³ Another criticism of open theism comes from process theology. Griffin rejects free-will theism's assertions, i.e., God's existence without the world, God's creation of the world by choice from *ex nihilo*, and God's voluntary interaction with creatures.⁴⁸⁴

With regard to strength in each view, first, from this standpoint the strength for Bracken is that although he is a neo-process theologian, he does not neglect traditions of classical theism, especially the Trinity, emphasizing that we need to listen to the voice of traditional theism. Second, the strength for Clayton is that although he is panentheist, he also strongly accepts traditional concepts such as *creatio ex nihilo* and God's grace. The expression "unusual," which Cooper uses of Clayton's panentheism, in that it does not even entail necessity of the world, speaks of Clayton's unique position in panentheistic tradition. Third, the strength in open theism is that since open theism is derived from

⁴⁸² Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 11. Brierley introduces people who insist divine suffering such as "Fiddes, Griffin, Hartshorne, Macquarrie, McDaniel, McFague, Moltmann, Pailin, Peacocke, and Pitenger." Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 190.

⁴⁸⁴ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 192.

evangelical movement, it can make a connection between process theology and evangelism.

Chapter VI: Constructive Theological Proposal toward a Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology

Before going more deeply into TPT model, in chapter six, we need to recognize the emergence of panentheism, the key concepts of panentheism, typologies and analogies of panentheism in general, and the relationship between panentheism and Trinity.

A. Emergence of Panentheism as a Form of Philosophical Theology beyond Classical Theism

Classical Theism: The Final Answer?

A main problem of the concept of God in classical theism is the understanding of the relationship between God and the world. Since the world is located outside God as a necessary substance and one entity cannot exist in another entity, if God exerts influence on the world, God has to intervene in the world from outside.⁴⁸⁵ There are many kinds of attempts to overcome this awkward God-world relation.⁴⁸⁶ As a reformed Christian classical theist, Cooper introduces some perspectives in any forms against the classical theism such as modified classical theism, Christian panentheism, and non-Christian panentheism. First, modified (revised) classical theism, which is called “open or free-will theism,” accepts “God’s participation in time” in its theology, because God is still creating the world. However, this position is not different from the doctrine of classical theism, since the view that “God temporally foreknows, foreordains, and concurs with (‘runs with’) everything in his plan for the world” is consistent with God’s providence of a traditional classical theism, unless it suggests that “God is *causally* affected by the

⁴⁸⁵ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 21.

⁴⁸⁶ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 342.

world.” Modified classical theism is just a more proper form of classical theism in the current accounting of God’s action in the world and relates to “voluntary relational panentheism,” which notes that “God freely chooses to involve himself in creation.” Strong versions of open theism can be also called “personal-relational Christian panentheism.”⁴⁸⁷ Second, although Christian panentheism is not an oxymoron, it is not compatible with Reformed theology, since it does not accept “a supernatural view of God’s existence, power, revelation, and acts in history.” Nonetheless, it is consists in “legitimate expressions of ecumenical Christianity.” Third is non-Christian Panentheism. Christian theology must defend that God is actively present “in the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and reign of Jesus Christ” which is not a symbol but the central cause of the salvation. With regard to this argument, whereas Teilhard, Pannenberg, and Moltmann belong to this qualification, Tillich and Ruether do not. Cooper prefers personal panentheism to impersonal-Ground-of being panentheism, relational panentheism to part-whole panentheism (model of mind and body) because of some biblical basis, and voluntarism to compatabilism in divine will.⁴⁸⁸

Since Cooper’s perspective is not sufficient to show the concrete meanings of panentheism, however, we need to seek to more appropriate models. With these kinds of theological responses to classical theism, we have to ask again: What kind of theology should we establish in this period when it seems to be more disordered than any period? Already indicating the problem of traditional theological categories, which has not been effective in responding to interdisciplinary debates, I considered panentheism as a new alternative to the question of skepticism in order to defend the doctrine of God, since it is

⁴⁸⁷ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 343-345. Pinnock and Moltmann are here very similar because they both hold “relational theologies and relational ontologies.” Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 345-346.

able to partner with other academic fields. Arguing three characteristics of panentheism, that is, “an outcome” in modern philosophy, “a framework” of divine action in modern science and “a response” to a dilemma in Christian systematic theology, Clayton suggests a variety of reasons that scholars have adopted panentheism: traditional theism’s inviability; panentheism’s compatibility in physics or biology; metaphysical position; better explanation of the certain religious beliefs such as divine action; the most convincing answer to a mediating metaphysics between Western and Eastern religions; more appropriate alternatives to unanswerable objections such as the problem of evil; more acceptable ethical or political implications.⁴⁸⁹ This panentheism hopes to “rekindle theological appetite in [those] who were dissatisfied with theism but who still recognized areas of ultimate concern.”⁴⁹⁰ In this sense, Michael Brierley defines panentheism as “revolution,”⁴⁹¹ because it “subverts,” “undercuts,” “challenges” the foundations of classical theism, and adds an adjective, “quiet,” to revolution—“quiet revolution”—because it has been used under other names such as “‘dialectical theism’ (Macquarrie), ‘neoclassical theism’ (Hartshorne), ‘naturalistic theism’ (Griffin), or... ‘process theism.’”⁴⁹²

Panentheistic Turn

In this perspective, we need to note “panentheistic turn.”⁴⁹³ I would like to show that it can function as a powerful model of God in contemporary constructive theology. Without

⁴⁸⁹ Clayton, *Panentheism in Metaphysical and Science Perspective*, 73-74. Panentheism can respond more persuasively than classical theism to the concern of feminist, lesbian and gay, ecological, and ‘economic’ liberation theologies, dialogue between science and religion, and dialogue between different faiths. Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 4.

⁴⁹⁰ Clayton, *The Problem of God*, 506.

⁴⁹¹ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 1.

⁴⁹² Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 4.

⁴⁹³ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 1.

claiming that this is the only viable model of God – that claim is surely false – I do believe that the model I defend can offer some powerful answers to some of the difficult dilemmas that Christian theology faces in the contemporary world. Brierley extracts “the eight facets of panentheistic language”⁴⁹⁴ which are the common ground for the panentheists: “The cosmos as God’s body; language of ‘In and Through’; the cosmos as sacrament; language of ‘inextricable intertwining’; the dependence of God on the cosmos; the intrinsic, positive value of the cosmos; passibility; and degree Christology.”⁴⁹⁵

First, the cosmos as God’s body is with regard to “divine embodiment.” They are in distinction but not in separation. Since not the whole but part of God can be seen, there is “a relationship of asymmetrical interdependence” between “God and mind” and “cosmos and body.” Whereas Arthur Peacocke is against this model because this model makes the cosmos the same ontological order as God, although Clayton maintains the ontological difference between them in terms of infinitude and finitude, and perfection and imperfection, he asserts that the cosmos is at least in some sense analogous to God’s body.⁴⁹⁶ Second is “language of In and Through.” The “in” means “in,” but the “through” means both the actor’s immanence and the actor’s transcendence, because, in order for something to come “through” something else, it needs to come from beyond it. Peacocke makes a connection between “the presence of God in the processes of the world” in panentheism and Luther’s “real presence of Christ in the Eucharist,” using the “celebrated Lutheran prepositions,” “in, with, and under.”⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 6.

⁴⁹⁵ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 6-12.

⁴⁹⁶ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 6-7.

⁴⁹⁷ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 7.

Third is “the cosmos as sacrament.” Contrasting to classical theism, the sacraments, in panentheism, are not limited to certain rites of the church, but the whole cosmos is sacramental, since it is something in which God comes. Panentheism and sacramentalism refer to different aspects of the same reality. Peacocke, Fiddes, Fox, McFague, Pittenger, and Ware recognize this sacrament.⁴⁹⁸ By the same token, Barth also considers revelation as sacrament, arguing that “God’s being-as-object as sacrament means: God speaks of himself in a worldly manner, that is, God speaks with us in a human way. Thus the ‘humanity of Jesus Christ as such is the first sacrament.’”⁴⁹⁹ Fourth is “language of inextricable intertwining.” Since embodiment for God is an intrinsic feature, God and cosmos cannot be separate, but must be distinct. They are “inextricably intertwined.” Macquarrie’s dialectics, Hartshorne’s dipolarity (correlativeness), and Clayton’s argument means the necessary link between “identification and the distinction, the inclusion and the separation, of God and cosmos.”⁵⁰⁰

Fifth is “God’s dependence on the Cosmos.” If embodiment for God is intrinsic character, God is dependent on the cosmos, because, especially in the process tradition, “God needs the cosmos for the fulfilment of God’s nature of love.” However, Macquarrie does not use the term, “necessity,” since it means “a coercive force external to God,” but, instead, states that God freely creates by God’s ultimate nature. Likewise, Clayton rejects a necessary divine dependence on the world and subordinates God’s love to God’s freedom or will, since God existed without the world and was dependent on the world after God’s free decision. Clayton’s logic to assert this position is very simple: it is

⁴⁹⁸ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 8. “The specific sacraments of the church are simply particular intensifications of the general ‘sacramental principle,’ signs, symbols, and reminders that any and every thing has the potential to become a full vehicle of the divine.” Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Jüngel, *God is in Becoming*, 65-66.

⁵⁰⁰ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 8-9.

incoherent to say that a contingent world must necessarily exist. Supporting Clayton's argument, Brierley attempts to describe more precisely that "God, through love, needs a world that (by nature) is radically dependent on God.... Love demands that God and cosmos are in some way interdependent, and necessary, one to the other; but the difference in natures demands that they are not interdependent and necessary to each other in the same way." This supports Clayton's insistence that God's embodiment is indispensable and God was freely dependent on the cosmos without any external force.⁵⁰¹

Sixth is "the intrinsic, positive value of the cosmos." It means that since God is good, God's body—physical material—is good and positive and "shares the same basic value as God's self." God works for the good of the cosmos in order to eliminate evil.⁵⁰²

Seventh is passibility. Since God and the cosmos have a mutual relationship in love and the cosmos is divine embodiment, when the cosmos as a body suffers, God suffers.⁵⁰³

Eighth is degree Christology. Christ is different from other people by degree rather than by kind, because, if God is in the cosmos, God's work in Christ has continuity with the cosmic work. Otherwise, there is "an unpanentheistic dichotomy" between God in Christ and God in the rest of the cosmos.⁵⁰⁴

Thus, Brierley defines panentheism as follows: "panentheism can be defined as the doctrine of the cosmos being the good (against Clayton) 'body' (against Peacocke), or 'sacrament,' needed by God (against Clayton), with which God is inextricably intertwined, and 'in and through' which God works and suffers."⁵⁰⁵ Among eight features,

⁵⁰¹ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 9-10.

⁵⁰² Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 10-11. However, Clayton argues that since the evil of the cosmos is in God, God is responsible for it. Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 11. Passibility is claimed by "Fiddes, Griffin, Hartshorne, Macquarrie, McDaniel, McFague, Moltmann, Pailin, Peacocke, and Pittenger." Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 12. It is held by John Robinson and Macquarrie, Griffin, Peacocke, McFague, and Norman Pittenger. Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 12-13.

Brierley notes, passibility is the main factor of the rise of panentheism “in Britain and the States under the influence of the German idealists.”

Panentheistic turn means a fundamental shift in ontology, “from a ‘substance ontology’ to a ‘relational ontology,’” in that, as process theology asserts, God and the world as entities are in relationship, because in substance they cannot overlap. The cosmos is in God. Although classical theism represents the “picture of God,” panentheism more accurately expresses the “basic religious conviction of humanity” and “greater moral potential for the world.” Thus, panentheism is “the result of process, mutuality, reciprocity or love,” which is the foundation to being. Nonetheless, there is an asymmetrical relationship between God and the cosmos, since God is not dependent on the cosmos in the same way that the cosmos is dependent on God.⁵⁰⁶

B. Definition of Panentheism

Then, what is panentheism? We need to define panentheism. According to Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, panentheism is that God is neither just the all of other things nor the whole of ordinary individuals, but all other things are in him, because God has “unity of experience.”⁵⁰⁷ Clayton’s definition of panentheism is that even though God is more than the world, world is within God. In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, panentheism is “[t]he belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against pantheism) that His

⁵⁰⁶ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 13-14.

⁵⁰⁷ Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers Speak of God*, 22. According to Hartshorne’s analysis, panentheism belongs to ETCKW. E: eternal, T: temporal, C: conscious, self-aware, K: knowing the world, omniscient, W: world-inclusive. The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, knowing and including the World. Panentheism. Plato, Sri Jiva, Schelling, Fechner, Whitehead, Iqbal, Radhakrishnan. Ibid., 17.

Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.”⁵⁰⁸ The common definition of panentheism can be defined as follows: although God and world are interrelated, God is more than the world.

Clayton sees *Deus semper major* in “‘more than’ in divine subjectivity” through Hartshorne’s definition: “because God comprehends all things into the unity of a single divine awareness, and none of the things or subjects comprehended by God does the same thing, God must be more than any of the objects comprehended.”⁵⁰⁹ Following the dialectical way of thinking of Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel, the infinite has two requirements in order to be the infinite: First, the infinite (God) must include the finite (the world) within itself, “otherwise the infinite will be limited by that which lies outside it and hence no longer infinite.” And the infinite is more than the finite.⁵¹⁰ That is, Hegel expressed that “an infinite that excludes the finite is ‘the bad infinite’ (*das schlechte Unendliche*) and not ‘the true infinite’ (*das wahre Unendliche*).”⁵¹¹ However, Clayton affirms infinite divine Creator’s involvement in deep mutual relations with finite agents within the asymmetrical structure “without being the same as them.”⁵¹²

That is, whereas God, on the one hand, cannot and does not determine everything because of “real human freedom,” God, on the other hand, does not equate with the world because “God existed before the (free) creation of the world and, if God is God, he will also exist after the collapse or heat death of our universe.”⁵¹³ Panentheism can affirm

⁵⁰⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 118.

⁵⁰⁹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 119.

⁵¹⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 119, 126.

⁵¹¹ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 151. “Such an infinite is not unlimited in the strongest sense, inasmuch as it is limited by the finite that lies outside it and is other to it. The true infinite, Hegel realized, must therefore include the finite as a part, while at the same time retaining within itself the distinction between infinite and finite.” Ibid. Further reading: Clayton, “On the very idea of an infinite and perfect God,” in *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, 117.

⁵¹² Clayton, “God Beyond Orthodoxy: Process Theology for the 21st Century,” 10.

⁵¹³ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 95.

“both God’s transcendence *over* and God’s immanence *in* the world.”⁵¹⁴ We can put panentheism’s definition, that is, even though God is more than the world, the world is in God, in another way. Even though the world is in God, God is more than the world. The former focuses on the immanence and the latter emphasizes the transcendence. Both God’s immanence and transcendence are based on panentheism, that is, epistemological tension between comprehensibility and incomprehensibility of triune God. Even though many theologies agree on this position, it is not easy to find well balanced theology inasmuch as they usually focus on only one side: immanence or transcendence. Panentheism as a metaphysical ground of a new theism has both dimensions: immanence and transcendence. Moltmann, in his article *Science and Wisdom*, argues that the fear of God and the love of God describe two sides of God’s presence: distance and closeness; sublimity and intimacy.⁵¹⁵ Thus, transcendence and immanence are correlative rather than opposed.⁵¹⁶

Rivera makes a distinction between pantheism and panentheism. Panentheism is “open to mystery and unpredictable possibilities: to the ineffable, unnameable, and unutterable.”⁵¹⁷ This is a possibility of transcendence for panentheism. Let me simply schematize the difference between pantheism and panentheism.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁴ Arthur Peacocke, “Introduction: ‘In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being?,”” xxii.

⁵¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom* (Theology Today, vol. 58, No. 2, July 2001), 158.

⁵¹⁶ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 231.

⁵¹⁷ Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 136.

⁵¹⁸ Paul Harrison defines two isms. Pantheism is “profound religious reverence for the universe/nature.” Panentheism could be considered as “belief in a personal creator God who transcends the world, but is also intimately present and active in the world and in each of us.” Harrison asks, “Are you a pantheist? Do you feel a deep sense of peace and belonging and wonder in the midst of nature, in a forest, by the ocean, or on a mountain top? Are you speechless with awe when you look up at the sky on a clear moonless night and see the Milky Way strewn with stars as thick as sand on a beach? When you see breakers crashing on a rocky shore, or hear wind rustling in a poplar’s leave, are you uplifted by the energy and creativity of existence? Finally, do you find it difficult to imagine anything more worthy of your deepest reverence than the beauty of nature or the power of the universe?” Paul Harrison, *Elements of Pantheism: Religious reverence of nature and the universe* (Coral Springs: Llumina Press, 2004), 2. If you answered yes to these questions, then you are almost certainly a Pantheist. If Harrison’s argument were

a) Pantheism
God–World=Nothing
God=Nothing+World

God=World

b) Panentheism
God–World=Something
God=Something+World

God=World+Something.

Thus, God is more than the world

An attempt to overcome this dichotomy between transcendence and immanence could be found in panentheism, not pantheism. In order to satisfy the condition of panentheism, however, God must be more than the world. Panentheism is “higher synthesis” of theism and pantheism. While God for classical theism is “the universal cause (C)” and for pantheism is “the all-inclusive reality of the world (W),” panentheism maintains that God is CW.⁵¹⁹ If space is “the dimension of God’s omnipresence,” notes Moltmann, pantheism is impossible,⁵²⁰ since Space and time have their origination in God.

Panentheism can provide a solution with which we can overcome dualistic thinking in the history of western thought, which has developed a dualistic scheme, such as transcendence and immanence, absolute and relative, time and eternity. Even though there are some attempts to solve this dichotomy, their methods appear to destroy or reduce one side to the other. Since a real two-way interaction between God and the world, the interaction that the world contained in God and the world’s return (influence) to God, is the *sine qua non* for panentheism, panentheism is different from both pantheism, which does not consider any God-world interrelation, and from classical philosophical theism, which asserts that God is not affected by the world.⁵²¹ We can still see this phenomenon today. The God in panentheism is neither dead nor a superficial, but can touch our daily lives. Although God is wholly other, God is the one who participates in people’s

right, we must be also pantheist inasmuch as we confess that God says, after creating the world, that “God saw that it was good.” (Gen.1). Harrison, *Elements of Pantheism*, 2.

⁵¹⁹ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 31.

⁵²⁰ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 89.

⁵²¹ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 20.

suffering and relates to the world. That is, God is over us, with us, for us, through us, and in us. There is no reason not to insist on God's transcendence in panentheism.

Panentheism, however, can possibly harmonize this ugly ditch.

C. Typologies of Panentheism

In order to understand the conceptual resources available to panentheists, it is helpful to explore some of the typologies of panentheisms that have been developed in the recent literature. The word "panentheism" was first coined by Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781-1832), the German idealist philosopher.⁵²² Schelling and Hegel are said to be "the Godfathers of Modern Panentheism," since they articulate that a dynamic God himself actually develops in and through the world—nature, history, and human affairs. Hegel influenced on Küng, Moltmann, and Pannenberg. Schelling inspired Coleridge, Peirce, James, Bergson, Heidegger, Tillich, Hartshorne, Moltmann, and Clayton.⁵²³ Especially, panentheism was made known by Hartshorne through *Philosophers Speak of God*.

According to Hartshorne's analysis, panentheism belongs to ETCKW. E: eternal, T:

⁵²² Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 2. Clayton suggests that idealist theologians such as Krause in the nineteenth century developed intuitions which derived from "Nicholas of Cusa's understanding of creation occurring 'within' God." Ibid.

⁵²³ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 90-91. Panentheists in process theism: "Hartshorne, Norman Pittenger, Charles Birch, Schubert Ogden, John Cobb, James Will, Jim Garrison, David Pailin, Joseph Bracken, David Griffin, Jay McDaniel, Daniel Dombrowski, and Anna Case-Winters." Self-identified panentheists: "Alan Anderson, Leonardo Boff, Marcus Borg, Philip Clayton, Scott Cowdell, Denis Edwards, Paul Fiddes, Matthew Fox, Donald Gelpi, Peter Hodgson, Christopher Knight, John Macquarrie, Paul Matthews, Sallie McFague, Jürgen Moltmann, Hugh Montefiore, Helen Oppenheimer, Arthur Peacocke, Piet Schoonenberg, Claude Stewart, and Kallistos Ware." Considered panentheists: the twentieth-century figures: "Nicolay Berdyayev, Peter Berger, James Bethune-Baker, Dietrich Bohhoeffer, Martin Buber, Sergei Bulgakov, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Heidegger, Karl Heim, William Hocking, Geddes MacGregor, Charles Peirce, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Albert Schweitzer, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Paul Tillich, Ernst Troeltsch, Alan Watts, Paul Weiss, and Alfred North Whitehead; British idealists John and Edward Caird and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison; nineteenth-century Germans Schleiermacher, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Bauer, Fechner, and Pfleiderer; the medieval theologians Nicholas of Cusa and Eckhart; the mystics Mechtilde of Magdeburg and Julian of Norwich; and even Luther. Others: R. J. Campbell, John Oman, John V. Taylor, and classic Anglican liberals such as Peter Baelz, Geoffrey Lampe, and Maurice Wiles. Movements: Neoplatonism, Orthodox Christianity, mysticism, and English modernism. However, neo-Thomism, Barthianism, radical orthodoxy cannot be considered panentheism. Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 3-4.

temporal, C: conscious, self-aware, K: knowing the world, omniscient, W: world-inclusive.⁵²⁴

John Macquarrie points out the same problems. Macquarrie uses “dialectical theism,”⁵²⁵ instead of panentheism, since panentheism is very similar to pantheism in the formation of the word. This dialectical theism is nearer to classical theism than to pantheism. Nevertheless, Macquarrie uses the adjective ‘dialectical’ in order to “avoid the one-sidedness of classical theism.”⁵²⁶ According to Macquarrie, the pantheist and classical theist make the same error; their common error is one-sidedness. On the one hand, classical theism emphasizes divine attributes: “transcendence, externality, immutability, impassibility, eternity and so on.”⁵²⁷ On the other hand, pantheism’s stress is on immanence and identification of the divinity with the world.⁵²⁸

Panentheism has many different names but whatever the name, the basic ideas are similar. The name, “panentheism,” even for many panentheists, is not significant as many other names are given to the attempt to suggest adequate relations between God and the world. Luke 9: 49-50 supports this idea. One day John said to Jesus, “Master, we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.” If we say it again in this panentheistic context, whoever is not against panentheism is for panentheism.

⁵²⁴ Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 22. The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, knowing and including the World. Panentheism. Plato, Sri Jiva, Schelling, Fechner, Whitehead, Iqbal, Radhakrishnan. Ibid., 17.

⁵²⁵ “Dialectical theism is the implicitly Trinitarian tradition of Plotinus, Dionysius, Eriugena, Nicholas of Cusa, Leibniz, Hegel, Whitehead, and Heidegger.” Cooper, *Panentheism*, 223.

⁵²⁶ John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism* (Crossroad: New York, 1984), 54.

⁵²⁷ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 53.

⁵²⁸ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 52-53.

Gregersen explicates a typology of “three varieties of panentheism.” The first version is a “soteriological panentheism” (classical theism), since the world is in God only by God’s redeeming grace (gift). God shall be “all in all” only in the eschatological consummation (1 Cor. 15:28). The second version is “revelational or expressivist panentheism” (German idealism) whose main idea is that the divine Spirit manifests itself in the world and returns to God with the experiences of the world. The third version is “dipolar panentheism” (process theology) in that God has dipolar aspects: primordial nature (timeless and beyond space and time) and consequent nature (temporal and spatial). Among these types, whereas dipolar process theism can be considered as panentheism, the other two types are qualified in the definition of panentheism. On the one hand, since the soteriological type means that God’s self revelation is not found everywhere but only in restricted places, the “all” of *pan-en-theism* is qualified. That is, evil cannot exist in the same way with truth, love, and beauty in God. On the other hand, the expressivist type has a problem with the “in” of *pan-en-theism*, since “only when the history of the world has been completed... in God,” will the circle of divine self-expression and self-return be closed.⁵²⁹ Gregersen seeks a common ground of the three versions of panentheism: they all share two-way relation, namely, both active and responsive aspects between God and the world. First is generic panentheism: 1) the world is in God; 2) the God-world relation is bilateral.⁵³⁰ Second is strict (dipolar) panentheism: 1) God cannot exist without the world (soul/body relation); 2) a metaphysical necessity between God and world. Third is

⁵²⁹ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 21. “By implication it seems that a full-blown panentheism risks the twofold danger of not fully preserving the identity of God while at the same time giving evil an ontological status not accorded it in the three Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.” Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Aquinas’ position does not accept bilateral relation between God and the world (2) but accept the world in God (1). Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 24.

qualified (Christian) panentheism: 1) since the world is created out of God, God could exist without a world; 2) the world can influence God by God's grace.⁵³¹

First is soteriological panentheism. Gregersen finds relations among the three divine persons (in trinity) rather than divine simplicity in Eastern Orthodoxy. The essence (*ousia*) of divine life is a community and "a result of reciprocal relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," since God exists only in interpenetration (*perichoresis*) of divine persons. John Zizioulas in *Being as Communion* argues that "there is no true being without community." However, we have to recognize that there is no two-way traffic in any direct way between God and the world in trinitarian thought. Gregersen finds trinitarian thought in an indirect way: "a human participation in divine life." For examples, 2 Peter 1:4 ("you may be partakers in the divine nature"); John 1:1-14 (Logos: (1) one with God, (2) the principle of creation, and (3) the principle of revelation); John 14-17 (the divine perichoresis with creatures: Christ in the Father (mutual indwelling), and the disciples in Christ (a mutual coinherence)).⁵³² However, are all things, including hatred, terror, or small-mindedness really in God? The biblical tradition rejects those things because sin shall not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 15:50). In this sense, the "in" of panentheism is limited and panentheism could be "a movement of conversion and attunement to God," so that soteriological panentheism refers to eschatological panentheism.⁵³³

Second is expressivist panentheism. Gregersen finds an alternative from Hegel which goes beyond both a supernaturalist theism (Leibniz)—"the best possible world" originated from an omnipotent and benevolent God—and pantheism (Spinoza)—all is

⁵³¹ Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 22-23.

⁵³² Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 25-26.

⁵³³ Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 27.

determined by God or nature (*natura naturans* or *natura naturata*).⁵³⁴ For Hegel, the finite world is in the infinite God. The world is a work of the self-giving nature of God. God (the Father) is not the One who is inaccessible, but the kenotic Being, who manifests himself in the history of humanity (the Son) and in the form of a self-consciousness (Spirit). That is, the concept of divinity has three elements. The Absolute reveals itself “(a) as eternal content abiding with itself in its manifestation [Father]; (b) as differentiation of eternal being [Son] from its manifestation...; (c) as infinite return [Spirit] of the alienated world and its reconciliation with eternal being.” However, Gregersen points out that the soteriological panentheism is still present in this panentheism, in that the world is not yet fully in God but will be reconciled with God at the consummation of world history. This romantic-idealistic version of panentheism is termed ‘natural supernaturalism,’ since it is in the natural world that God manifests his love and since it is only in returning to God that the world of nature participates in ‘supernatural life.’⁵³⁵

Third is dipolar panentheism. God is both essentially unchangeable and dependent on the world. God is the world’s creator in that God gives initial aim to everything and at the same time God is a creature of the world in that the world influences God. God and the world have mutual transcendence. With regard to God’s perfection, unlike God as *actus purus* in classical theism, God in dipolar theism is “both the unsurpassable perfect

⁵³⁴ Krause follows both the subjective idealist Fichte and objective idealism from Schelling. From the former, his point was that anyone who realizes finitude also realize “the infinity of God as the primordial being.” From the latter, his point was that God is beyond all dualisms and manifests both Contrabeing (*Gegenwesen*) and Unified Being (*Vereinwesen*). Krause emphasizes God’s activity motivated by God’s love: “Love is the living form of the inner organic unification of all life in God. Love is the eternal will of God to be lovingly present in all beings and to take back the life of all his members into Himself as into their whole life.” Krause’s panentheism overcomes the split between humanity and nature and goes beyond both a supernaturalist theism (Leibniz) and pantheism (Spinoza). Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 28-29.

⁵³⁵ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 30-31.

and the self-surpassing perfect that ever grows in perfection.”⁵³⁶ Dipolar panentheism is different from trinitarian panentheism in that whereas the former is general in nature, the latter is focused on the soteriological vision which transforms the world into divine community. Dipolar panentheism is different from expressivist panentheism in that although Hegel and Hartshorne explicate a “universalist model” in the God-world relationship,” God in dipolar panentheism cannot be truly infinite because the creativity of the world influences God.⁵³⁷ Analyzing generic panentheism among Griffin, Gregersen, Clayton, and Brierley, Clayton explicates common ground or family resemblance: world in God; world’s independence from God, and world’s deep influence on God.⁵³⁸

Ware relates Palamas’ panentheism to the above three types of panentheism by Gregersen. However, it is “weak” panentheism, since while for Palamas God is radically immanent, God still remains in totally transcendent essence. First, with regard to soteriological panentheism, Ware makes a distinction between the ontological and eschatological levels. Whereas, ontologically, God is utterly present in the creation through his divine energies and all creatures participate in the divine energies, eschatologically, all creatures are not fully in God because of their fallen states. Only at the final consummation, not at present, will God be “all in all” (I Cor. 15:28).⁵³⁹ Second, in relation to expressionist panentheism, Palamas uses the triad in Dionysius the Areopagite: “stability, procession, and return (*mone, proodos, epistrophe*).” However, for

⁵³⁶ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 32. For Palamas and the Eastern tradition, the matrix is the “uncreated energy of God;” for Hegel the matrix is two way movement of the divine Spirit itself; for process thought, the matrix consists of several actors: (1) eternal objects (2) the creativity (3) actual occasions. Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 33.

⁵³⁸ Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 251-252.

⁵³⁹ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 166-167. We can recognize “Palamite principles” that the world in God is “not merely a static datum but a dynamic gift of grace... through the voluntary cooperation of humankind.” Ibid.

Palamas, since God is complete in himself, God does not need anything to be perfect. How can we overcome a gap between Palamas and the expressionist panentheism? The uncreated divine energies do not enrich God but transform the world and enrich the creation. Third, in relation to dipolar panentheism, Palamas is not comfortable, since he does not mean “necessary interdependence between God and the world.”⁵⁴⁰ That is, in creating the world, God chose, completely freely, to do so. However, although the world is not necessary to God, this does not mean that the world is arbitrary, peripheral, or accidental, since God wants to express and share his own true self, i.e., the self-diffusive love, which is the “true point of reconciliation between divine transcendence and divine immanence.”⁵⁴¹ Thus there is “a genuine convergence between dipolar panentheism and Palamite orthodoxy,” although it is not a complete agreement.

D. Panentheistic Analogy (Model)

We need to realize the basic attitude of taking model of some theory. Ian Barbour appropriately explains that models in theology and natural science should be not taken literally, because they are “neither literal pictures nor useful fictions but limited and inadequate ways of imaging what is not observable.”⁵⁴² Panentheism also needs to be understood in this way. Although there are many analogies (models) of panentheism, we have to admit that an analogy (model) has its own limitations. In the sense, panentheism

⁵⁴⁰ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 166-168.

⁵⁴¹ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 168. Ware argues that for Palamas God’s love means “sharing, exchange, self-giving, and response.” It is true of God’s self-expression as creator, since creation is a disclosure of God’s nature as ecstatic love in the world. Ibid.

⁵⁴² Bracken, “Pantheism: A Field-Oriented Approach,” 213. In his doctoral thesis, *Spirit in the World*, Rahner concludes, according to Mark Fischer, that since human thought can proceed through an image or representation, even human thought of God depends on mental imagery, on representations which Thomas called phantasms. Through symbol, God’s Spirit is present to the world and becomes tangible. Mark Fischer, *The Foundations of Karl Rahner* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005), ix.

is not to be abandoned but needs to be reconsidered in its metaphors,⁵⁴³ and to go beyond them. The most common analogy for panentheism is the mind/body analogy. Like a relationship between human intentions (purposes) and human bodies, although the former transcends the latter, since they are interrelated and the former is implemented by the latter, Peacocke considers God as personal agency in which God is internally present to the world.⁵⁴⁴

Even though there are obviously analogies between God and the world, this mind-body relation and the God-world relation has three qualifications. The first is that although God and mind are more than the world and the body, whereas God creates the world, our minds cannot create our bodies. The second is that although there is a distinction between autonomic processes such as “breathing, digestion, and heart beating” and deliberate, conscious intentions in human persons, God does not have such a distinction, since God’s relation to the world is omniscient. The third is that when we consider God as an agency similar to human agency, God is not a person, but rather suprapersonal or transpersonal and cannot be reduced to human persons. In the sense, there are both analogies and qualification between God and the world.⁵⁴⁵ The God-world relationship for panentheism is “a relationship of *asymmetrical* interdependence:” that is, “God and mind are both dependent on cosmos and body, but not in the same way that cosmos and body are, in turn, dependent on them.”⁵⁴⁶ This is different from Whitehead’s symmetrical relation between God and the world, that is, each can create the other, although panentheists accept Whitehead’s insight that, “Either of them, God and the

⁵⁴³ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 12.

⁵⁴⁴ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 23-24.

⁵⁴⁵ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 24.

⁵⁴⁶ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 6.

world, is the instrument of novelty for the other.”⁵⁴⁷ Tillich also argues that “God’s participation is not a spatial or temporal presence. It is meant not categorically but symbolically.”⁵⁴⁸

Here we can recognize three weak points. Weak point 1: the cosmos is within God, but the body does not exist ‘within’ mind.⁵⁴⁹ Weak point 2: in the mind-body relation, no mind, no body, and vice versa. However, in the God-world relationship, is it possible to say no world, no God? In this sense, God would appear “as an emergent reality arising out of natural processes.”⁵⁵⁰ That is, God does always exist, even if the world does not exist, if we follow the “asymmetrical interdependence.” Weak point 3: whereas God knows perfectly the cosmos, human beings do not have perfect knowledge of their bodies.⁵⁵¹ These weak points are to be expected, because this model is an analogy, i.e., “panentheistic analogy,” which inevitably entails weak points: “One can’t use the difference in natures between God and world (necessary vs. contingent) to defend use of the panentheistic analogy... and at the same time maintain that it was eternally necessary that God create a world.”⁵⁵²

Instead, I would like to illustrate this analogy through Heidegger’s image of *in-der-Welt-sein*. “Being” for Heidegger is not just a being or a pure being, but always “being in the world” (*in-der-welt-sein*), which belongs essentially to Dasein: “Thus the understanding of Being that belongs to Dasein just as originally implies the understanding of something like ‘world’ and the understanding of the Being of beings

⁵⁴⁷ PR, 349.

⁵⁴⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 245.

⁵⁴⁹ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 6.

⁵⁵⁰ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 20.

⁵⁵¹ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 7.

⁵⁵² Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 10. Thus we have to say that “what is needed, perhaps, is not an abandonment of panentheism but the reconsideration of existing metaphors as well as the development of new ones.” Ibid., 12.

accessible within the world.”⁵⁵³ Human beings are given to the nature (*geworfenheit*).

The image of “being in the world” is that which the world embraces beings. It can be the meaning of *Umwelt* (milieu). Whenever I think of this phrase of Heidegger, the thought gives rise to the image of a mother embracing her baby, or a baby in the mother’s womb. Dasein is like a baby in a mother’s womb in that although the baby is in the womb of the mother, the baby has her/his own creativity or self-identity separate and different from that of the mother. The panentheistic analogy between God and the world can be expressed by an analogy of a mother’s womb and a baby in that, just as there can be no world without God, and not vice versa, so without the mother’s womb, there can be no baby, but not vice versa. *Theotokos* (bearer of God), which refers to Mary, helps us understand this image of God. Early church, both Eastern and Western, accept this *theotokos* rather than *Christokos*. Mary bears God. It was God who was in Mary’s womb. In a sense this analogy is appropriate for the definition of panentheism.⁵⁵⁴ Thus we can understand the image in which a baby is in a mother’s womb as follows: “the whole earth is mine” (Exodus 19:5).

Of course this analogy has weak points. First, since the mother’s womb cannot create a baby by itself, it needs other things which a mother’s womb does not have. Then, can God alone not create the world? If God needs other things to create the world, it makes God a deficient being. Second, a baby in the mother’s womb can come out of the womb and become an independent self which does no longer need the womb’s protection. Although the baby leaves the womb, if the mother’s love or mind continues to take care

⁵⁵³ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 55.

⁵⁵⁴ For example, image of swim can explain Panentheism. In order to swim, there must be at least swimmers and sea, river, or swimming pool. Although swimmers are at sea, the sea is more than the swimmers. The swimmers must be in sea. They cannot swim outside sea or water. Likewise, the world must be in God. There is no world outside God.

of the baby, the baby is still within the mother. However, the world cannot free itself from God's boundary, because the world is in God. Nonetheless, this analogy is more appropriate than that of the mind-body, because, as regards the mind-body analogy, it is possible to say that without mind, no body, and vice versa. The Triune God conceived the world in the triune God and gave birth to the world. Does this mean that the world is outside God? It is not, since God's arms still hold the world. Thus, the world is still in God. Relating this phrase to panentheism, which means 'the world is within God,' we can make a similar expression: *die Welt-in-Gott* (the world in God). It is the image of God who embraces the world. It could be related to the image of *Zimzum* (self-limitation) or *Shekinah* (indwelling) for Jewish tradition.

E. "In" of Panentheism

Brierley asks a further question: "In what sense does the universe exist in God?"⁵⁵⁵

Panentheists argue that when they explain God's immanence in the world, "in" is more proper than "separate-but-present-to," since everything in the world is in God and that means that nothing exists outside infinite God. The question of "in" is as follows: how can God be present in the world if one substance cannot be present within another at the same time? In the sense, Peacocke appropriately describes the meaning of "in": "God creates all-that-is *within* Godself while remaining ontologically distinct." If all is NOT in God, since God is outside the world, God must intervene in such a discrete world in order to connect to the world. Insofar as God interacts with all the systems at their holistic levels, God is not only in parts but also in the whole, so that God can give existence to

⁵⁵⁵ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 5-6.

all-that-is, which asserts God's ultimate transcendence in order to satisfy the panentheistic definition that God is more than world.⁵⁵⁶

Clayton's answer is that to locate God at all points in space cannot be a proper answer to satisfy this question, but rather, he finds an answer from the "active presence of the divine Spirit in the world," that is, "a theology of Spirit that is both theologically and scientifically adequate."⁵⁵⁷ Gregersen summarizes three types of "in." First is a ball in a bowl (container model); second is a finite realization of some possibilities in wider possibilities; and third is something in another thing in a qualitative sense (the beloved in the lover). The third one can be considered in trinitarian thought.⁵⁵⁸ Gregersen understands "all in God" as follows: *finitum capax infiniti* (finitude can grasp infinity). We can see the infinite God in finitude, i.e., even "in the miniatures of life." In this sense, we need to note Wolfgang Goethe's saying, "*Willst du ins Unendliche schreiten, geh im Endlichen und schaue nach allen Seiten*" (If you want to enter the infinite, walk in the finite world, and look to all sides).⁵⁵⁹

Mind-body as metaphor in the God-world relationship has limitation. How can we insist on a double "in" between God and the world? Tom Oord enumerates 12 categories of the various meanings of "in." The world is "in" God because:

1. that is its literal location
2. God energizes the world
3. God experiences or "prehends" the world (process theology)
4. God ensouls the world
5. God plays with the world (Indic Vedantic Traditions)
6. God "enfields" the world (J. Bracken)
7. God gives space to the world (J. Moltmann, drawing on the zimzum tradition; A. Peacocke and many of the authors in this text)
8. God encompasses or contains the world (substantive or locative notion)
9. God binds up the world by giving the divine self to the world
10. God provides the ground for emergences in, or the emergence of, the world (A. Peacocke, P. Davies, H. Morowitz, P. Clayton)
11. God befriends the world (C. Deane-Drummond)
12. all things

⁵⁵⁶ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 22-23. In sciences, there is "a continuum of sciences from particle physics to ecology and sociology" in a layered physicalism that "the more complex is constituted of the less complex." Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 135-136.

⁵⁵⁸ Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 24.

⁵⁵⁹ Gregersen, "Three Varieties of Panentheism," 19, 35.

are contained “in Christ” (from the Pauline *en Christo*) 13. God graces the world (all of the above).⁵⁶⁰

Among the above categories I argue that numbers 3, 5, 7, 10, and 13 are particularly fruitful for theological reflection. The “in” of panentheism is not merely a spatial, literal location, as Gregersen indicates; if it were, that would make God a spatial being and the extension of the world as space could be God. The container metaphor is not “a spatial continuum from the world to God.”⁵⁶¹ Clayton also argues that if God is specifically located at a particular point within the universe, it implies that God is absent from other places.⁵⁶² Thus God’s space is not like the created time-space continuum, but rather embraces the world’s spatial temporal existence “by God’s unimaginable ‘roominess.’”⁵⁶³ Max Jammer explains that “we do not know whether God is the space of his world, or whether his world is his space.” Moltmann answers this question with the idea of perichoresis (mutual interpenetration): “in the consummation God will find space in the finite world in a divine way, and finite world will find space in God in a ‘worldly’ way.”⁵⁶⁴ Based on the interpretations of “in,” Jay McDaniel makes a distinction between emanationist panentheism and relational panentheism. On the one hand, the former holds that since the cosmos is God’s direct expression, the cosmos’s creative action is God’s creative action. On the other hand, the latter holds that since the cosmos has creative independence from God, humanity has its own creative power.⁵⁶⁵

These definitions of panentheism are reminiscent of a Korean expression,

‘월인천강’—月 (*wol*, Moon), 印 (*in*, Stamp) 千 (*chun*, Thousand) 江 (*gang*, River)—

⁵⁶⁰ Clayton, “Panentheism Today,” 253.

⁵⁶¹ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 20.

⁵⁶² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 181-182.

⁵⁶³ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 20. Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 144.

⁵⁶⁴ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 144.

⁵⁶⁵ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 5-6.

which means that a moon permeates or stamps into a thousand rivers. How can a moon exist in a thousand rivers at the same time? When a moon shines on all the rivers, it is possible for a moon to exist in a thousand rivers. This traditional Korean expression helps one to understand the God-world relationship. God can exist in the whole world and the world can be touched by God, but God is more than the world. The moon is present everywhere, but it is more than (beyond) the rivers. That is, God permeates everywhere, but God is more than the world.⁵⁶⁶

F. Trinity in Panentheism

One can ask this important question: ‘why does Panentheism need the Trinity?’

Panentheism offers an important *via media*, a third way between traditional doctrine and process theology. In theism, there are so many skeptical elements such as naturalism, scientific position, pluralism, problem of evil, and historical discourses. However, are these skeptical elements appropriate or persuasive to make theism disappear? No, because these skeptical elements criticize some aspects of existing theism, aspects that contemporary theology also criticizes or defends with some alteration. Theology requests metaphysics to the extent that theology must not be reduced to the history. In this sense, I support the task of theology as “The New Reformation” for Whitehead which is to show how the World is founded on something (element) which is undying beyond mere

⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, this parable can explain the relationship between Immanent Trinity (moon) and Economic Trinity (river). There was a long debate between Whang Lee (1501-1570) and Daeseong Ki (1527-1572) in Korea concerning the relation between 본연지성 (bon-yeon-ji-seong, 理 (*li*), moon) and 기궐지성 (ki-jil-ji-seong, 氣 (*ki*), moon on river). Whereas Lee asserts that the moon and the moon on the river are not same, Ki argues that the moon on the river is the moon in the sky, because there is no another moon beyond the moon on the river. Ja-kyeong Han, *A Vein of Korea Philosophy* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University, 2008), 177-210.

transient fact or beyond the perishing of occasions. Thus we can understand “how life includes a mode of satisfaction deeper than joy or sorrow” in perishing lives.⁵⁶⁷

I would like to suggest an alternative position to defend theism. Some theism and process theology in some part cannot answer those skeptical criticisms to the extent that, while the former cannot explain the contemporary issues, the latter is near to naturalism. We need to listen to a voice. Bracken also emphasizes this point: “Both sides have something to learn from the well-reasoned arguments of the other side, and both sides may ultimately need the assistance of the other in setting forth the case against contemporary atheism and agnosticism.”⁵⁶⁸

New or alternative theism does not stand at the borderline of one simple dimension between theism and atheism. It must stand between not only theism and atheism, but process theism and some classical theism as well. I would like to consider panentheism as the most powerful alternative theism because it can suggest some responses to the weak points of two aspects. Panentheism means everything is in God. This can be interpreted as two sides of one coin. Even though God transcends the world, the world is within God. Even though the world is within God, God transcends the world. These two sentences have the same meanings but the tone is different. From the former, we can draw God’s immanent aspect and from the latter, God’s transcendent one. In this sense, panentheism relates to the Trinity. Trinity contrasts to the speculative, philosophical god of Greek metaphysics who is immutable and unchanging as “unmoved mover.” Moltmann points out that the problem of this Greek god is that “a god who is

⁵⁶⁷ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 172.

⁵⁶⁸ Joseph Bracken, “Two Different Models in Process Studies,” Vol. 36.1, Spring-Summer, 2007, 19.

immutable is a god without pathos and a god who cannot love.”⁵⁶⁹ Thus Trinitarian Panentheism is the most credible metaphysical position to hold.

To that extent, then, immanence and transcendence can be explained by the triune God who has both aspects. This means God does not exist both as transcendental immanence or immanent transcendence. Rather, God exists radically as both immanence and as transcendence: Economic Trinity and Immanent Trinity. God is omnipresent but there also must be ontological difference between creator and creature, infinite and finite. I will develop this part on trinity in the last chapter.

G. Panentheism in the Bible

It is an important task to find panentheistic elements in the Bible. According to Cooper, we can recognize “biblical panentheism” from Jesus’ praying in John 17:21, “Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us.” We should not consider this argument that creatures are “in God” as unbiblical. 2 Corinthians 6:16 tells us the definition of panentheism and the relation between God and the world: “For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’” In the sense, God is *Immanuel* (God with us), as Matthew 1:23 says. Ephesians 4:6 also says that “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” That exactly describes characters of panentheism, especially using panentheistic prepositions ‘over, through, and in.’ That is, God is over the world and through the world and in the world. Ephesians 4:9-10 shows us a logical interrelation between Jesus’ ascendance and descendance. Jesus’ ascendance

⁵⁶⁹ *Reformed Reader: A SourceBook in Christian Theology*, Vol. II, ed. by., George Stroup (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), 67.

presupposes Jesus' descentance or incarnation (through and in) and Jesus' descentance presupposes His transcendence (over). In this sense, we can recognize God's omnipresence through Psalms 139:7-10, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."⁵⁷⁰ We will recognize God's presence in us and our presence in God through John 14:20, "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." In Jer. 23:23-24, "a God near by... and not a God afar off"; "Do I not fill heaven and earth? Says the Lord."

⁵⁷⁰ 2009 Cokesbury VBS pledge, "E.D.G.E (Experience and Discover God Everywhere)", shows us a motto of panentheism.

Chapter VII: A Model of Theism as a Synthesis of Classical Theism and Process

Theism⁵⁷¹

In chapter seven I will explore a model of God that draws on the strengths of three different philosophical theologies argued earlier, which I call “Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology” (TPT).

As a theological vocabulary referring to the God-world relationship, panentheism must be a catalyst for a theological stream between classical theism and pantheism.

Cooper points out that “ironically, panentheism shares important roots with classical theism,” even though they are different in that while classical theism represents “the God of the philosophers,” recent theologians argue that it is “neither biblical nor philosophically coherent.” Panentheism explores “the *other* God of the philosophers.”⁵⁷²

It is significant to formulate a proper doctrine of the other God in the face of skepticism. However, is it possible by regression to traditional Christian concepts or by hitchhiking with popular contemporary philosophers?

In this final chapter, I present the model of Trinitarian Panentheistic Theology (TPT) whose primary aspect must be a kind of unity of classical theism and process theology in the form of constructive theology. The primary purpose is to overcome the limitation of classical theism and to frame a form of panentheism. First, I choose some characters from classical theism: *Creatio ex nihilo* (Genesis 1:1), Trinity (Genesis 1:26), Transcendence (Isaiah 55:8-9), worship (Psalms 150). Third, the other part is from process theology: Dipolar God. Second, Divine Action, as the horizontal bar in the image of the cross, is a bridge between upper part (classical theology) and lower part (process

⁵⁷¹ I have to say that it is impossible to exactly divide differences between classical theism and process theism, inasmuch as they obviously share one another's perspectives in some parts. Nevertheless, I roughly divide two groups in order to develop my argument.

⁵⁷² Cooper, *Panentheism*, 14, 19.

theology) in the vertical bar. Divine action is the place where double agencies, that is, God and human beings, encounter. The cross must be the place of peace and reconciliation between classical theism and process theology. Fourth and finally, TPT entails Kenotic God (Phil. 2:5-8), Relational God (John 3:16), Suffering God (Matthew 27:46), Revised Understanding of the Power of God (I Cor. 1:18 and I Cor. 1:25), and Knowable God (1 John 4:7-8). TPT can be summarized as follows: God does not stay in himself, but chooses to limit himself by coming down to the world; God is not in aseity as simplicity in the Godhead, but relates to the world as a dipolarity in the triune God; God is not impassible, but suffers with the suffering world and ultimately overcomes suffering; God is not only powerless God but also powerful God; and God can be known in the world.

1. From Classical Theism

1) Creatio ex Nihilo⁵⁷³

“Where am I, why was I not there?” As my son who was four-years-old saw some family pictures in which he was not shown, he asked that question. His mom said that you were in my belly. He asked again, “Why?” We human beings often ask about our origination: Where do we come from? How could the world exist as it is? Did God create the world or is the world the consequence of evolution? Nancy Murphy and George Ellis explain five possibilities for the origination of the universe: “random chance, high probability, necessity, universality, and design.” Random chance means that the universe just happened without any explanation. High probability and necessity do not have any

⁵⁷³ There are similar expressions to: *Creatio ex vetere* (transformation and transfiguration, Revelation 21:1-6); *creatio ex deo* (creation out of being of God); *Creatio Continua*; *Creatio Nova*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_nihilo.

standard to compare with those of other possible universes. Universality means that everything that can happen will happen sooner or later. Design asserts that the universe is designed by “a transcendent intelligence,” i.e., God.⁵⁷⁴ Generally and simply speaking, there are two positions to explain the origination of the universe: Creation and Evolution; “God without evolution” or “evolution without God.”⁵⁷⁵ Is there not any solution to harmonize them?

Conflict of Two Positions

On the one hand, many Christians accept creation but not “evolution.” The Bible explicitly proclaims God’s creation of the world: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). This tells that God has priority over the world and nothing existed before the creation, thereby justifying God’s question: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (Job 38:4). The Bible answers that, “In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end” (Psalms 102:25-27). Creationism asserts that God alone can explain the difference between nonliving and living only through creation. There are many models of God the creator such as “Emanation,” “Construction,” and “Artistic

⁵⁷⁴ Joseph A. Bracken, *God: Three Who Are One* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), xii. a) Creationism/ Intelligent Design insists that the stories of Genesis are very scientific. If there are some causes such as material causes, formal causes, efficient causes, and final causes, when God created the world, did God not have final causes (any purpose)? ID would maintain God’s design beforehand as final cause. However, a problem of Creation Science/ Intelligent-design by Christian fundamentalists: There has been an argument of the age of the world. Is the world 6,000 years old or more than? One scientist who said that the age of the world is more than 6,000 was banished from Creation-Science Association in Korea. He was the founder of the association.

⁵⁷⁵ Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and other Theological Mistakes* (New York: State University of New York, 1984), 66.

Expression.” Since the image of emanation is like light from the sun or heat from a fire, the creation of the world or the created order is “an overflowing of the creative energy of God.” The weakness of this model is that it entails not God’s conscious and prior decision but “an involuntary emanation.”⁵⁷⁶ The image of construction portrays God as “a master builder” who constructs the world with any purpose, planning, and intention. Its weakness is that God shapes or constructs the pre-existing matter, so that it is not proper to *creatio ex nihilo*. The image of artistic expression is that the world is God’s handiwork and this image overcomes the weakness of the images of emanation and construction, i.e., personal images of God. Its weakness is also the suggestion of preexisting matter as in the relation between a sculptor and pre-existent stone.⁵⁷⁷

On the other hand, Michael Shermer gives “five general tenets of evolutionary theory”: Evolution, Descent with modification, Gradualism, Multiplication, and Natural selection.⁵⁷⁸ According to Ian Barbour, advocates of “the modern synthesis,” that is, Gaylord Simson, Theodosius Dobzhansky, and Ernst Mayr, insisted that the formation of new species is the result of “variation and natural selection,” and “gradualism,” the thesis that “major evolutionary changes are the result of the accumulation of many small changes.”⁵⁷⁹

Dilemma in Two Separate Positions

Was the world created as the Bible describes within just six days? There are big controversies surrounding creationism and evolution. In fact, most Christians do not

⁵⁷⁶ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 228.

⁵⁷⁷ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 230.

⁵⁷⁸ *Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design*, 6.

⁵⁷⁹ Ian Barbour, “Evolution and Process Thought,” in ed. by, John B. Cobb Jr, *Back To Darwin* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 196.

accept evolution, since the Bible describes the process of creation of the world and if evolution is correct, they become descendents of animals, especially closely related to the chimpanzee. However, we cannot simply consider the origin of the world as God's one time creation; we must take into account humans' intimate similarity to other animals and improper inference of the age of the universe (6,000 or 10,000 years old) from the perspective of creation. Just as religions presuppose God, so science presupposes material. In this view, inasmuch as there is only a gap between two positions, we have to consider both creation and evolution, and two perspectives need to open up and begin to have real dialogue with each other.⁵⁸⁰ However, there are so many questions when we think of them together: how they are connected; if there was the big bang 13.7 billion years ago, what did God do before the big bang; if there was the Earth 4.5 billion years ago, what did God do between big bang and beginning of the earth; how could life appear 3.8 billion years ago; how could human beings exist in the world 100,000 years ago; how could human beings think about God; who first thought about God; are human beings the end of evolution; if the natural world seems to proceed after the big bang in a natural system, do we have to say that God created the world; what did God create? what is the relation between God's creation and evolution; what has this God to do with Christianity?

An Attempt to Solve the Conflict: From the Process Perspective

⁵⁸⁰ Elaine Howard Ecklund, a social scientist Rice University, notes importance of dialogue: "Such radical dialogue would never have convinced Jerry Falwell and it won't convince Richard Dawkins. But my research shows that most religious people do not take after Falwell, and most scientists are not like Dawkins." Furthermore, Ecklund notes usefulness of scientific knowledge of religious people that "If we want students of faith to be seated in the classrooms of the nation's top universities and succeed in America's top institutions, then we need to encourage them to thoughtfully examine modern scientific theories and dispel misconceptions and stereotypes of scientists' religious views." <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/08/14/how-religious-people-misunderstand-scientists/>

For Whitehead, God is “the primordial creature”⁵⁸¹ and “[God] is not *before* all creation, but *with* all creation.”⁵⁸² That is, this logic results from Whitehead’s metaphysical principles in which “God is not to be treated as an exception,” but is only “their chief exemplification.”⁵⁸³ By the same token, Edward Correia asserts that “a modern conception of God has nothing to do with creation,” but that means another paradox: A God who does not have the power to create the world can much more powerfully influence in our lives.⁵⁸⁴ In the sense, Griffin considers *creatio ex nihilo* as distortion;⁵⁸⁵ because “the world was void and without form,” rather Griffin affirms “creation out of chaos.” Griffin argues for a tension between coercion and the evolutionary explanation of the world. If God coercively and unilaterally acted for the divine-human drama of salvation, why would God have spent such a long time (10 to 20 billion years) in the preparation of that drama?⁵⁸⁶

Thomas Oord also rejects this doctrine and instead suggests a thesis, which is different from that of process theology, that “God creates out of what God previously created.” However, it does not explain the origination, i.e., “from where (what).” That is, “from what” did God create for the first time? If it is from something (e.g., water, deep, chaos, etc.), it is the same as process theology. However, Oord suggests that “God Creates out of what God Previously Created” is “an everlasting regress of creating.”⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸¹ PR, 31.

⁵⁸² PR, 343.

⁵⁸³ PR, 343.

⁵⁸⁴ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/08/12/what-if-god-had-nothing-to-do-with-creation/>

⁵⁸⁵ Griffin, *Two Great Truths*, 37.

⁵⁸⁶ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 21-22.

⁵⁸⁷ Thomas Oord also points out “Nine Problems with Creatio Ex Nihilo.” 1. Theoretical problem: absolute nothingness cannot be conceived. Biblical problem: Scripture – in Genesis, 2 Peter, and elsewhere – suggests creation from something (water, deep, chaos, invisible things, etc.), not creation from absolutely nothing. 3. Historical problem: Creatio ex nihilo was first proposed by Gnostics – Basilides and Valentinus – who assumed that creation was inherently evil and that God does not act in history. It was adopted by early Christian theologians to affirm the kind of absolute divine power that many Christians – especially

However, the endless repetition of regress cannot occur, because there must be the first moment to create, which is “ex nihilo.”

A More Proper Model for the Correlation of Creation and Evolution

Although process theology does not accept “creatio ex nihilo,” because it distorts the Christian faith, I would like to accept that doctrine, since it is more logically proper to the definition of panentheism: God more than the world. Is *creatio ex nihilo* not logically more proper? Is it not awkward to say that God and the world have always coexisted? If God is not the God of origination, what is this God? What do we have to call the world which has always coexisted with God? Why does the world which has always coexisted with God call God to be God? Was the world not able to be God? How can God become God if the world has already existed? How can we think the existence of children without parents? Whereas *creatio ex nihilo* allows us to confess that God can exist even without the world (Matthew 24:35),⁵⁸⁸ process thought denies the possibility of God without the world. If God cannot be God without the world, how can this God become God? If we do not accept creatio ex nihilo, I think, we have to say “no world, no God” and we could be pantheist, because, as process theologians think, God and the world have been always existing together everlastingly. However, God must be God without the world, although

Wesleyans – now reject. 4. Empirical problem: We have no evidence that our universe originally came into being from absolutely nothing. 5. Creation at an instant problem: We have no evidence in the history of the universe after the big bang that entities can emerge instantaneously from absolute nothingness. Out of nothing comes nothing (*ex nihil, nihil fit*). 6. Solitary power problem: Creatio ex nihilo assumes that a powerful God once acted alone. But power is a social concept only meaningful in relation to others. 7. Errant revelation problem: The God with the capacity to create something from absolutely nothing would apparently have the power to guarantee an unambiguous and inerrant message of salvation (e.g. inerrant Bible). An unambiguously clear and inerrant divine revelation does not exist. 8. Evil problem: If God once had the power to create from absolutely nothing, God *essentially* retains that power. But a God of love with this capacity is culpable for failing to prevent genuine evil. 9. Empire Problem: The kind of divine power implied in *creatio ex nihilo* supports a theology of empire, which is based upon unilateral force and control of others. <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/71815840830/doc/?id=10150344373995831>

⁵⁸⁸ It says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

there must be a radical relation between them. In this sense, nothingness is possible. It is not evolution *ex nihilo*, but creation *ex nihilo*. In the sense, it is *creatio ex nihilo* that enables us to call God to be God and to worship God: “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One” (Isaiah 40:25).

However, is it not possible to unify them to have something like “evolutionary theist?” Is there not any room to accept evolution into the Christianity? As the matter of fact, the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is neither equal to creationism nor does it neglect the theory of evolution. I will work to develop a harmonized integration whose basic principle is that God existed before the world, not God with the world, nor vice-versa. Nevertheless, creation and evolution are intertwined in the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Theistic evolution and evolutionary creation both argue that God is the *creator* of the world and that biological evolution is a natural process within the creation. That is, evolution is a tool that God used to develop human life.⁵⁸⁹ Hartshorne also insists on “creation through evolution.”⁵⁹⁰ *Creative evolution* by Henry Bergson provides that “evolution is motivated by an *élan vital*, a “vital impetus” that can also be understood as humanity's natural creative impulse.⁵⁹¹

We can find a more appropriate model from Clayton who accepts both *creatio ex nihilo* and evolution. In conversation with Clayton, Nic Paton asks, what is primary

⁵⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theistic_evolution. Collins summarizes six premises of theistic evolution: “1. The universe came into being out of nothingness, approximately 14 billion years ago. 2. Despite massive improbabilities, the properties of the universe appear to have been precisely tuned for life. 3. While the precise mechanism of the origin of life on earth remains unknown, once life arose, the process of evolution and natural selection permitted the development of biological diversity and complexity over very long periods of time. 4. Once evolution got under way, no special supernatural intervention was required. 5. Humans are part of this process, sharing a common ancestor with the great apes. 6. But humans are also unique in ways that defy evolutionary explanation and point to our spiritual nature. This includes the existence of the Moral Law (the knowledge of right and wrong) and the search for God that characterizes all human cultures throughout history.” Collins, *The Language of God*, 200.

⁵⁹⁰ Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and other Theological Mistakes*, Chapter 3.

⁵⁹¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Evolution_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Evolution_(book)). “Bergson's term “duration” refers to a more individual, subjective experience of time, as opposed to mathematical, objectively measurable “clock time.” In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson suggests that the experience of time as “duration” can best be understood through creative intuition, not through intellect.” Ibid.

between matter and consciousness? Neo Darwinians assert that “all is matter. And everything arose out of matter.” Clayton resists the view, however, because he believes that God creates the world, God exists before the finite world, God is spirit and God could exist without the world. This view says that “spirit precedes matter.” Nonetheless, Clayton asks, “Is that really the final result?” He puts an approximate question: “In this process of evolution, does a creation emerge, which genuinely, truly can encounter God in the midst of this world?” That is, how can we see God’s work in this evolution?⁵⁹²

Clayton asks us to remember a significant principle: that we must investigate the doctrine of creation: “It is not the place of a theological doctrine of creation to replace science, but to acknowledge its findings.”⁵⁹³ Theology has to learn from modern biology and cosmology: “that God has created dynamic and open rather than a static and closed universe; that God has created a highly differentiated rather than a monolithic universe; and that God has created a universe in which there is change, novelty, and indeterminacy as well as continuity, order, and coherence.”⁵⁹⁴ By the same token, Moltmann maintains that a theological doctrine of creation can be compatible with the cosmologies of physics, although they have different experiences and that in their dialogue theologians prefer both “great scientific narratives” such as the development of an expanding universe and the evolution of life, and that they have a particular interest in contingency.⁵⁹⁵

After accepting evolution following creatio ex nihilo, we can accept “continual creation” in that the work of creation is not a past event once-and-for-all but is in the

⁵⁹² <http://soundandsilence.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/phillip-clayton-in-conversation-with-nic-paton/>

⁵⁹³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 179.

⁵⁹⁴ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking understanding: An introduction to Christian Theology* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 1991, 2004), 115-116.

⁵⁹⁵ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 137-138.

making, “here and now, at this moment and always.” In the beginning, argues Ware, the word “beginning” does not mean a temporal sense, but that God is the constant *arche*, the source of all things at every moment. That is, without God’s action in a single moment, nothing would exist.⁵⁹⁶ According to Polkinghorne, an evolutionary world can be understood as a creation by God, not in the sense of “the performance of a pre-determined script,” but in the sense of “a self-improvisatory performance by the actors themselves.”⁵⁹⁷ Even Augustine believed that “God had created the seeds of life from which creatures eventually developed.”⁵⁹⁸ Accordingly, a concept of *creatio continua* complements the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*. Polkinghorne suggests new creation (*ex vetere*) as well as initial creation or old creation. New creation is not second creative act *ex nihilo* but *ex vetere* as the resurrected transformation of the old creation. It is manifested in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁵⁹⁹ As Peacocke notes, just as the world is in a dynamic picture and continues to change, so God is in the creative relation to the world. God is a “living God,” who is continuously creating, in the Hebrew tradition: “God is the *immanent creator* creating in and through the processes of the natural order.”⁶⁰⁰ And, as Philip Hefner considers, in the sense, human beings are “created co-creators.”⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁶ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 159.

⁵⁹⁷ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 94. Recently, one of the founders of Creation-Science Association in Korea was expelled from the group, because he had insisted that the age of the earth would be more than 10,000 years-old. Most churches or seminaries in Korea still have been teaching the age of the world as 6,000 -10,000 years-old, according to the story of the Bible. So, it is not easy to maintain or talk about other hypotheses or evolution in church. It is the reality in Korea.

⁵⁹⁸ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 94.

⁵⁹⁹ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 91.

⁶⁰⁰ Arthur Peacocke, “Introduction: “In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being?,” xx. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁰¹ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 94. Thomas Oord also asserts that human beings are created co-creators, although he does not accept *creatio ex nihilo*. http://thomasjaylor.com/index.php/blog/archives/evangelicals_and_evolution/

In conclusion, as Tillich argues, we need to understand that the doctrine of creation is “not the story of an event which took place ‘once upon a time,’” but the “basic description of the relation between God and the world.”⁶⁰² Migliore emphasizes that the stories of Genesis 1 and 2 are not scientific theories contradicting to modern cosmological theories, but “poetic, doxological declarations of faith in God.” Thus, the doctrine of creation is not scientific explanation or theory of how the world existed, but “a religious affirmation that we are contingent, finite beings whose very existence is a gift from God.”⁶⁰³ Thus *creatio ex nihilo* in Genesis 1 does not mean creationism.

2) Trinity⁶⁰⁴

Why is the doctrine of the Trinity necessary in Christian theology? What do we think when we hear the name of the Triune God? In a sense, Moltmann’s acknowledgement would be proper to those questions, acknowledgement that if we ask about trinity, it is not easy to find a clear answer about why it is important, except that it is “part of the faith of the universal church.”⁶⁰⁵ Cyril Richardson describes this as a dilemma: if we deny it, we may lose our soul, if we try to understand it, we may lose our wits.⁶⁰⁶ Whence the

⁶⁰² Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 252.

⁶⁰³ Migliore, *Faith seeking Understanding*, 113. Ted Peters’ eschatological panentheism accepts creator, activity in the world, and aseity. He defines “*creatio ex nihilo*” as one that “God creates from the future, not the past.” That is, God invites non-being into being and future means openness and fulfillment. If he keeps both *creatio ex nihilo* and creation continua, he might change his definition of creation ex nihilo like this: God creates not only from the past but also from the future.

⁶⁰⁴ Schleiermacher just put the Trinity at the last a few pages in his *Christian Faith*. Schleiermacher had no interest in Trinity, just 14 pages from 800 pages. “We have only to do with the God-consciousness given in our self-consciousness along with our consciousness of the world; hence, we have no formula for the being of God in himself as distinct from the being of God in the world.” (CF, 748). I should confess that I did not understand why Trinity was of very importance even after I studied theology in M. Div. and Th. M., and became a pastor in Korea, so that I never preached about Trinity in church. However, studying theology of Catherine LaCugna and Miroslav Volf, I realized that Trinity is not just a superficial dogma concerning God’s aseity and immutability, but really related to the world.

⁶⁰⁵ Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, xiii. Trinity seems to have “a *mysterium logicum* (logical mystery) than a *mysterium salutis* (mystery of salvation).” It is reduced to curiosity. However, “A mystery is different from a contradiction,” since mystery is “an apparent contradiction which there is good reason to believe.” Ibid., xiii.

⁶⁰⁶ Cyril Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*,

emergence of the doctrine of the Trinity? Although the word Trinity is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, Christianity explicitly confesses the Trinitarian God, since the doctrine of the Trinity becomes the product of church's meditation on the Bible and of church's effort to express God's free grace in the gospel.⁶⁰⁷

However, Richardson also argues three elements of the Trinity to consider: First, it is needful to give "a metaphysical ground to the threefold experience of God" (Father as the source of Being, Christ as Redeemer, and Holy Spirit as Sanctifier). Second, it is necessary to make a distinction between God and the created world. God does not need to create the world, because God has perfect relationship among triune God without loneliness. Third, it is needful to keep God's homoousios between Father and Son, unlike Arianism.⁶⁰⁸ The general and simple problem of the Trinity is how God can be both tripersonal and one. Here I will explore three different models of the Trinity: Augustine, Rahner, and Moltmann. Each thinker contributes important features to a well-rounded doctrine of the Trinity today.

A) Augustine

Before Augustine, we need to see The Cappadocians. They defend divine unity in three different "modes of being." Nevertheless, they emphasize the priority of the Father who is "the source or fountainhead of the Trinity." The Son is "begotten" and the Spirit is "proceeds." They explain the relation between one substance and three persons in the relationship between a universal (humanity) and its particulars (individual persons).

ed. by Roy Battenhouse, 235.

⁶⁰⁷ Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, xiii-xiv. Migliore, *Faith seeking Understanding*, 67.

⁶⁰⁸ Richardson, "The Enigma of the Trinity," 239-240. Migliore, *Faith seeking Understanding: An introduction to Christian Theology*, 67.

Although all human beings have their common nature, they are not identical but different. Thus the Father (being ingenerate, *agennesia*), the Son (beings generate, *genesis*), and the Spirit (beings sent) are different from each other.⁶⁰⁹ Augustine's task is to explain how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit constitute a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality.⁶¹⁰ In the sense, resisting any subordinationism, although the Son and the Spirit appear posteriorly in history, Augustine emphasizes their coequality in eternity.⁶¹¹

Trinity for Augustine has two distinct characteristics: the place of Holy Spirit and The Psychological Analogies. First, Augustine is the first to identify the Holy Spirit with the love (*caritas*) which binds the Father and the Son (wisdom, *sapientia*). And insofar as this Spirit "makes us dwell in God, and God in us," the Spirit is the "divine gift" which unites God to us. Augustine explains in 1 Corinthians 13:13 (These three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love) as follows: a) God's greatest gift is love. b) God's greatest gift is the Holy Spirit. c) Therefore the Holy Spirit is love.⁶¹² Augustine suggests that "love" is the key concept to know God and the Trinity, because God is love: "he that loves, and that which is loved, and love itself."⁶¹³ The Father is Lover, the Son the Beloved, the Spirit the mutual Love that connects the two,⁶¹⁴ Father to Son, and both 'Father and Son' to believers.⁶¹⁵

⁶⁰⁹ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 257-258.

⁶¹⁰ Richardson, "The Enigma of the Trinity," 238-239. Augustine's idea of Trinity was different from the Greek Fathers, since he was ignorant of them. Since he was not able to read Greek with fluency, he could not grasp the meaning of Cappadocian theology. Ibid.

⁶¹¹ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 258. It makes a distinction between Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity. Ibid.

⁶¹² McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 258-259.

⁶¹³ Richardson, "The Enigma of the Trinity," 248.

⁶¹⁴ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 46.

⁶¹⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 259.

Second, psychological analogies appeal to the human mind. In creating the world, God has left a characteristic imprint (*vestigium*) of the image of God upon the height of his creation, i.e., humanity, especially, in the neo-Platonic view, on the human mind. In the inner mental world of individuals rather than in personal relationship, Augustine is looking for “traces of the Trinity” (*vestigia Trinitatis*) in creation. This is the “radical individualism” united with intellectualism. Augustine describes “a triadic structure to human thought” which is based on the being of God: *mens/notitia/amor*—mind, knowledge, and love. The human mind is an image of God himself in that there can be three “persons” in God: “Father as Being, Son as Consciousness, and Spirit as Love.”⁶¹⁶ Nevertheless, although human beings are created in the image of the triune God, asserts Augustine, the word “image” is inappropriate, because they are not fully the image of God, but ‘*after*’ the image. In the sense, we can never know God as He is and the Trinity remains an “enigma.”⁶¹⁷ The weakness of this analogy of self-presence, self-knowledge, and self-love is that it leans toward a “monopersonal, modalistic view of God.”⁶¹⁸ Although Calvin repeats Augustine’s Trinity, he doubts psychological analogies.⁶¹⁹

De Trinitate: The Doctrine and the Scriptures

First of all, for Augustine the “authority of revelation” (belief) precedes reason because “something must be believed” and then reason can understand it. And reason has three defects: first, it is slow to reach the right conclusion; second, it is darkened by sin and third, it is only by contemplation that the divine can be known. This defective reason cannot know God as He is because God’s nature cannot be directly accessed by the

⁶¹⁶ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 258-259. Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 47.

⁶¹⁷ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 248-249.

⁶¹⁸ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 48.

⁶¹⁹ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 260.

reason which consists of the experience of the senses or of the intellect. Because of these defects of reason, Richardson asserts that we have to start with “truth as it is revealed” and we need the “guide of the Catholic Faith and the Scriptures.”⁶²⁰

Then Augustine defends the deity of the Son (*homoousia*) against Arian (*homoiousia*). Since the Son is equal to the Father in relation to the form of God and the Son is less than the Father in the form of a servant, a statement that “My father is greater than I” (John 14:28) is not contradictory to the verse, “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30). Through the reinterpretation of Mark 13:32 (“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”), Augustine argues that even in His incarnation, the Son had unlimited knowledge: “Christ, even as man, was not really ignorant, but is called ignorant in the sense that He made others ignorant, by hiding truths they were not ready to grasp.” The third type is neither “less than” nor equal to the Father but that “He is of the Father.” It means “the birth of the Son from the Father.” The Son is sent (John 14:26). Since “Sent” does not mean the subordination of the Son to the Father, but “making visible” to the world, it cannot fit for the Father, although He appeared “in theophanies.”⁶²¹ Augustine answers the co-equality of the three persons. The Father is the “beginning of the whole divinity,” the Son is the “brightness of eternal light,” “an emanation (*manatio*) from the Omnipotent,” and the Holy Spirit “enjoys the same essential nature” with the Father and the Son and is the “unifying

⁶²⁰ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 240-241. The first part of *De Trinitate* (Books I-VIII) defines the “faith in the Trinity” (examining scriptures). The last part of *De Trinitate* deals with analogies to reach the nature of the Trinity. Human beings are created in the image of the Trinity, and hence human nature must disclose the divine image. Ibid., 241.

⁶²¹ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 241-242. Against Arian who claims that the Son was inferior to the Father because the Son is visible by nature, Augustine argues that the Father was visible. The Trinity was visible from the three men who appeared to Abraham in Gen. 18: “visibly intimated by the visible creature, the equality of the Trinity and one and the same substance in the three Persons.” Daniel 7:9-11 also means that “the Father gives, while the Son receives, an eternal kingdom.” Ibid., 243.

principle” in the Godhead. In the sense, the relations between the Persons of the Trinity are “not those of degree or order but of causality.”⁶²²

There are some debates. First is about *filioque*. It is about the “double procession of the Spirit, from both Father and Son.” Whereas to the Greeks, it means “two principles of causality in the Godhead,” to the West, it expresses “a way of expressing the equality of Father and Son,” and the “bond of union that unified Father and Son.”⁶²³ Second is about unity and the distinctions among the three persons. There is the unity in that the Trinity is the togetherness of “the voice of the Father, and the flesh of the Son, and the dove of the Holy Spirit.” Thus Augustine expresses the co-inherence of the Trinity as follows: “so both each are in each, and all in each, and each in all, and all in all, and all are one.” There is the distinction in the Godhead. Cappadocian made distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, but Augustine translated ‘*hypostasis*’ as ‘substance.’ They express relations, not essence and substance. “There is one substance in the Trinity, not three; for with God, to be is the same thing as to subsist.” Augustine uses the word “Person” (*persona*) to express the distinctions in the Godhead. However, he realizes that this is inadequate, since the word ‘person’ would refer not to relation but to essence, so that three persons would mean three essences.⁶²⁴ Thus we can say that “God is one according to essence, and three according to relation.”⁶²⁵

In conclusion, according to Karkkainen, Augustine emphasizes the “divine unity and substance.” Whereas for the Christian East “distinctions of persons” are the focal point, for Augustine “substance” is. And, while Augustine was aware of analogies of the

⁶²² Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 244-245.

⁶²³ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 245.

⁶²⁴ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 246.

⁶²⁵ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 247. In any sense, whereas the Cappadocians would be tritheism, Augustine would be in Unitarianism or Sabellianism (modalism). Ibid.

Trinity, many of his followers make them abstract speculations.⁶²⁶ With regard to the difficulty of the three or the one, Augustine states that the formula of three persons has been coined, “not in order to give a complete explanation,” but in order not to remain silent⁶²⁷ and he ends it with a prayer, “which is better than an argument”: “I have sought Thee, and have desired to see with my understanding what I believed; and I have argued and laboured much... O Lord, the one God, God the Trinity, whatever I have said in these books that is of Thine, may they acknowledge who are thine; if anything of my own, may it be pardoned both by Thee and by those who are Thine.”⁶²⁸ Augustine’s thought decisively shaped subsequent Western trinitarian theology of God.⁶²⁹

B) Rahner

Karkkainen maintains that if Karl Barth started the “Trinitarian renaissance” in the 20th century, Karl Rahner established the “canons of later Trinitarian language” with his famous rule, that is, the identity of the Immanent Trinity (IT) and Economic Trinity (ET),⁶³⁰ that is, the Trinity in the History and Economy of Salvation is the Immanent Trinity.⁶³¹ Rahner criticizes the traditional doctrine of Trinity on three interrelated issues. First is the priority of “On the One God” (the unity of God) over “On the Triune God” (threeness). Second is the problem with the “Augustinian rule of the indivisibility of the works of the Triune God *ad extra*.” It makes theologians neglect the “peculiarity of each Trinitarian person.” For example, theology textbooks assign “incarnation” not to “the Son,

⁶²⁶ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 50.

⁶²⁷ Augustine, *On the Trinity* 5.9.10.

⁶²⁸ Richardson, “The Enigma of the Trinity,” 254-255.

⁶²⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 82.

⁶³⁰ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 76.

⁶³¹ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1978), 136.

Logos, who became human,” but to “‘God’ (in the generic sense) in assuming humanity.” Consequently, Trinitarian theology becomes ambiguous in speaking of hypostases. Third is the separation of the Trinity from salvation history which makes it “philosophical and abstract.” This is opposite to the direction of the Bible. The only proper way to approach the Trinity is to take “salvation history” as the “starting point.” Thus the Trinity is “a mystery of salvation” rather than “an abstract speculation into the Godhead apart from the world.” This leads into the identity of IT and ET.⁶³²

Rahner’s Rule

Rahner was concerned that traditional theology focuses on the “inner life of God and especially on God’s unity of being (‘simplicity’)” apart from salvation history, so that it neglects the Trinity and the relationship between the Christian life and the Trinity.

Rahner wants to forbid “speculation about the immanent Trinity.” Why then is there need for immanent Trinity? The only reason to speak of God’s immanent trinity is “to guard against dissolving God into history and to protect God’s transcendence and the graciousness of salvation.” That is, since God in the immanent Trinity is the same as the God we experience in salvation history, there is no distinction between “the doctrine of the Trinity” and “the doctrine of the economy of salvation.”⁶³³ Ted Peters interprets Rahner’s rule as follows. The way we experience God is not in general but “through God’s saving activity within history.” In the economy of salvation, we experience God who is communicating Godself.⁶³⁴ Rahner criticizes God as a Whole. The incarnated God we meet in this world is not “God as a whole,” but Jesus who is the Son (God’s Logos).

⁶³² Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 77-78.

⁶³³ Quote from Karkkainen, *Trinity*, 78, Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 145.

⁶³⁴ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 144-145. Ted Peters, *God as Trinity*, 96.

There is a “threefold relation of God to us,” but it is not tritheism, since it is the “self-communications of the one God in three interrelated ways.” And it is not merely a copy of the inner Trinity, but the Trinity itself, “the triune personal God.”⁶³⁵

In the formula of the identity of IT and ET, we can ask whether “incarnation, cross, and resurrection contribute something “new” to God’s own life. Is there any change in God? Can we keep the immutability of God? Despite claims of the unchanging nature of God, Rahner insists, first, that history (in the world) becomes God’s own history or becoming. Second, it is possible to speak of change in an immutable God if the change is something which is not internal to the Deity: “He who is not subject to change in himself can himself be subject to change in *something else*.”⁶³⁶ In the incarnation, “God becomes while remaining immutable.”⁶³⁷ Furthermore, human beings are the “grammar of God’s possible self-expression” and the “most fitting vehicle for God’s self-expression.” Thus insofar as the Son of God is the proper self-expression of God, the Son is the “outward expression of immanent Word.”⁶³⁸

Terminology of Person

Rahner’s criticism of the term “person” is similar to Barth, in that it is in danger of tritheism, because the term “person” means “individual.” Nonetheless, asserts Rahner, we have to note that the term “person” has survived for more than 1500 years. Rahner suggests we use the phrase “distinct manner of subsistence” rather than “person” or “modes of being” (*seinsweise*). “Distinct manner of subsistence” means that there are

⁶³⁵ Karkkainen, *Trinity*, 79.

⁶³⁶ Karkkainen, *Trinity*, 80.

⁶³⁷ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 145.

⁶³⁸ Karkkainen, *Trinity*, 80.

“not three consciousnesses” in the Godhead, but rather, “the one consciousness” in a threefold way shared by Father, Son, and Spirit. Through this change in terminology, Rahner wants to avoid both modalism and tritheism both “by speaking of *distinct* manner of subsistence” and “by speaking of *subsistence* which is not ‘as personal’ as *person*.”⁶³⁹

Some Debates

Let us think about critical reflections. Although Rahner’s rule has been called a “decisive watershed,” argues Karkkainen, it is an irony to note that the Trinity did not play any significant role in Rahner’s own systematic theology. We can consider Rahner’s contribution which relates the “divine life” to “salvation history” as the “gateway to the knowledge of God.” Ted Peters describes Rahner’s significance as follows: There is “relationality in God.” God’s relationship to the world is not external but internal to the divine life (Father). God in the incarnation includes the humanity of the historical Jesus (Son). God in the Holy Spirit binds believers to Christ (Holy Spirit), so that in faith they are “at one with Christ” and “at one with God.”⁶⁴⁰

There are some criticisms. First is the radical identity problem between ET and IT. This identity could compromise divine freedom, because the ET-IT distinction protects divine freedom. In this sense there is a concern about the “total collapse of IT into ET,” which makes God a finite God who is dependent upon the world. This entails the question of the “newness” of the revelation of God. That is, if God’s incarnation does not introduce anything new to the world, God’s self-revelation is meaningless. After the incarnation, the cross and resurrection, God exists in a newly different way. Although he

⁶³⁹ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 81.

⁶⁴⁰ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 82.

keeps the idea of immutability, he also accepts the significance of the incarnation as something new. Second is the distinction problem between ET and IT. It means subordinationism which considers ET as a “temporal image” or a “superficial act” of eternal Trinity (IT).⁶⁴¹

Then, how can we solve the tension between ET and IT, neither fully equating nor separating them? According to Lacugna, Rahner’s rule relates to his theological method which in turn relates to “the order of theological knowledge” to the “historical form of God’s self-communication in Christ and the Spirit.” Does Rahner conceive his rule epistemologically or ontologically? Epistemologically speaking, the rule says that no gap exists between IT and ET. However, does Rahner go beyond the epistemological principle (order of knowing) to an ontological identity (order of being)? Karkkainen argues that Rahner only wants to connect divine life with salvation history, which is a faithful way to know God. Edmund Hill calls Rahner’s rule a “theological shorthand” in the sense that ET means the mystery of the Trinity as revealed in the economy of salvation “through such saving events and realities as the incarnation, Pentecost, the Church.”⁶⁴²

With regard to God’s “self-expression” and “self-possession,” Rahner accepts Hegel’s dialectical idea that it is “in the Son” (incarnation, salvation historical events) as the other that the Father reveals himself “to possess the Spirit in himself.” However, like DiNoia, we can ask whether God’s free expression could be the result of God’s necessity. However, says Karkkainen, Rahner did not move in this way, since Rahner placed the external self-expression already “in a prior act of the inner life of God, in eternity.” That

⁶⁴¹ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 82-83.

⁶⁴² Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 83-84.

is, “It is because God must express himself inwardly that he can also utter himself outwardly; the finite, created utterance *ad extra* is a continuation of the immanent constitution of ‘image and likeness’—a free continuation.” In order to preserve God’s freedom, Yves Congar asserts that although there is only one Trinity, self-communication as “condescension, *kenosis*” is “not connatural with the being of the divine Persons.” Thus there is a disparity between God *in se* (IT) and God *ad extra* (ET). In the sense, LaCugna maintains that although God’s incomprehensibility or ineffable mystery is not reduced to God’s self-expression in the salvation history, because of the identity between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, God’s self-revelation in Christ and the Spirit reveals God’s nature.⁶⁴³

To that extent, then, like Barth, Rahner kept the classical belief, i.e., God’s eternal being ultimately independent of historical events. If so, we can ask: Can we affirm both God’s presence in the salvation history and God’s priority over the human capacity to explain self-communication? Beyond the epistemological principle, LaCugna and Moltmann affirm an “ontological identity between ET and IT” in relation to eschatology. While accepting Rahner’s rule in epistemological dimension, by the same token Ted Peters maintains a distinction between the IT and ET “as eschatological.” We here need to understand “time and eternity.” For Peters, since eternity does not mean “timelessness,” but rather “everlastingness” that includes the temporal history, as “what happens in time contributes to the content of what is eternal.” Thus whereas eternity is interrelated to history, God’s action is not separated from the God’s eternity.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 84-85.

⁶⁴⁴ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 85.

C) Moltmann

Moltmann considers God as “triunity, the three-in-one,” since he prefers the “threeness of God” to the “unity” based on a “monotheistic” concept of God. In this sense, Moltmann suggests “social doctrine of the Trinity” (social trinity) which focuses on “relationships and communities,” rejecting the immutability doctrine of classical theism.⁶⁴⁵ However, threeness means neither “three different individuals” (tritheism) nor “three modes of being or three repetitions of the One God” (modalism). And the concept of divine unity does not mean “monadic unity,” or “the one lordship of God,”⁶⁴⁶ but the “union of the tri-unity,” “fellowship,” “communicable unity,” and “open, inviting unity, capable of interaction.”⁶⁴⁷ Divine unity needs to be understood as follows: “without reducing the threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the threeness.”⁶⁴⁸ Furthermore, Moltmann relates the salvation history in eschatology to the “trinitarian life of God in itself.” In other words, ET completes IT when the history of salvation is completed.⁶⁴⁹ For Moltmann Trinity presupposes Christology, since “the cross of the Son stands from eternity in the centre of the Trinity,” emphasizing the idea of God’s suffering. Then, ask the people, how can we consider Christ’s passion as God’s revelation, if God cannot suffer? However, insofar as the cross is the most important difference from stories of other gods, and God’s passion is an “active passion,” Moltmann advocates the “doctrine of *theopathy*.”⁶⁵⁰ “God was in Christ” (II Cor. 5.19) means that God acted “in the

⁶⁴⁵ Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, 102.

⁶⁴⁶ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 175.

⁶⁴⁷ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 111.

⁶⁴⁸ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 175.

⁶⁴⁹ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 112.

⁶⁵⁰ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 103-104.

crucifixion of Jesus” and made Himself “visible in the cross of Christ.”⁶⁵¹ In the Christ we can see “a negation (expiation) of the negation (sin).”⁶⁵²

In the relation between God and the world, Moltmann develops some important concepts. First is *Zimzum*. In the mutual relationship between God and the world, Moltmann considers the creation of the world as “God’s self-humiliation” and develops it with the help of the Jewish kabbalistic notion of *zimzum* (self-limitation). This is called “Trinitarian creation.”⁶⁵³ Second is perichoresis. For Moltmann this unity must be understood “in the perichoresis of the divine Persons.” Furthermore, this perichoresis relates to the world. Third is *Shekinah* (indwelling): When everything is in God and God is in all, there is “mutual indwelling.” The God’s eschatological indwelling is the presence of God in the world.⁶⁵⁴ Fourth is doxology: Doxology is our response to God’s salvation for us all. Doxological response means “participation in and transformation into God rather than an attempt to know God *in se*.”⁶⁵⁵ With regard to the trinitarian grammar, since knowing means “knowing in wonder,” we can know God “by the way of worshiping the Triune God.” This is “doxological knowledge” and “true Trinitarian grammar!”⁶⁵⁶

On the one hand, Moltmann’s Trinity contributes to feminism (Elizabeth Johnson), liberationism (Leonardo Boff), and even evangelicalism (Millard J. Ericksson).⁶⁵⁷ On the other hand, there are weak points: First is Tritheism. Ted Peters argues that Moltmann’s social doctrine of the Trinity on the “three separate subjects” sacrifice divine unity.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 190.

⁶⁵² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 261.

⁶⁵³ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 106-107.

⁶⁵⁴ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 111-112.

⁶⁵⁵ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 113.

⁶⁵⁶ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, xvi.

⁶⁵⁷ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 115.

⁶⁵⁸ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 116.

Second, the idea of the cross or death of God would make God too much dependent on the world. Thus people ask, can the suffering God overcome suffering and evil?⁶⁵⁹

Relation between Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity

Let us think about the issue of the relationship between Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity. Immanent (and necessary) Trinity and Economic Trinity can be expressed in juxtaposition as follows: God in himself and God for us; *Theologia* and *Oikonomia*,⁶⁶⁰ *Deus Absconditus* and *Deus Revelatus*; *Deus Nudus* [naked God] and *Deus Incarnatus* [incarnate God];⁶⁶¹ The Substance and The Revelation; *Opera trinitatis ad intra* (Inwardness) and *Opera trinitatis ad extra* (Outwardness). Like these distinctions, there are two sides to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity. Without the right side, obviously, we in no way comprehend the left side inasmuch as we cannot have direct access to the left side without the right side. And vice versa?

Von Balthasar relates the Cross to the Trinity in the view of soteriology, since the man Jesus cannot save the world, if he is not God in the Hypostatic Union. However, Von Balthasar's way is different from that of many theologians who emphasize ET. Rahner, for example, would assert that it is only in ET that God's self-communication is revealed, and he considers IT merely a "precondition for God's true, earnest self-revelation."⁶⁶² Von Balthasar goes a different way which is "neither a formal process of

⁶⁵⁹ Karkkainen, *The Trinity*, 119.

⁶⁶⁰ Whereas *theologia* is given in *oikonomia*, *oikonomia* reveals *theologia*. Since we can only access to *theologia* through *oikonomia*, immanent trinity is not different from the economic trinity. That is, there is only one starting point: the *oikonomia* that reveals the mystery of *theologia*. LaCuana, *God for Us*, 224.

⁶⁶¹ According to Jüngel, Barth argues that the dogma of the Trinity "will not lead us beyond revelation and faith, but into revelation and faith, to their correct understanding." Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, tr. by. John Webster (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 53.

⁶⁶² TD IV, 319-321. Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity remind me of Spinoza's expression of

self-communication in God, as in Rahner, nor entangled in the world process, as in Moltmann.” God’s relation to the world is not necessary but is, rather, free and self-giving love. The Father imparts Godhead to the Son, when the Father’s self-utterance in the Son is “an initial kenosis,” and the Father “*is* this movement of self-giving that holds nothing back” (an absolute renunciation”). The Son’s response to God’s gift (equal substance) is “eternal thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) to the Father.” However, since Von Balthasar asserts that even in this participation, there is “an absolute, infinite ‘distance,’” he does not agree with process theology’s assertion of a mutual identity between “the world process” (even including the Cross) and “the eternal and timeless ‘procession’ of the Hypostases in God.” Rather, he accepts that we can approach the triune God only “on the basis of what is manifest in God’s kenosis” in the theology of the Cross. Thus he accepts both the “mystery of the absolute” and “the possibility of such experience and suffering” in God. This avoids God’s suffering but accepts God’s sharing in the suffering world.⁶⁶³

When the Father gives Himself to the Son in the “primal divine drama,” he does not lose himself, since he is the “whole divine essence.” God has infinite power and powerlessness in that God is God in the kenosis. The Son receives in his thanksgiving both “omnipotence and powerlessness from the Father” and the world can be ‘recapitulated’ only in the Son. Here we can see the Father’s self-giving and the Son’s thanksgiving.⁶⁶⁴ The divine drama lasts forever: “The Father was never without the Son, nor were Father and Son ever without the Spirit.” Von Balthasar does not accept Hegelian dialectics to explain the God-world relationship but rather approaches it from

God: *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata*. As Immanent Trinity relates to *Natura Naturans*, so Economic Trinity relates to *Natura Naturata*.

⁶⁶³ TD IV, 322-324.

⁶⁶⁴ TD IV, 325-326.

two sides, first from negative theology, and second from the world drama which is grounded in God.⁶⁶⁵

Von Balthasar argues that “the inner-trinitarian kenosis is part of the inner-trinitarian *perichoresis*, in Latin: *circuminsessio*.” That is, there is the unity of God the Father and Jesus the Son, “without mixing and without separating”: “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me” (John 14:11).⁶⁶⁶ In Rahner’s rule, the accent obviously lies on ET, insofar as the Son is the self-utterance of the Father and the Spirit is the Father’s self-giving together with the Son.⁶⁶⁷ Catherine LaCugna interprets Rahner’s rule as follows: “An immanent theology of the Trinity is not a theology of a purely intradivine Trinity of self-communication of persons unrelated to the world.”⁶⁶⁸ That is, “the referent for the IT is not ‘God in *se*,’ or ‘God’s essence as it is in itself.’”⁶⁶⁹ Rather, what God has revealed in Christ and the Spirit is the reality of God as God from all eternity and what is given in the economy of salvation is the mystery of God which exists from all eternity as triune. However, since the distinction between economic and immanent Trinity is “strictly conceptual,” not ontological, there are not two trinities, i.e., the Trinity of experience and a transeconomic Trinity.⁶⁷⁰

Let me here reflect again both the IT and the ET with LaCugna’s interpretation of Rahner’s rule: “God freely, utterly and completely bestows God’s very self in the

⁶⁶⁵ TD IV, 327.

⁶⁶⁶ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 141.

⁶⁶⁷ TD IV, 320.

⁶⁶⁸ Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: the Trinity and Christian Life*, 224. There is only one self-communication of God, one begetting of the Son, one breathing forth of the Spirit, with both eternal and temporal aspects. An immanent theology of the Trinity is ineluctably a theology of the ‘internal’ structure of the economy of redemption. LaCugna accepts Eberhard Jüngel’s position: The distinction between immanent and economic Trinity “corresponds to the old distinction between ‘theology’ (*theologia*) and ‘economy’ (*oikonomia*). But it is legitimate only when the economic doctrine of the Trinity deals with God’s history with [humanity], and the immanent doctrine of the Trinity is *its* summarizing concept. Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 231.

⁶⁷⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 212.

encounter with human persons, yet God remains ineffable because the creature is incapable of fully receiving or understanding the One who is imparted.”⁶⁷¹ That is, even though God reveals Himself in the ET and the ET is not other than IT, we cannot fully know God only because of our human inability to know God. In this case, however, God at best exists as immanent transcendence, i.e., IT within ET. However, is it enough? If so, is it not possible that not only God but also human beings remain ineffable? Can I fully know even myself even though I do not have *Humanus Absconditus*? Can I fully explain others even though they have just *Humanus Revelatus*? If we say that just as we cannot explain our human history or phenomena in some parts, so we cannot comprehend God even in economic Trinity, why do we call God also *Deus Absconditus*? Even if we completely understand God, that is, even when we see God face to face, does it mean that *deus absconditus* disappears? If we answer “Yes,” how can we make distinct ineffability between “God” and “human being”? Where can we find infinite qualitative difference between God and human beings? Thus, even though IT can be revealed only through ET, and they are not two different trinities, I would like to argue that IT is bigger than ET. In this sense, I do not agree with Rahner’s rule: “The economic Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity, and vice versa.”

Balthasar exactly answers this question: “The only comparison available to us is the free self-opening of one human subject to another, where the person addressed has no inherent right to the knowledge thus imparted. But this analogy too fails at the crucial point: even information freely shared between equals cannot be compared with God giving creatures a share in his inner life, a life which, to them, is “fundamentally foreign”

⁶⁷¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 231.

and an inaccessible mystery.”⁶⁷² To that extent, then, we cannot even more comprehend IT because IT is always more than ET. If it is not, how can we say, as Augustine declares, “*Deus semper major?*” Can we not explain that there is difference between ‘God’ and ‘God for us’ even though we do not deny that there is only one self-communication of one God from all eternity, not two different trinities?⁶⁷³

In conclusion, the deeper our knowledge of God, the more unfathomable (Eph 3:8) the divine love becomes. As Von Balthasar contends, the more *Deus Revelatus* shows up, the more undisclosed the *Deus Absconditus* becomes.⁶⁷⁴ That is, even though ‘*Deus Absconditus*’ reveals ‘*Deus Revelatus*,’ ‘*Deus Revelatus*’ cannot completely reveal the mystery of *Deus Absconditus*. And God remains, paradoxically, hidden even in the event of revelation. Even though God’s revelation in Jesus Christ is completely trustworthy, because it is Jesus Christ in whom the revelation of God is decisively embodied,⁶⁷⁵ we cannot fully comprehend the being of God and God’s gifts of creation, reconciliation, and redemption,⁶⁷⁶ because of the limitation of humanity itself. Even in the beatific vision or in virtue of the *lumen gloriae* (light of glory), argues Anselm Min, “God does not cease to be infinite.”⁶⁷⁷

3) Transcendence

⁶⁷² TD II, 399.

⁶⁷³ LaCugna’s answer to this question is ‘No,’ because ‘God’ is always ‘God for us.’ LaCugna, *God for us*, 225.

⁶⁷⁴ TD II, 260.

⁶⁷⁵ Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding* 25. In Jesus Christ, God has spoken not only through a prophet but through a Son (Heb. 1:1-2), that the eternal divine Word has become incarnate in a singular human life (John 1:14), that the light of the glory of God has shone in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor.4:6), that in him the Spirit-anointed liberator of all the oppressed has appeared. (Luke 4:18ff). Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding*, 24. At the burning bush, Moses is given the name of God, but it is the name of unfathomable mystery: “I am who I am,” or “I will be who I will be (Gen. 3:14). Moses asks to see God but is permitted to see only God’s back side (Exod. 33:12-23). Elijah hears the voice of God not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a small voice (1 Kings 19:11); Isaiah declares, “Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior” (Isa. 45:15). Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Anselm Min, *Paths to the Triune God* (Notre Dame: University of Nortre Dame, 2005), 50.

Since the days of early Christian tradition, there have been no more controversial conceptions in theology than those expressed by the two words, transcendence and immanence. To solve this tension might be a perennial task of theology. Roughly speaking, whereas transcendence means God's superiority, otherness, independence, or separation from creation, immanence means the close relationship, the intimacy of God in the world. In the relation between transcendence and immanence, on the one hand, if we emphasize only the former, how can we explain "God for us"? On the other hand, if we emphasize only the latter, how can we then worship God, because worship is possible only when we admit a qualitative difference? How is it possible to insist on God's transcendence and immanence simultaneously? In fact, while liberal theology emphasizes divine immanence, classical theism focuses on divine transcendence, although they have their respective counterparts.

A) Transcendence

There are many examples of radical transcendence both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. First, Isaiah 55:8-9 is the most concrete expression of the difference between the infinite and the finite, that difference being that God's thoughts and God's ways are not ours but are higher than ours. This God "hides" himself (Isaiah 45:15) and has measured the world in his hand (Isaiah 40:12). In the New Testament, we can see the preexistence of Christ before the world (John 1:1, Colossians 1:17). Although we build houses for God, God the Most High does not live in the houses made by us, because God already made all these things (Acts 7:48-50). Thus God's wisdom and knowledge are beyond the ken of human beings (Romans 11: 33-34).

C. S. Lewis's insight shows us the radical difference or distance between God and human beings.

The man who does not regard God as other than himself cannot be said to have a religion at all. On the other hand, if I think God other than myself in the same way in which my fellow-men, and objects in general, are other than myself, I am beginning to make Him an idol. I am daring to treat His existence as somehow parallel to my own. But He is the ground of our being. He is always both within us and over against us. Our reality is so much from His reality as He, moment by moment, projects into us. The deeper the level within ourselves from which our prayer, or any other act, wells up, the more it is His, but not at all the less ours. Rather, most ours when most His.⁶⁷⁸

That is, if we consider God as existing at the same level as human beings, then God is not God but an idol. As Balthasar argues, without this distance between God and humans, there could be “‘no genuine intercourse,’ ‘no dialogue,’ and hence ‘no drama’” between God and humans.⁶⁷⁹

As one of the leading scholars of “radical orthodoxy,” John Milbank describes a modern world that has lost transcendence or height, but “there was still depth.”⁶⁸⁰ The Radical Orthodox thinkers want to return to classical traditions based on patristic and medieval roots, calling for the reappropriation of transcendence in Abrahamic religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The cosmology of this theory comes from two ideas about reality contained in Platonic thought, i.e., the eternal and immutable realm and the worldly realm of becoming. In that sense, “the worldly realm derives its reality from its ‘participation’ (*methexis*) in the immutable forms.”⁶⁸¹

B) Immanence

⁶⁷⁸ From Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. II: Dramatis Personae Man in God (TD II)* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 193-194.

⁶⁷⁹ Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. II*. 177-178.

⁶⁸⁰ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 20.

⁶⁸¹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 22-23.

There are many examples of radical immanence both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. God is not far away but nearby and fills heaven and earth, so that no one can hide from God (Jer. 23:23-24). God is omnipresent to the heaven and in the depths (Ps. 139:7-8), and, accordingly, “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:27-28).

Donald G. Bloesch’s diagnosis of today’s trends with regard to the doctrine of God is proper to start this section:

“A new immanentalism is displacing the transcendentalism that has hitherto characterized both Catholic and Protestant theology. The emphasis today is not on the almightiness of God but on his vulnerability. Attention is given to God’s empathy with the world rather than his majesty, his pathos rather than his infinite beatitude. The idea of a suffering God is supplanting the idea of an impassible God, vigorously defended in Christian tradition. God is no longer the infinite supreme being beyond world history but now ‘the Infinite in the finite’ (Schleiermacher). God is no longer a static Infinite but now a dynamic Infinite that ‘emerges’ out of the void but also ‘rushes’ in (Sri Aurobindo).”⁶⁸²

In other words, God is not beyond the world as the infinite Supreme Being, but in the finite as a dynamic infinite. Tillich argues that when God and the world participate in each other, everything finite participates in being itself, as the structure of being. That is, being itself is not the universal essence of the world, because it transcends the essence/existence split and does not participate in nonbeing but infinitely transcends everything finite.⁶⁸³ Thomas Altizer also argues that God in the world “emptied” and negated his own original Totality, and identified Himself with humanity and descended into the opposite of its original identity. Thus “transcendence becomes immanence just as Spirit becomes flesh.”⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² Quote from Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 303-304. Donald G. Bloesch, *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995), 17.

⁶⁸³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 133.

⁶⁸⁴ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 177.

Conflict of Two Positions

Is there any way to solve this tension between transcendence and immanence? On the one hand, can we speak of difference alone which does not express a mutual interrelation between God and the world? On the other hand, can we speak of only mutual transcendence? If we speak of mutual transcendence, we have to say that just as God dies for us in order to save the world, so we die for God in order to save God. Mutual transcendence in this sense, strictly speaking, is pantheism. Even though God relates to the world, we have to make a room for God. If this radical orthodoxy insists on radical transcendence, is it possible to speak of God without transcendence? If a doctrine of God adheres to immanence alone, why does it need God? In this seemingly irreconcilable dispute, can transcendence and immanence not love each other? Is immanence the axis of evil from the perspective of classical theism? Is transcendence a vacant idea from the perspective of liberal theology? People usually ask these questions as follows: does God exist only beyond the world? Does God act only in this world? While the former question would be that of process theology, roughly speaking, the latter might be that of classical theism. Strictly speaking, however, those who insist on either radical transcendence or radical immanence also at the very least accept the opposite view. For example, even process theology, according to Cobb, makes a distinction with “a Binity” between God’s double reality, “God in God’s transcendence” and “God in God’s immanence,” that is, ontologically in God’s nature and experientially in God in the world. Nevertheless, there is only one God: the God who is immanent in the world is nothing else than the God who is transcendent.⁶⁸⁵ Nowadays, some people attempt to harmonize two contrasts as “transcendental immanence” or “immanent transcendence.” Let me consider

⁶⁸⁵ John Cobb, *Trinity in Process*, 12.

“transcendental immanence” as *kenosis* and “immanent transcendence” as *theosis*.

However, I would like to make a plausible balance between immanence and transcendence not by either-or, but by both-and. We need to remember that the transcendent God alone can be immanent.

Dipolarity between Transcendence and Immanence

We need to find a model which contains dipolarity. Isaiah 57:15 shows us both transcendence and immanence: “For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” A more persuasive model of God consists in both transcendence and immanence. Ware considers God as *pantokrator* which means both “almighty” and “he who holds all things in unity.” In the Christian traditions Ware finds two aspects of God: “without beginning, invisible, incomprehensible, indescribable, changeless,” and “everywhere present and filling everything.”⁶⁸⁶ Saint Maximus the Confessor argues that since Christ the creator Logos planted a logos (word or thought) in every creature, each thing is “a personal word addressed to us by the Creator.” Other Greek Fathers speak God’s transcendent essence (*ousia*) and his immanent energies. While God is totally transcendent in his essence, in the sense, God is radically immanent in his energies.⁶⁸⁷ Let us find some models or alternatives to solve this tension.

⁶⁸⁶ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 157-158. Ware finds a beautiful expression concerning divine omnipresence from *Gospel of Thomas*: “‘Cut the wood in two, and I am there; lift up the stone, and there you will find me’ (logion 77).” Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 160. Ware traces the model of the essence-energies in history of theology. Philo of Alexandria: “while God is unknowable in his nature (*physis*), he is revealed to us in his ‘acts of power’ (*dynameis*); Clement of Alexandria: “God is ‘far off in his essence (*ousia*) but very near in his power (*dynamei*), which embraces all things;” Athanasius of Alexandria: “‘God is in essence (*ousia*) outside the universe... but he is present in everything through his acts of power

Alternative 1)

In *The Touch of Transcendence*, Mayra Rivera uses a term “relational transcendence” which inextricably affirms “not only the irreducible difference of God from all creatures, but the complex differences among creatures as well.”⁶⁸⁸ Although Rivera accepts God’s Other, “wholly Other” (Barth), “infinite qualitative difference” (Kierkegaard), or transcendence, her main idea of transcendence is “not beyond our touch,” that is, “transcendence within creation and between creatures: a relational transcendence.” From this perspective, Barth’s dictum, “*Gott ist im Himmel, du bist auf der Erde* (God is in heaven, thou art on earth)” and “a tangent touch of a circle, that is, without touching it,” ignores human distinction. However, Rivera argues a relational transcendence touching creatures, “embracing their irreducible differences.”⁶⁸⁹ That is, Rivera accepts transcendence not as otherworldliness but as the one in contact with the concrete realities of our world. Rivera’s emphasis is to relate God’s difference or transcendence to interhuman difference, which insists that “God can be perceived as an extreme instance of interhuman difference,” so that God’s transcendence cannot be separated from theological anthropology.⁶⁹⁰

Rivera emphasizes both human and divine transcendence which is “no longer a mere option,” but “the principle and most urgent imperative:” respect for God’s transcendence or otherness is interrelated with our respect of other creatures.⁶⁹¹ However, Rivera’s view that God is an extreme form of interhuman difference might be the same

(*dynameis*);” Basil of Caesarea: “We claim to know our God from his energies (*energeiai*), but we do not profess that we can draw near to his essence (*ousia*). For his energies come down to us, but his essence remains inaccessible.” Developing this argument from Gregory Palamas’ trinitarian divine energies, Ware argues that it is not right to argue that while any one person in triune God has an “energy,” the other two persons do not share. *Ibid.*, 160-161.

⁶⁸⁸ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, x.

⁶⁸⁹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 4-5.

⁶⁹⁰ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 2, 3.

⁶⁹¹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 69.

idea as that God can be reached if the space of world is extended, which panentheism does not accept. In the definition of panentheism, we can find the possibility of transcendence, the definition that although the world is in God, God is “more than” the world. Here the term “More Than” means transcendence. Although I understand Rivera’s interest, this position should not reduce difference between God and creatures to the difference between creatures themselves.⁶⁹² Her idea of transcendence is the one which is encountered in creatures, so I call it “immanent transcendence.”

On the other side, Rivera makes a distinction between the radical orthodox position and the position of Levinas in the conception of immanence. Immanence for radical orthodox means a world without transcendence outside the created world. However, for Levinas, immanence is not opposed so much to transcendence as to difference, since “immanence means sameness.” In this sense, transcendence goes beyond the sameness to the face of Other, i.e., the face of difference, which is not abstraction but the very singular. Transcendence is not outside of human relations, but in the encounter of one person facing another.⁶⁹³ Levinas defines that “Transcendence designates a relation with a reality infinitely distant from my own reality, yet without this distance destroying this relation and without the relation destroying this distance.”⁶⁹⁴ Modifying Levinas’ definition, Rivera argues that “transcendence designates a relation with a reality irreducibly different from my own reality, without this difference destroying this relation and without the relation destroying this difference.”⁶⁹⁵ Although

⁶⁹² Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 2.

⁶⁹³ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 58-59. “In the modern models, the system or the self takes priority over the Other. In some theistic model it is in reference to a God and ‘his’ rules that others are catalogued and valued. By contrast, in Levinas’s ethics the Other resists the appropriating impulse of the self. She or he is inherently beyond my grasp.” Ibid. , 62.

⁶⁹⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 41. quoted from Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 62.

⁶⁹⁵ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 82.

there is relation between self and other, or between God and world, Rivera maintains that “distinctions are not erased.”⁶⁹⁶ For Irigaray, by the same token, the cosmos is “not pure immanence,” but “the site of transcendence in flesh.” Therefore the death of the transcendence of the world comes from Otherness (difference) to sameness (immanence).⁶⁹⁷

We can recognize that a common denominator for Rivera, Levinas, and Irigaray is horizontal transcendence and that it is related to ethics. According to Rivera, if God is found in the Other and relates us to Other, ethics is the significant position in theology. Theology should embrace without grasping or reducing Other in order to transform our eyes and ears.⁶⁹⁸ In our daily singular lives, since we encounter the Other who is already glorified and blessed by God’s love, we have to love the Other.⁶⁹⁹ Thus the perception of the transcendence of the Other is “the glory of God.”⁷⁰⁰

Alternative 2)

Palamas also argues that God is not a “nature or being” among other objects but “beyond being” (*hyperousios*), that God is “All,” because without God’s constant interruption, nothing could exist. Thus, for Palamas, God is either everywhere or no-where. That is, “[God] is (paradoxically) both existent and nonexistent; he is everywhere and nowhere; he has many names and he cannot be named; he is ever-moving and his is unmoved and, in short, he is everything and nothing.”⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁶ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 136.

⁶⁹⁷ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 93.

⁶⁹⁸ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 138.

⁶⁹⁹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 140.

⁷⁰⁰ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 138.

⁷⁰¹ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 162. Meister Eckhart also indicates that “God is *totus intra, totus extra*: ‘The more he is in things, the more his is out of things; the more in, the more out, and the more out, the more in.’” Ibid.

Palamas insists the differences are threefold “between essence, energy, and hypostasis” in God. With regard to essence, God does not participate in the world. With regard to hypostasis, it is accomplished only in the Logos, the God-man. Thus with regard to energy, the world can attain “union with God.” Palamas here describes three levels of union. First is “union ‘according to essence.’” We cannot be united with God in essence, since if we are one in essence with God, we become God, so that *theosis* (deification) should not be interpreted as “one with God in essence.” Second is “union ‘according to hypostasis.’” It appeared at the incarnation as the unification between Godhead and manhood in Jesus Christ the *Theanthropos*. Although we are “sons in the Son,” we and God cannot be a single person, because even in the mystical union, the saints still keep their own human identity. Third is “union ‘according to energy.’” Although human beings are one with God, because “God is all in all,” they still remain in their own nature. The distinction-in-unity between God’s essence and God’s uncreated energies shows “an unmediated union in love” between God and the world.⁷⁰² Palamas concludes that “one, single, living, and active God is present wholly and entirely: 1. on the level of *ousia*, in the total simplicity of his divine being; 2. on the level of hypostasis, in the threefold diversity of the divine persons; 3. on the level of *energeia*, in the indivisible multiplicity of his creative and redemptive work.” Thus, for Palamas, God is “radically transcendent in his essence,” and “radically immanent in his omnipresent energies.”⁷⁰³ Ware finds the contact point between divine transcendence and divine immanence in the divine self-diffusive love: the divine energies mean “love in action.”⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰² Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 163-164. The divine energies are not apart from God but “God himself, God in action, God in his self-revelation, God indwelling his creation,” and “the whole deity, God in his entirety,” not a part of God. Ibid., 165.

⁷⁰³ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 165-166.

⁷⁰⁴ Ware, “God Immanent yet Transcendent,” 168. Ware points out that this idea is same wit Julian

Alternative 3)

Macquarrie explains the relationship between transcendence and immanence as an element of a dialectical concept of God. On the one hand, God's transcendence means "otherness" from the world (the ontological difference), "precedence" over the world (creative source), and "surpassing" (transcendence) of the merely natural levels of existence (the ground of the order which manifests itself in nature). On the other hand, God's immanence means "indwelling of the creation," that is, God's presence in the world. God is "wholly transcendent" and "wholly immanent," in that some half-way position in either would make both weak. In order to explain this relation, Macquarrie uses a metaphor of the relationship between an artist and his or her art-work. When an artist imagines, produces and then gives a production to the world, although he transcends his work, he is immanent and permeates his work.⁷⁰⁵

Macquarrie explains God's creation with the idea of emanation of Plotinus, which emphasizes the "divine immanence and the intimacy of the God-world relation." When God creates the world, especially human beings, "God both makes man of the dust of the ground and then breathes into him the breath of life." This means God's self-giving to the men. Likewise, Macquarrie derives emanation from even Barth, although Barth does not like that term. When the Bible uses a special formula, "Let us make," in the creation of man, "it is a summons to intradivine unanimity of intention and decision." Macquarrie interprets this expression as follows: "in the creation of man, God endows him with something that he has summoned out of his own inner nature." And since God has offered something of himself in and with Israel's election, God is in the Israelites.

of Norwich "when she marveled at the contrast between the 'littleness' and fragility of the world on the one hand and its stability and persistence on the other: 'it lasteth, and ever shall, for God loveth it. And so hath all thing being by the love of God.'" Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 177.

Macquarrie also emphasizes that, although there is no necessity for creation, God thereby puts another from himself in the form of the “mysterious primordial event of giving.”⁷⁰⁶

Between Heaven and Earth

Let me describe the relation of transcendence and immanence with an image of between heaven and earth. This looks like pop song words but the meaning of these two words is wide and various, as unlimited spaces between two substances. It is not a lie to say that the history of the meaning of these words started with the history of the universe. This has such meanings as scientific principles derived from study of the origin of the universe and philosophical principles which try to explain the foundation of all questions. The Bible also says, “In the beginning God created the heaven (sky) and the earth.” What is the sky? What is the earth? Is the sky just the sky? Is the earth just the earth? If we ask the meaning of these words, should we answer that the sky is the sky and the earth is the earth? Does that explain it? In a dictionary, we read that “the sky is the upper atmosphere as seen from the earth’s surface” and “the earth is the land surface of the world.” How, then, can we locate the boundary between the sky and the earth so as to divide them one from the other? If the boundary is that which neither excludes nor includes, where is the boundary between them? The cloud? The summit of Everest Mountain? The Rocky Mountains? If not, is this the horizon where they meet? Simply speaking, there is no any boundary, is there? They communicate with each other, don’t they? However, I mean neither that two substances are the same, nor that they can exchange their places. I just want to remove eternal dualism.

The most important fact is that we are living between the sky and the earth. The

⁷⁰⁶ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 178-179.

following is a significant question; what is the reason for living as a human between the sky and the earth? Where does the confidence, with which we are living in this world, come from? This may come from our self-question, "Who are you? Where are you?" If we do not ask about ourselves, we will lose our language. If we lose our language, our existence will disappear. If we stop questioning, our lives will have no meaning. We become only a dead flesh, even though we live. Furthermore, we want to have honesty around these questions. We should ask essential questions, questions which lead us to become ourselves; questions which are neither superficial nor unnecessary. In my case, when asking myself these ontological questions, and trying to answer them, I see that I would like to live the sort of life which unites my daily life and history. My life should make contact with the point of subject and object, eastern and western society, individual and universe, time and eternity, and the sky and earth. In other words, I would hope that my daily life is leading to history. This may be the revolution of life, a paradigm shift, and a heavenly experience which makes manifest the kingdom of God within me. I will recognize this on the last day: that I was on the best path during a significant number of many occasions when I will have looked at God's marvelous panorama.

This idea came from the many cows which were eating grass in the field, cows in the field, many of which never saw the sky. If there was only one cow that saw the sky, it might become a metaphysical cow, and would try to suggest the ontological foundation of the cow. The only difference between the human and the cow is whether or not they see the sky. However, too huge is the difference in the meaning. When we live in stepping on the earth, not seeing the sky but seeing just earth, someone who sees the sky calls us a stupid cow. Someday, we will be on the table of the people who see the sky.

We should not be foolish humans who do not hear the voice of the sky, but see the sky as Other which make us constantly ask about ourselves and the world, because, after all, the initiative of the salvation comes from the sky. We should listen to the voice of the sky speaking to us today. Anyone who lives in this world should not make a “Cartel of Silence” when confronted by the voice of the sky. The voice of the sky is God’s initial aim in Whithead’s terms. God’s initial aim knocks for us to open our hearts and requires our response: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). In other words, we should not look away from the passage of life about which the sky continually tells us. We should not fall down into the monopoly of the death which leads everyone to a hollow. Rather, we need to see again the sky today. That we live between heaven and earth means that we see the sky above our head and feel the earth under our feet. How comfortable we are as we stand on the earth and see the sky! We are free now, between heaven and earth.

In conclusion, I argue that whereas immanence without transcendence may be blind, transcendence without immanence is vacant, since God cannot be confined within one-sidedness. Whereas if God is only in transcendence, this God can be the God of docetism, but not the Christian God; if God is only in immanent, God must be the one of creatures. Thus God has both transcendence and immanence.

4) Worship

“Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7).

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32 called *Nunc Dimittis*).

Great are you, O Lord, and exceedingly worthy of praise; your power is immense, and your wisdom beyond reckoning. And so we humans, who are a due part of your creation, long to praise you—we who carry our mortality about with us, carry the evidence of our sin and with it the proof that you thwart the proud. Yet these humans, due part of your creation as they are, still do long to praise you. You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.⁷⁰⁷

What is worship? Worship is to bow down our head to God and to close our eyes from the world. This is in a sense the simplest and the holiest attitude to God. Then, why does and should worship take a position in panentheism? Does panentheism really consider and need worship? If panentheism means “all-in-God,” I strongly suggest, all must worship God, because, without God, “all” (the world) are nothing, so that just as the Bible proclaims that “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD” (Psalms 150:6),⁷⁰⁸ so we have to worship God in our life and in this world. Most worshipers want to confess their mind to God and want to receive God’s comfort in worship, paraphrasing Augustine’s saying that our heart is quiet when it rests in God. Since worshippers receive any religious calmness not from people, but from God, they worship God, so that we should not devalue such worship. Even though God is radically related to the world, God must be the One who must receive worship from us. Is it not the privilege of believers to look at the above, think of God, and pray to God, when they feel

⁷⁰⁷ ST. Augustine, *The Confession* (New York: New City Press, 1997), 39.

⁷⁰⁸ Ephesians 1: 12, 14 tell us the reason of our existence: “for the praise of his glory.” Isaiah 43:21, “the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.” Romans 12: 1, when worship means to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, this is the spiritual act of worship. Exodus 3: 12, And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” (Liberation and worship).

lonely or are in unspeakable suffering? Worship is not the escape from the current situation like Marx's criticism of religion but total reliance on God. No matter what kinds of theology we explore, God must be the object of worship. Since one of the greatest abilities that human beings can find in themselves is the ability to sing a song, if we apply this ability to God, it is to praise God. In this section I defend the importance of "worshipability" as a criterion for an adequate Christian model of God in panentheism "without sacrificing God's Lordship over history."⁷⁰⁹

Insofar as worship flows from human beings to God, not vice versa, and is to raise our hands toward God's grace, which is stretching God's two hands to us, worship shows the terminal point of difference between God and the world. If God and the world eternally existed at the same time from the beginning because of God's necessity, and if God is not superior to the world, how can we consider God as God and worship God? And if we accept God's necessity to the world, we cannot deny "Schleiermacher's motto": "*Kein Gott ohne Welt, so wie keine Welt ohne Gott.*" That is, we cannot accept God's existence without the world. However, does God not exist regardless of the world? If God's transcendence over the world simply means the mutual transcendence of God and the world, should God also worship us?

Then in what sense does God become God and why do we worship God but not the world? Why do we call God, "God," and not the world, "God?" Where can we find *Deus semper major*? Since it is not any other actual entities but God that gives the world initial aim even in process theology, God has priority over anything else. In the sense, we need to listen to Calvin's saying that "genuine knowledge of God is inseparable from

⁷⁰⁹ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 95.

worship and service.”⁷¹⁰ Philipp Melanchthon points out the same view that “we adore the mysteries of the Godhead. That is better than to investigate them.” And for the church fathers “knowing” means “knowing in wonder. By knowing or perceiving one participates in the life of the other.” Karkkainen considers “Trinitarian grammar” as “doxological knowledge, knowing God by the way of worshiping the Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit.”⁷¹¹ Insofar as theology must help us praise God, argues Moltmann, real theology finds expression “in thanks, praise and adoration.”⁷¹²

Then where can we meet God’s wonder and awe? Where can we worship God? Don Saliers answers both in daily life and in liturgy. “[W]e can meet God in the liturgy because of what is given in daily life; and we can recognize what is given in daily life because of what we continually rehearse and receive in the liturgy.”⁷¹³ We should not make a distinction between our daily life and worship. In the sense, worship is also intertwined to an ethical dimension (daily life). Acts 2:42-47 speaks to us of both social and religious aspects. When the early church members were together, they did not only share their possessions but also praised God. While sharing is a horizontal or ethical dimension in relation to others, praising is a vertical or religious one in relation to God. Thus we need both dimensions: ethical (horizontal) and religious (vertical).

If we emphasized only the one, it would reduce the Christian life of communion to no more than a kind of well constructed social group, whereas if we focused on the other, the Christian life would become the source of a fanatically religious group apart from the concrete life in the world. Theology has not only to transform the world but also

⁷¹⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.2.1. This Idea from Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding*, 7.

⁷¹¹ Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, xvi.

⁷¹² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 152.

⁷¹³ Don E. Saliers, *Worship Come to Its Senses* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 32.

to glorify God who is in the world as well as above the world. If the purpose of theology is only to transform the world, it is a sort of reductionism to society. Thus Christian communities must have both sides and be balanced between the two of them. Our daily life and liturgy (worship) cannot be separated, but are intertwined. Liturgy and worship can and should relate to our daily life. Thus Christians must recognize and keep this basic and holistic principle.

Analogically speaking, a trip is an encounter with something such as nature or any particular place which existed before us, during a time interval, and a moment to express a sense of awe about that something. A trip in God is also an encounter with God. To worship God is to concretely acknowledge and positively accept the definition of panentheism, that is, God more than the world. Insofar as panentheism enables us to praise God, I call it “panentheistic worship.” This is an attempt to find the glory of God in panentheism and one reason why worship must belong to panentheism. Just as there is a saying that “compliment enables a whale to dance,” so worship enables God to dance.

2. Conceptual Resources from Process Theism

Let us go to the other side of classical theism, that is, process theism. Hartshorne suggests six mistakes in classical theology: God is absolutely perfect and therefore unchangeable; omnipotence; omniscience; God’s unsympathetic goodness; immortality as a career after death; and revelation as infallible.⁷¹⁴ Griffin suggests seven core doctrines in process

⁷¹⁴ Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and other Theological Mistakes*, 4-5.

thought.⁷¹⁵ First is the acceptance of the “presuppositions of practice” as philosophical or theological adequacy. The reality of human freedom, for example, implies that we are free without any determination by God or molecules. Second is “panexperientialism with organizational duality”: all actual entities have “some iota of spontaneity (self-determination) and experience.” Organizational duality means two kinds of societies: “compound individuals” (human beings) and “aggregational societies” (stone). In this distinction, the “pan” does not mean “all entities” but “all genuine individuals.” Third, religious experience entails “a genuine perceptual experience of God.” Fourth, all enduring individuals are “personally ordered societies of occasions of experience.” This reconciles between final and efficient cause (or freedom and determinism). Each actual entity has two modes, a subject and an object. A subject receives efficient cause from prior actual entities (physical pole) and ends with self-determination (mental pole).⁷¹⁶ Fifth is the doctrine of internal relatedness. It is the basis to recognize “causation as incarnation,” that is, God in all things and all things in God. Sixth is naturalistic theism. Divine influence in the world is not a supernatural interruption but fully follows natural causes. In this sense, divine cause in the world is exemplification of these principles. Seventh is dipolar God.⁷¹⁷ Here I will focus on the last doctrine.

From process theism, since the actual world means “the community of all actual entities, including the primordial actual entity called ‘God’ and the temporal actual

⁷¹⁵ Oord finds seven common grounds in the relation between process theology and Wesleyan theology: 1. God is Relational; 2. Prayer Changes Things; 3. God Made Us Free; 4. God is not Responsible for Evil; 5. Community and Individual Matter; 6. Contemporary Issues must be Engaged; 7. Love Reigns Supreme. http://thomasjaylor.com/index.php/blog/archives/process_and_wesleyan_theologies/ See Bryan P. Stone and Thomas J. Oord, eds., *The Nature and Thy Name is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue* (Nashville: Kingswood, 2001).

⁷¹⁶ According to process thoughts, “present events are influenced by prior events about causation”; “we... are not wholly determined by such causation but exert a degree of self-determination”; “present events exert causal influence on subsequent events.” Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 5.

⁷¹⁷ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 6.

entities,”⁷¹⁸ God has dipolar aspects which refer to two poles in God: the primordial nature and consequent nature of God.⁷¹⁹ The one is conceptual, infinite, and unchangeable, so that it is “free, complete, primordial, eternal, actually deficient, and unconscious.” The other side, consequent nature, is God’s physical experience of the world, so that it is “determined, incomplete, consequent, ‘ever-lasting,’ fully actual, and conscious.”⁷²⁰ Insofar as the primordial nature (PN) is complemented by the consequent nature (CN), we cannot imagine God without the world, because God is related to the world. In the sense, it is obvious to say that there is “no meaning to ‘creativity’ apart from its ‘creatures,’ and no meaning to ‘God’ apart from the ‘creativity’ and the ‘temporal creatures,’ and no meaning to the ‘temporal creatures’ apart from ‘creativity’ and ‘God.’” Whitehead recognizes God as “the creator of each temporal actual entity” in a limited sense that God gives them initial aims.⁷²¹ However, I resist their six types of fully symmetrical structure between God and the world—i.e., permanence and fluence, one and many, actual eminently, immanence, transcendence, and creation, since they go too far to explain the mutual relationship between God and the world.⁷²²

The notion of God for Whitehead is at once actual, eternal, immanent, and transcendent. But the transcendence of God is not peculiar to him, since every actual

⁷¹⁸ PR, 65.

⁷¹⁹ Griffin argues that there is a twofold dipolarity, one by Whitehead and the other by Hartshorne. The former is God as influencing the world (primordial) and God as influenced by the world (consequent) (Whitehead). The latter is God as unchanging (the abstract essence) and God as changing (concrete states) (Hartshorne). However, each has a weak point. Whereas Hartshorne’s weak point is God’s influence in the world, Whitehead’s weak point is God as a single actual entity. Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 6.

⁷²⁰ PR, 345.

⁷²¹ PR, 225.

⁷²² PR, 348. Whitehead maintains that “In the inescapable flux, there is something that abides; in the overwhelming permanence, there is an element that escapes into flux. Permanence can be snatched only out of flux; and the passing moment can find its adequate intensity only by its submission to permanence. Those who would disjoin the two elements can find no interpretation of patent facts.... The perfect realization is not merely the exemplification of what in abstraction is timeless. It does more: it implants timelessness on what in its essence is passing. The perfect moment is fadeless in the lapse of time. Time has then lost its character of ‘perfectual perishing’; it becomes the ‘moving image of eternity.’” Ibid., 338.

entity transcends its universe.⁷²³ Primordial Nature and Consequent Nature can explain the relationship between transcendence and immanence: whereas PN refers to transcendence, CN relates to immanence. If it is right to say that the world always relates to CN not directly PN, there must be radical transcendence in PN which cannot be compared to that of actual entities. PN and CN are always interrelated to each other, but they are distinct. For Whitehead, cosmology consists of the final opposites, “joy and sorrow, good and evil, disjunction and conjunction—that is to say, the many in one—flux and permanence, greatness and triviality, freedom and necessity, God and the world.” We can see the pairs of opposites in our experience, except the pair of God and the world which needs “the note of interpretation.”⁷²⁴

In my view, however, John Macquarrie more appropriately suggests “a series of dialectical oppositions within God,” which are “not destructive contradictions or even sheer paradoxes,” as a minimal idea of God: “both being and nothing, both the one and the many, both knowability and unknowability, both transcendent and immanent, both impassible and passible, and both eternal and temporal.”⁷²⁵

First contrast is between “being and nothing.” God is both being and nothing. With regard to being, we can see this tradition in Aquinas who asserted that “the most proper name of God is ‘He who is,’” and patristic writers who believed that their concept of God has “a religious justification” such as “I am who I am” (to Moses). However, since God does not exist as something exists in the world of space and time, God is “nothing.” When Macquarrie speaks of God as “being,” it means that God does not exist

⁷²³ PR, 93-94.

⁷²⁴ PR, 341. God and the world “embody the interpretation of the cosmological problem in terms of a fundamental metaphysical doctrine as to the quality of creative origination, namely, conceptual appetition and physical realization.” Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 54 and in chapter XIII.

as an individual thing exists, but “in the sense of the source of all existence,” that is, “not so much ‘being’ as ‘letting be,’” because the Bible does not start by saying that God exists, but that “he brings things into existence: ‘let there be light.’” Thus existence “excludes God. Inevitably, he is nothing.” Then, why do we use the term “being” about God? Although any existent being derives its existence from other beings, the world cannot be explained in this way, because the world is not an existent but a reality as a source of existence. Furthermore, since God is wholly other, who is beyond the comprehension, is “the ultimate event of giving” or “the source of the sheer fact of the givenness of the world,” without God, there would be nothing.

The second opposition in God is the one and the many. God is the “unity holding all things together,” but this is not “a barren undifferentiated unity,” because God is the “fullness of being,” which is not an empty abstraction, but a *plenum*. God has characteristics such as good, great, or just. In the sense, God has both the “primordial” mode, which is hidden or transcendent, and the “expressive” mode in which the divine activity as “an event of giving” expresses or reveals the reality into the cosmos. There is a third mode of being, “unitive” being in that the cosmos seeks to return to its source “forming a new and richer unity, a unity which necessarily includes distinctness.”

The third opposition is knowability and unknowability. We cannot know or grasp God, because God is wholly other or suprarational. However, we can know God only through images and symbols, but this knowledge is “genuine,” since God expresses Godself in the creation. That is, although we do not know God “by a deduction or inference from the world,” we can say that “God is intuited in the world as a presence or as its unity.” Macquarrie agrees with H. A. Hodges that “the foundation of theism is not a

speculative guess or inference or theory, but an imaginative vision of existence which can be of deep significance for life.” In the sense, God is incomprehensible and knowable. The fourth opposition is transcendence and immanence. Whereas God’s transcendence means God’s otherness, God’s immanence means God’s presence in the world. Whereas God as the primordial is totally transcendent, God as the expressive and unitive modes of being is totally immanent. (I have already dealt with this part in the section, “transcendence”).

The fifth opposition is impassibility and passibility. Although classical theism asserts God’s pure act and impassibility because God cannot be affected by the world, if we accept God’s immanence in the world, we also acknowledge that God must be deeply affected by the world. If God would not suffer the suffering of the world, we do not have to worship such a God who is not “the God of religious experience” but “a product of philosophical speculation.” God’s expression of love, that the God of Israel in the Bible was afflicted in all the people’s afflictions, means God’s vulnerability, since “it is impossible to love a person without being grieved by that person’s suffering and sin” and since God “consents to know the pain and frustration of the world” in creation. However, God’s vulnerability does not “substitute passibility for impassibility” but asserts that God unites this dialectical opposition. How is it possible? Here we need to make a distinction between God’s suffering and human suffering. Whereas human suffering can overwhelm the person, God cannot be overwhelmed by it, because God has “an infinite capacity” to absorb and to transform suffering and God is “the ultimate reality, the primordial source of everything.” The symbols of the cross and the resurrection show the transformation from passion to life and salvation. Although God suffers in the suffering

of others, it does not mean that God is reduced to world. Thus God is both passible and impassible in that whereas without God's passibility, "there could be no bond of sympathy" between God and the world, without God's impassibility, "there could be no final faith in God."

The sixth opposition is eternity and temporality. In the classical theism, God is above time, eternal, because temporality means "loss, decay, passing away." On the one hand, although this interpretation has some problems, we can still keep that God is eternal, because of the "immunity from the ravages of time." On the other hand, God is not just an observer, but "an active participant" in the events of history. We can say with Eriugena that "God is actually making himself in the temporal world." In the sense, we can say with Whitehead that God is both eternal in primordial nature and temporal in consequent nature.⁷²⁶ With regard to God's eternity, argues Polkinghorne, God enters into the time. More precisely, "The universe came into being *cum tempore*, nor *in tempore*." This means that God still has not only something which is totally free from the change but also something that corresponds to the changing. Polkinghorne calls it "kenosis of simple eternity," since God accepts the temporality (the experience of time). Furthermore, since incarnation means God's radical involvement of what is eternally true of the nature of God into the temporal world, time is not strange to the divine nature in itself.⁷²⁷

Macquarrie excludes the dialectical opposition between evil and good within God, since evil is "essentially negative, a distortion of the good and parasitic on the good." The problem of evil is, first, that it "causes pain even to God," because God also has to face it and overcome it. The second point is that evil cannot be separated from creation and the

⁷²⁶ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 172-182.

⁷²⁷ Polkinghorne, "Kenotic Creation and Divine Action," 102-103.

world, which is imperfect and deficient. The third point is about value. This world is the best possible.⁷²⁸ In conclusion, even though the elements of dipolar God seem to be contradictory to each other, they are not because “the logic of God is different from the logic of the created order.”⁷²⁹ Analogically speaking, God is like a spoon which has both a convex part and a concave part. If we see our face from convex part, we see our face as we see from a mirror, but if we see from concave part, we see our face upside down. It is not like two sides of one coin, but two sides of one spoon. A difference between Whitehead and Macquarrie is that whereas Whitehead places dipolarity even in the world, Macquarrie puts it within God alone. On this point I am closer to Macquarrie’s perspective.

3. Divine Action as a Bridge

What Does God Do in the World?

In this section we take on the most urgent problem for philosophical theology today: the problem of divine action. It is my thesis that panentheism offers crucial resources for addressing this core theme in our discipline.

“How am I driving?” (Call me 1-800-xxx-xxxx). Sometimes we can see this kind of sign posted on some vehicles. The driver of such a vehicle may want to hear any feedback about his or her driving attitude from other drivers, and ultimately to change or develop new driving abilities in general. If God asks us this question, ‘How am I driving, acting, or working in the world,’ what could be our answers? There could be more negative answers than positive answers for God’s action in the world, along with

⁷²⁸ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 182.

⁷²⁹ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 54.

repugnant complaining or questioning: we do not understand what you are doing now; what is the God's *modus operandi* in this world?; what are you doing around this suffering; are you really the God I have believed in so far; if you are really God, how can you prove it? These negative responses must spring from the contradiction between the concrete reality of life and the Christian affirmation that since creation, God is active in the world to achieve divine purpose. The problem of divine action and divine agency, which most Christians may ask at least more than once, is, in a sense, one of the most serious issues since the modern age.

Admittedly, when we see something happening, whether it is good or bad, we seek to find causes: why or how it happens. In the sense, actions consist of causes and effects in natural systems. For example, we wash a car because it is dirty. Then dirty is a kind of cause and washing is its effect. By the same token, when we define divine action in the world, we may ask the relation between God and the world with regard to the relation between cause and effect: does God cause every effects in the world; does God control everything in the world; how does God work to achieve the divine purpose in history; what is the relation between divine action and creature action; does God keep natural laws or intervene them? Among these questions, the following question points to the most controversial issue: If there is God, why are there so many vicious problems?

The model of divine action that I will be defending in this section functions as a bridge (though certainly not the only one!) between classical theology and process theology; it draws significantly on elements from both of them. Think of the image of the cross: Classical theism might be located on the upper part and process theism on the lower part of the vertical bar of the cross; the two might then be unified by a bridge, i.e.,

divine action on the horizontal bar. The cross, I suggest, on the one hand, can be the place of peace and reconciliation between classical theism and process theology: “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col. 1:20). In order for the image of the cross to show itself not as a decorated symbol, but as the living spirit in the concrete world, its primary aspect must be the unity of classical theism and process theology, since Jesus Christ died on the Cross, unified the heaven and the earth, and lived a new life and a new way. Since to do theology is to seek to self-integration for the self and to confess it in one’s life, it behooves us to unify both sides of the Cross based on panentheism. Likewise, a proper theology must be in the tension of two extremes: classical theism and process theology. It must be panentheism.

However, on the other hand, the cross may be the hardest place to understand God’s action. We need to think of the question, “What did God do,” when Jesus was on the cross and threw the most solitary question which human beings can ask: “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When a child is drowning in the water, for example, if his/her father does not act at all to save his child or keeps silent throughout the situation, people ask whether this father is the real father, and he may be punished by the social law. How about God? Isn’t God only too much similar to the father? How can we call God who was silent to Jesus’ outcry to the real father or God? How can we call God the gracious God if God performs no action to save his Son? In the sense, we need to answer to the following negative and mocking attitude for the God’s action: “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him” (Matthew

27:49). Since Elijah here can be interpreted as God, it can be interpreted as follows: Let's see if God does something for Jesus, his Son. What did God do, however?

Some Models of History of Divine Action

In order to solve this provocative question, let us consider the history of divine action. It is my goal in this section to sketch a theory of divine action, using a few historical and contemporary sources from classical theism to process theology. After tracing the history, I will elucidate my position.

First, in the part of “treatise on the divine government” of the *Summa Theologia*, Aquinas argues the ways of God's action in the world. God can act both immediately apart from the natural order of the world and mediately through finite causes. Using Aristotle's four causes, Aquinas describes how God is the source of all material causes (material cause), the first cause of all agents (efficient cause), the source of all forms (formal cause), and the goal of all action (final causes). One and same action through all these causes proceeds not from two agents on the same level (order), but from both a primary agent (by God) and a secondary agent (by finite agent). This one action proceeds neither partly by God nor partly by the finite agent, but by both.⁷³⁰ However, divine primary causality is totally different from the creaturely secondary causality in that it is in and under diverse secondary causalities. However, we cannot see how this double agency is possible in Thomistic thinkers, because they claim that any attempt to explain double agency could be impious. This assertion means that, first, they reject on grounds of

⁷³⁰ This summary comes from Owen Thomas. Owen C. Thomas, ed., *God's Activity in the World: The Contemporary Problem* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, AAR Studies in Religion 31. 1983), 2. *Summa Theologia*, I, 105. Augustine argues two aspects: on the one hand, God extrinsically reigns over all history and controls everything. On the other hand, God intrinsically acts not as finite causes but in finite causes both human and natural. Owen Thomas, *Ibid.*, 1.

incomprehensibility of primary causality any analogy between divine and human agency, and second, God has not a part time job but a full time job for every event in the world, because nothing is outside God. However, it has difficulties for theodicy.⁷³¹

Second, for Calvin, God controls everything of the world and the divine will causes everything. All natural phenomena are governed by God's will sometimes through, sometimes without, and sometimes in contradiction to secondary causes. Nonetheless, Calvin asserts that there is no divine, but only human, responsibility for evil. In the seventeenth century Protestant orthodox theology elaborated the doctrine of providence which consists of three parts: preservation, concurrence, and government. Concurrence means "the cooperation of divine and creaturely action" in which God participates with secondary causes. J.A. Quenstedt (1617-1688) talks about two causes. When God acts in the world, the effect is produced by both God and the creature, that is, by God as the first cause and by the creature as second cause. However, there are some problems in this traditional view. If God is the first cause of all events and intervenes beyond or without secondary causes, how can God avoid the responsibility for evil? And could we hold this orthodox position even after the development of modern science which attempts to explain all possible natural causes and which entirely doubts the divine action?⁷³²

Third, in responding to orthodoxy tradition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the liberal theology, which emphasizes the "divine immanence" (universal presence of God), affirmed human freedom, causal laws, and God's action "as the purposive power" in all the processes of the world, so that supernatural miracles cannot be placed in this liberal theology. Schleiermacher, for example, asserts the coincidence

⁷³¹ Polkinghorne, "Kenotic Creation and Divine Action," 97.

⁷³² Thomas, *God's Activity in the World*, 2-3. A miracle is not an act of God, "since God is the (primary) cause of every event."

between divine providence and causal law, and a miracle is only the “religious name for event.” Albrecht Ritschl argues that God’s radical immanence in the world makes humanity valuable. However, this liberal perspective of divine action is nothing other than the traditional view without miracles. And since God is not separated from the creaturely actions, there would be a problem of pantheism.⁷³³

Fourth, in reaction to liberal theology, neo-orthodox theology with Barth appears and emphasizes “the freedom and sovereignty of God’s action in the world.” This influences “biblical theology movement” which focuses on the the importance of faith and church. The main message of the Bible is God’s election, judgment, and redemption.⁷³⁴ Abraham Kuyper's view of God’s influence in daily life and daily events explains this position. Without God’s direct action, creation would be destructive.⁷³⁵ A. R. Millard espouses the same view: since for the Israelites a ‘natural cause’ did not diminish the miracle, they believed their God controlled the universe and could use any normal natural cause for God’s purposes.⁷³⁶ However, in this view there is ambiguity among historical events, interpretation of events by faith, and divine action: is God’s action the real event or the faithful interpretation?; what is the relation between God’s action and natural causes? Thus far, except for some aspects of liberal theology, the traditional doctrine of divine action can be summarized as follows: God knows everything that will happen because God planned and determined events beforehand, and God also acts positively in the world.

⁷³³ Thomas, *God’s Activity in the World*, 3-4.

⁷³⁴ Thomas, *God’s Activity in the World*, 4.

⁷³⁵ “Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Kuyper.

⁷³⁶ John Collins, *The God of Miracles*, (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2000), 88.

Fifth, there are some examples of process thought. Whitehead's famous sentence is appropriate to describe divine action as "persuasive agencies" in process thought: "[God] is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire."⁷³⁷ The creation of the world is not by force but by persuasion and humans also can persuade and be persuaded by alternatives.⁷³⁸ John Cobb argues that due to the influence of Newtonian science, which focuses on efficient causes and involves "the necessitation of the effect by the cause" "from the observed effects to inferred causes," Christian theology attributes efficient causes to God's action, so that God could be the causes of all effects. If efficient causes refer not to necessity but to regular successions, only observable states of affairs, not efficient causes, can be inferred from effects. We cannot infer God as efficient causes due to observed effects, but instead must seek formal cause (Wieman), material cause (Tillich), and final cause (Pannenberg).⁷³⁹ However, Cobb considers God, as efficient causality of events in the world, as a real influence in the experience of the lure toward new experience. The real influence of God on me makes me consider that such influence does not determine my decision, but provides a context for my choice. Cobb explains this through his analogy of influence on the human feeling. For example, our experience of anger influences subsequent events "not through overt, sensible, observable actions" but in the sense that other events consider God. However, in some instances, there are overt, sensible, observable actions. Although we do not accept God's efficient causality from Newtonian and Humean notions, since God is a cause of events as a real influence, this

⁷³⁷ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 69. PR, 344. In Isaiah 42:2-4, God puts his Spirit on his servant: "He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."

⁷³⁸ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 83.

⁷³⁹ John Cobb, "Natural Causality and Divine Action," in Thomas, *God's Activity in the World: The Contemporary Problem*, 102-103.

way of causality does not threaten but supports freedom.⁷⁴⁰ David Griffin asserts that process naturalism rejects the plausibility of God's supernatural intervention into the world's most fundamentally natural laws,⁷⁴¹ although a divine action influences all human events, since the God-world relation is fully natural.⁷⁴² That is, naturalistic theism involves "continuous, gradualistic divine action in the world," since God always and everywhere gives all finite beings initial aims, and since divine aims cannot suddenly give creatures possibilities that are radically different from their current possibilities.⁷⁴³

Sixth, Farrer who is in the Thomistic tradition explains divine causal influence (divine action) in the world through "double agency," with God as the primary cause and creaturely agents as secondary causes. Farrer insists that God's action is not general but always particular, without either forcing or competing with creaturely agents. However, it is impossible to understand the causal relation between finite and infinite action.⁷⁴⁴ Seventh, divine influence in human moral intuitions and religious aspirations is different from the divine alternation of purely physical events, because we cannot grasp laws of individual human behaviors. In the sense, as a form of downward mental causation, divine causal influence on the human thought, will, and emotions could change an individual's disposition without breaking natural laws of physics and biology.⁷⁴⁵ Divine Action in the world would be recognized as a naturalized theism or God without the

⁷⁴⁰ Cobb, "Natural Causality and Divine Action," 112, 115.

⁷⁴¹ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 6, 21, 391. Quoted from, Philip Clayton, "God Beyond Orthodoxy: Process Theology for the 21 Century," (Sept. 9, 2008), 10. Clayton defends *Creatio ex nihilo* (See chapter 11, "'Open Panentheism and Creation as Kenosis'" in *Adventures in the Spirit*), but he also rejects the unlimited omnipotence of God and hesitates to insist physical miracles in order to avoid God's responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world. Ibid.

⁷⁴² Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 6.

⁷⁴³ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 215-216. That is, "the divine aims can bring about novelty in the world only in terms of possibilities that are closely related to possibilities that have already been actualized." Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Thomas, *God's Activity in the World: The Contemporary Problem*, 12.

⁷⁴⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 197.

supernatural.⁷⁴⁶ In this dissertation I work with the assumption that God cannot circumvent natural law.

Some Characters of Divine Action

Robert John Russell introduces four ways of God's interaction with the world: "(i) creating and sustaining the world; (ii) through natural processes ('God's action through the regular laws of physics and biology: 'general providence'); (iii) special events of significance ('where God acts to make a difference but which scientists see as part of the flow of nature,' which can be "special providence"); (iv) miracles ("where God's action goes beyond the ordinary routines of nature")."⁷⁴⁷ According to Frank Dilley, there are three possible ways of conceiving divine action in the world: the biblical view that God intervenes in the natural law, a modern revision that divine action is possible only to the eye of faith, and the double causes by God and creatures.⁷⁴⁸ Thomas Tracy gives five types of divine agency:

1. God acts directly in every event to sustain the existence of each entity that has a part in it (the doctrine of conservation).
2. God can act directly to determine various events which occur by chance on the finite level (quantum-level intervention).
3. God acts indirectly through causal chains that extend from God's initiating direct actions (the amplification effect).
4. God acts indirectly in and through the free acts of persons whose choices have been shaped by the rest of God's activity in the world (divine persuasion?).
5. God can also act directly to bring about events that exceed the natural powers of creatures, events which not only are undetermined on the finite level, but which also fall outside the prevailing patterns and regular structures of the natural order (miracles in the classical sense).⁷⁴⁹

What are the common grounds among these types? There are two ways of divine action with regard to creaturely action: God's direct action and indirect action. While creation

⁷⁴⁶ Clayton, "Panentheism Today," 255.

⁷⁴⁷ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/?s=middle+knowledge>.

⁷⁴⁸ Thomas, *God's Activity in the World*, 6.

⁷⁴⁹ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 215.

and sustaining, special providence and miracles belong to God's direct action, general providence and divine persuasion belong to God's indirect action. Panentheism fills with the gap between "supernaturalism versus atheistic naturalism dichotomy."⁷⁵⁰

A Third Way

I would like to address a third way between the classical view and process perspective. On the one hand, from the perspective of classical theism, if God arbitrarily intervenes in human action, freedom, or natural laws, it confuses human beings and/or natural systems, because "[i]f God appears periodically, He disappears periodically."⁷⁵¹ If God controls everything in the world, we cannot look to God for an answer to the problem of evil. I will suggest that God can somehow *influence* human states of affairs and natural systems, but that God does not interrupt or violate them. I will define "intervene" in this dissertation as meaning "interrupt" or "violate." However, although God does not intervene in natural laws, can God have no attitude at all with regard to suffering? When our son and daughter fall down on the street, we do not have to help them, if they can stand up by themselves. However, if they are in danger and if we can help them, we have to help them. And if it is a really serious situation in which we cannot help them, although they are in trouble or danger, we still cannot help them. Likewise, if we are in trouble and if we can overcome the situation, God does not have to intervene in it. However, if we are really in danger or suffering and if we cannot overcome such suffering, should God not help us? There are many examples in which God intervenes in

⁷⁵⁰ Clayton, "Panentheism Today," 255.

⁷⁵¹ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 18.

suffering in the Bible. However, it is also a fact that in many cases God does not help those of us who are in suffering.

On the other hand, however, from the perspective of process theology, although God exists, if there is no particular action but persuasion or lure, does it make sense for God to intervene? Is it more reasonable to say that, like the phrase of atheism, ‘no God, no divine action?’ If we compare the two positions above, i.e., the traditional position as against process thought, what are the differences between Aquinas’s God-world relation (not in the real but in the idea) and the actions as lure in the world by the God of process theology? Is it not ironical to say that a traditional perspective in which God’s relation to the world is weak expresses a rather more active voice of God’s participation in the world than process theology which insists on God’s intimate relation to the world? It is strange to see the fact that the theology which emphasizes relationship takes a passive position in divine action. Are there not some similarities between deism and a persuasive God in process theology? A common impression of them would be that God does not directly or urgently involve in this world. Furthermore, if process theology would really avoid a coercive God, God must not give even initial aim to the creatures. Is it not coerciveness of God to give even initial aim to all entities regardless of creatures’s will? Thus persuasion is not enough to explain divine action as an alternative.

Peacocke defends a middle space between “traditional miracle claims” and “the denial of all special divine action.”⁷⁵² Peacocke not only avoids Aquinas’ definition of miracles which are done by God rather than nature, but also rejects a conclusion that no special divine action is possible. This perspective of Peacocke is different from Maurice Wiles’s “radically naturalized versions of Christianity,” wherein Wiles denies divine

⁷⁵² Clayton, “On Divine and Human Agency,” in Peacocke, *All That Is*, 166.

intentional acts but accepts “the living God” who acts only in “the universal act of creating and sustaining the world.” Different from Peacocke’s perspective also is Gordon Kaufman’s inconceivability of divine special actions. Kaufman envisions a web, each part of which is interconnected “as a causal consequence” with other parts. Similarly, seeking a *tertium quid*, Clayton introduces a mediating proposal from James Kellenberger; when natural miracles occur through God’s agency, they are not results of God’s direct action (intervention). Here God could be considered “the ground of natural events.”⁷⁵³

A principle which I have to keep in the discourse of divine action, and which is not contradictory to Christian faith, is that God does not arbitrarily intervene in the natural order, ignoring the natural laws.⁷⁵⁴ If we do not keep this principle, we could meet “stymie science.”⁷⁵⁵ Nonetheless, I do not accept perspectives which remain only in natural causes. Although we could not accept God’s miraculous events, they could remain as possibilities explaining some phenomena until we can find other possible explanations in natural causes.⁷⁵⁶ And if we conclude that natural causes alone explain all events in the world, *that* could result in another problem, a “metaphysical prejudice,”⁷⁵⁷ giving rise to the need for “a metaphysical leap.”⁷⁵⁸ In fact, the development of quantum mechanics and its indeterminist picture of the world resists all scientific determinism.

⁷⁵³ Clayton, “On Divine and Human Agency,” 167-168.

⁷⁵⁴ Clayton, “On Divine and Human Agency,” 163.

⁷⁵⁵ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 174. Clayton concludes that “the immediate perception of some state of affairs *in the physical world* justifies an explanatory account of what has occurred *only when* the perceived state of affairs and its alleged cause are compatible with the relevant natural scientific accounts.” Ibid., 175.

⁷⁵⁶ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 171. Clayton gives an example from the Israelite prophet Samuel in the Bible. When Samuel heard a voice in the temple, he thought he father called him so he went to him, but it was not him who called Samuel. After several times, only when he realized that it was not his father, he opened to the possibility that it was Yahweh (1 Sam. 3). Ibid., 172.

⁷⁵⁷ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 172.

⁷⁵⁸ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 173.

Thus, as Polkinghorne says, it is appropriate to say that “the natural process in itself is also an expression of the Creator’s will.”⁷⁵⁹

Religious Explanation or Divine Action in and through Whole History

Here we have to ask other questions: If we fully accept natural laws, is it possible to talk about divine action in the completed and closed physical world? If natural laws explain most phenomena in the world, how does God act or influence natural laws? Is there any plausible way for divine action to have a place in this scientific world? Does God’s action explain some exceptional phenomena? Can we not explain God’s special action without breaking natural law? Then, when can we have religious explanation as metaphysical leap? Is there nothing that natural causality cannot explain? Why do we need divine causality and how can we say that it needs divine causality, although natural causality cannot explain any event in the world? What could be God’s action? When and where can we consider divine action beyond natural laws? Hume argues that divine action can be thought “before the creation of the universe and after the end of universal history.”⁷⁶⁰ But is it really possible to apply empirical induction to these areas? One possible answer is to appeal to universal history that “God’s intentions, purposes and guiding actions would be visible.” To believe in God is not to ascribe our thought into the vacuous areas Hume indicates, but “to believe in something about human experience taken as a whole.”⁷⁶¹ Thus the most natural locus of divine action is this universal history, since we can see evidence of God’s leading hand in this history as a whole.

⁷⁵⁹ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 96-97.

⁷⁶⁰ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 175.

⁷⁶¹ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 176. Clayton maintains that this is the realm in which religious explanation is possible, for scientific explanations lack of empirical data. Ibid.

Analogically speaking, the relation between God and the world in divine action is like the one between parents and their children. If we find God's action or religious explanation "before creation and after the end of history," it must be like the parents who give birth to their babies but no longer take care of them and who insist that they are their parents after the death of their children. What are these parents who do not have any memory of their babies in the world but only the two facts that they were born and that they died? In such a situation, we have to ask to the parents: what did you do when your children were living? Parents must take care of their children through their whole lives with material help while they are financially dependent, and with spiritual help after they become adults.

Possibility of SDA in Whole History

Then, we can ask more deeply, how can we explain some traces of special divine action (SDA) or intermittent divine action (IDA) in this scheme without violating regularities of the natural laws? When we speak of SDA, we can extrapolate from this general divine action (GDA). Clayton argues that "God must be active in *this* event because he is active in *all* events and because the nature of this event fits the pattern, either in its situation or its outcome."⁷⁶² Accepting SDA in the form of whole-part influences in natural systems,⁷⁶³ Peacocke also argues that God could so affect the world at all levels that patterns of events at physical, biological, human, and even social levels could be influenced by divine intention without abrogating any natural laws.⁷⁶⁴ Polkinghorne does

⁷⁶² Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 177.

⁷⁶³ Clayton explains Peacocke's whole-part relation: "Parts constitute wholes, which themselves become parts within greater wholes, and so forth, until one reaches the entire cosmos as a single interrelated natural system." Clayton, "On Divine and Human Agency," in Peacocke, *All That Is*, 168.

⁷⁶⁴ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 46.

not accept “a kenosis of novelty” that “God is self-restricted to act in the future only as God has acted in the past.” Although God does not arbitrarily act in the world, God will do new things in new situations, even miracles such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since “there is certainly no theological reason to suppose that God must always be boringly restricted to doing nothing new.”⁷⁶⁵ Thus the divine subject hugely contributes to the world which scientific explanation cannot do.

Admittedly, no GDA, no SDA, not vice versa. If someone insists on SDA without GDA, it is like those irresponsible parents who do not take care of their children in daily life but sometimes appear and insist that the children are theirs. There are also some special events in all areas of life in which parents influence children, so that we remember this event or that event as a special event of our life among all events. This particular or special event is not outside all general events but within them.⁷⁶⁶ This event is in circulation of all events. That is, this special event is in hermeneutical circulation with all events. Thus, we need phenomenological or epistemological tools to facilitate our understanding of God through daily events, or hermeneutical tools for relating part to whole of our explorations of divine action. SDA is a reinterpretation of the meaning of a fact, not a supernatural happening in itself.

An Appropriate Interpretation of Divine Action

Before entering into more specific discussion here, we need to appropriately define the term, “intervention.” However, we should not arrive at this strange conclusion: “If a nonphysical supreme being, “God,” does exist, and if God does intervene in the world,

⁷⁶⁵ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 104-105.

⁷⁶⁶ For example, a tennis game or a golf game with president or professor must be the special action for someone. Although such events are not special for others, it could be special for someone.

I'd be surprised if we could *ever* figure out how.”⁷⁶⁷ This conclusion does not solve how God acts in the world, but rather return us to the naïve, traditional appeal to divine control of the world. Whereas, before quantum physics, the world was considered to be a closed physical system, after quantum mechanics, that is no longer the case. Russell argues that God acts through all the natural laws, so that God is involved in whatever happens. God's action is not God's intervention, since “intervention” means God's violation of the natural laws. Unlike Peacocke, Russell argues that although there is not enough explanation of natural law, we should not consider natural law as God's special action, since God is truly acting all the time in the world, breaking down the distinction between general providence and special providence.⁷⁶⁸ By the same token, John Collins and Polkinghorne also avoid the term “intervention,” since it seems to suggest that God's intervention is as “an intruder” in the world⁷⁶⁹ and connotes “arbitrary interruption.”⁷⁷⁰

However, although Whitehead surprisingly uses the term, “God's intervention,” it is not “occasional interventions that interrupt the normal causal pattern of the world,” but rather God's intervention all the time, so that “divine intervention is a regular, necessary part” of natural causes.⁷⁷¹ Then where does God always intervene? Griffin answers that prior to its outside and observable public manifestation, divine action can directly influence inner as well as hidden sides of every individual.⁷⁷² “No influence” describes the view called “deism” which argues that the Ground of being cannot impact the natural world. We cannot accept such a deistic view, because God had intentions in creating the

⁷⁶⁷ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/04/03/how-could-god-interact-with-the-world/>

⁷⁶⁸ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/04/03/how-could-god-interact-with-the-world/>

⁷⁶⁹ Collins, *The God of Miracles*, 87.

⁷⁷⁰ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 100.

⁷⁷¹ Whitehead notes that “Apart from the intervention of God, there could be nothing new in the world, and no order in the world.” PR, 247. Quoted from Griffin, *Reenchantment Without Supernaturalism*, 185.

⁷⁷² Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 216.

world and has and will have intentions in sustaining it. “No intervention” view at least allows God’s influence on the world, since “the influence is exercised without breaking or setting aside natural laws.”⁷⁷³

Concrete Example: God and Broken Air-Conditioner

How can God act in the following example? If there are air-conditioning problems in an apartment and the manager does not fix the air-conditioner, even after the apartment’s resident asks several times, the residents may ask: what does the manager do? The manager must be derelict in her/his responsibilities. Likewise, when there are some problems in the world, although many people ask God several times to solve the problems, and God could solve the problems for God’s residents in the world, if God does not act and does not provide any management services, it is natural to ask what God is doing. In this case, God would be derelict in God’s job, since it is strange to believe that “God exists but never actually does anything.”⁷⁷⁴ To that extent, then, is it not appropriate or reasonable to ask God’s action and help in human life, or especially in the case of suffering? Can we not find some examples of divine direct action and help from the Bible? Did God literally neither accept our prayer nor change some physical situations? Was God in the Bible not the God who acted in the world, the God who created the world, the God who delivered the Israelites from the slavery, the God who enabled David to win over Goliath, the God who sent us the Lord our savior, Jesus, and the God who raised Jesus from the dead?

⁷⁷³ Clayton, “On Divine and Human Agency,” in Peacocke, *All that Is*, 166.

⁷⁷⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 217.

If God physically acted in the world as the Bible attests, why does God not act here and now in the world? Does God act like a responsible apartment manager or a repairman, or not? Do we really expect God to fix the air-conditioner regardless of any natural condition? Do we expect God to bring tool boxes and come to the apartment to fix a broken air-conditioner? If we really expect God's direct action, what does God suppose to do and what are the natural laws? When we define divine action in this world, we have to think of natural laws alongside of it, since nobody expects God to fix everything by Himself; it is obviously a repairman who is needed to fix the broken air-conditioner. This means that there must be natural laws to explain the cause and effect in the world. The movement of heavenly bodies; the turn of the tide; change of four seasons; all these can be explained by natural laws. In a sense, since natural laws could explain many physical phenomena in the world, we should not neglect the natural laws. If we are sick, for example, we have to see a doctor or take medicine, since that is more reasonable than only to pray to God, although prayer is very important (I will argue the power of prayer later).

However, if divine causality is needed to explain any event in the world, does that not affirm the possibility of SDA? Although God can influence every event in the world, when there are some events which natural causality cannot explain, does SDA not go beyond divine influence or persuasion? If a state government arbitrarily intervenes in individuals' lives, it must be the state's oppression over the individual. However, if the individual is under some problems or a difficult situation, the state must intervene in the individuals' life. If people do not have food, the state must give them food. If they do not have a house, the state has a responsibility to provide them with shelter. By the same

token, just as if God may arbitrarily intervene in natural laws, it is problematic, so if God does not intervene in any suffering situation, it is also problematic. Accepting the interest of liberal theology in divine action, I will develop my model: God's continual and concrete divine action in the world without supernaturalism. This model has continuity and discontinuity with traditional doctrine.⁷⁷⁵ Whereas there is continuity in that God acts in the world, it has discontinuity, since it resists miracles.

Natural Law and Miracle

Christian naturalism does not reject God but it does reject supernaturalism. In order to develop this argument, we need to make a distinction between supernaturalism and transcendence. What are the differences between supernaturalism and transcendence? One plausible difference would be that all supernaturalism includes transcendence, but transcendence does not entail supernaturalism, because transcendence does not violate the natural laws. Whereas panentheism without supernaturalism is possible, since supernaturalism implies that God is not touched by the world, panentheism without transcendence is not possible, since without transcendence, there can be no kenosis and no incarnation.

Let's think about natural laws and miracles. There are so many occasions on which Jesus performs miracles; these occasions seem to be a form of the direct expression of divine action in the world. Are these miracles compatible with natural law or not? Although there are diverse forms of naturalism, argues Charles Hardwick, they have family resemblances: "(1) that *only* the world of nature is real; (2) that nature is necessary in the sense of requiring no sufficient reason beyond itself to account either for

⁷⁷⁵ Thomas, *God's Activity in the World*, 4.

its origin or ontological ground; (3) that nature as a whole may be understood without appeal to any kind of intelligence or purposive agency; and (4) that all causes are natural causes so that every natural event is itself a product of other natural events.” In short, naturalism does not allow God a place to become involved in the natural systems. Karl Peters suggests a “religious naturalism” which considers God as “not a being who creates the world but the process of creation itself,” since God is the “creative activity of nature, human history, and individual life.” However, this view is also a naturalistic view.⁷⁷⁶

Defining naturalism as a “minimal and generic sense,” David Griffin argues that naturalism does not always mean atheism, since it just denies supernaturalism, not “theistic versions of naturalism.” Griffin calls it naturalism (ns) which stands for “nonsupernaturalistic” and distinguishes this naturalism from naturalism (nati) which stands for “nature is all there is,” and from naturalism (sam) which stands for “sensationalist-atheistic-materialistic.”⁷⁷⁷ Agreeing with Griffin’s naturalism, Peacocke points out the dangers of any two of these extreme forms without the third. On the one hand, if we excessively emphasize God’s transcendence and the severance of God from the world, it brings about *deism* wherein God created something totally different from God and something external to God’s self, created in an entirely different space and not involved in the natural world but remaining as the ultimate reality in *aseity*. On the other hand, an excessive emphasis on God’s immanence leads to naturalism, or the proposition that the world can be sufficiently explained by natural laws without any super-natural means. In this sense, immanence without transcendence can lead to pantheism, because there is no God without the world. Instead of using a term, “naturalism,” in which only

⁷⁷⁶ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 7.

⁷⁷⁷ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 8.

natural laws alone can explain all natural systems, since naturalism might exclude the divine,⁷⁷⁸ Peacocke uses a term “*theistic* naturalism,” insofar as “natural processes are themselves actions of God, who continuously gives them existence.” Since the emergence of Charles Darwin, deistic concept of God disappeared or God as “an occasional visitor,” and God’s immanence in the world as “imperative” appeared in a way that “God makes things make themselves.” God is “the immanent Creator” who dynamically relates to the world, continuously creating the world’s existence at every moment in and through the processes of the natural order. Here, since we need to recognize that “the processes are not themselves God but are the actions of God-as-Creator,”⁷⁷⁹ we can reach a possibility of God’s place in the naturalism: “God+nature+humanity.”⁷⁸⁰

Although we can reach even to Polkinghorne’s argument that since miracles are not against the natural laws and the laws are themselves God’s expression, miracles can be considered more profound and deeper revelations of the divine character,⁷⁸¹ the most important thing was Jesus’ attitude for miracles. Ironically, Jesus did not want the people who were healed to tell others the news of miracles, since the miracles were not his original intention at all. If he was really interested in miracles, he might have shown his miracle on the cross. Many people wanted to see the miracles, but they mocked Jesus: “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One” (Luke 23:35). However, there was no miracle at that time. The real miracle, resurrection,

⁷⁷⁸ Arthur Peacocke, *All That Is*, ed. by Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 6.

⁷⁷⁹ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 17-19.

⁷⁸⁰ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 11.

⁷⁸¹ Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 53. Hartshorne does not deny the supernatural since it is both real and is God, not humanity. The bounded reality of humanity is in the supernatural reality of unbounded God: “we live and move and have our being.” Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and other Theological Mistakes*, 49.

happened after three days. Nonetheless, the Bible did not focus on the miracle with regard to the resurrection. John 9:25 gives us a proper attitude to understand a miracle: “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” This is a wonderful insight and a scientific fact. Hence we can say that it is not important to know whether it is a miracle or not, but to realize what happens.

Double Agency: Human Agency and Divine Agency

Before developing the discourse of double agency, let’s briefly consider of act of creation by God. Before creation, there was only one action, that is, divine action. Then, as Polkinghorne asks, “what are God’s motives that lie behind this great act?” Why did God create the world? It is because of the divine love that willed other existences outside the perichoretic triune God. Thus, creation became to exist because of God giving to the world God’s own life and value.⁷⁸² After creation, if we accept the term *creatio continua*, God cannot overrule creatures but must interact with them. Griffin argues that since each finite actual entity has its own self-creativity and self-determination, although the world including every actual entity is in God, it can transcend the divine influence.⁷⁸³ In the sense, we have to consider double agency, i.e., divine and human. Although divine action presupposes a divine agent, “agent” must have at least an *analogous* meaning to the finite agencies that we know and experience. If it does not, it is impossible to attempt a theology of divine action. Since divine action would make human beings “puppets, mere instruments of the divine purposes,”⁷⁸⁴ action must be both the one of a finite agent and the one of God. Inasmuch as divine action should not neglect the evolution of the cosmos

⁷⁸² Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 90-91.

⁷⁸³ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 142.

⁷⁸⁴ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 204.

based on the natural law in the world,⁷⁸⁵ what is important is how we can find and distinguish divine action from natural law.

As we saw earlier, Clayton suggests the “panentheistic analogy.” God’s relation to the world is similar to the relation of our minds to our bodies.⁷⁸⁶ From the perspective of Clayton, the following two perspectives are not appropriate to double agency. First, Austin Farrer’s “double agency” has two interpretations: 1. every physical event has both a physical cause and divine contributing cause in a metaphysical sense. 2. God is one of the efficient causes affecting every event. However, Clayton points out that this is ambiguous because the first position does not have any competition with natural explanation and the second position actually means continuous divine intervention in the world.⁷⁸⁷ Thus two laws, divine law and natural law, cannot exclude each other.

There are four numbers of cases in divine action. First, where there is divine action, there is human action (panentheism). Second, where there is divine action, there is no human action (determinism). Third, where there is no divine action, there is human action (atheism). Fourth, where there is no divine action, there is no human action (nihilism). Here I would like to focus on double action in which human and divine agency are related to the category of experience, neither before creation nor after death. That is, as Polkinghorne argues, we should accept both “our basic experience of free choice and consequent moral responsibility” and the testimony of our tradition that “God acts in the world.” Both human and divine agency are causal principles which will bring

⁷⁸⁵ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 205. Clayton gives some examples: “lawlikeness and regularity reflect the enduring character of God. Big Bang cosmology is consistent with the creation of the universe by a conscious intelligence. And the Anthropic Principle, which holds that many variables are ‘fine-tuned’ for the production of intelligent life, suggests a possible structuring of the universe for the evolution of consciousness.” Clayton emphasizes that there is no God’s intervention into the natural world in these features. Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 204-205. In order to complete this condition, Clayton uses panentheistic-participatory theory of agency based on Schleiermacher and Whitehead. Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science*, 177

about the future state of the world.⁷⁸⁸ Polkinghorne maintains that there must be distinction between creator/creature: “God acts through pure information input, while creaturely acts involve a mixture of energetic and informational causalities, corresponding to the embodied status of creatures.”⁷⁸⁹

With regard to freedom, Schelling explains it in the relation between individual and whole, saying that although an individual part is only possible within the whole of an organism, it has its own life or freedom for itself. In the relation between God and the world, the procession [*Folge*] of things from God is God’s self-revelation and God can only reveal himself to himself in free beings acting on their own, because there is no ground other than God. That is, whereas only what is free is in God because it is free, what is not free is necessarily outside of God because it is not free.⁷⁹⁰ In the sense, Schelling asserts that “The beginning and ending of this philosophy is freedom.”⁷⁹¹ The freedom of the creatures is not dependent on divine choice, since the divine life essentially transacts with free creatures. As Berdyaev argues, freedom as such is not created, but rather is “a primordial principle of reality inherent in deity as such and in all concrete actualities.” Thus the freedom of the creatures is against a false conception of divine omnipotence which suppresses or manipulates the freedom.⁷⁹² Every kind of life is “a succession and concatenation of states,” since each previous state is the ground which bears potency of the succeeding state. This movement is even in the divine life.⁷⁹³ In this sense, Schelling must be a harbinger of Whitehead.

⁷⁸⁸ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 98.

⁷⁸⁹ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 101.

⁷⁹⁰ F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human freedom* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 18-19.

⁷⁹¹ Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 33. Cooper, *Panentheism*, 96.

⁷⁹² Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 234.

⁷⁹³ Schelling argues how this divine life again distinguishes itself from every other, particularly human life Difference between God and man: 1) succession and concatenation, dissoluble in human life, is

Cooper summarizes Schelling's dynamic panentheism in three ways. First, if we are not autonomous, since we are subject to determinism in the natural laws, in order to have individual moral autonomy, he locates humans in God. As a part of God, we have freedom, "moral self-determination." Second, God must be dynamic. God's relation to the world cannot be static or fully actual, because if God is already actualized and completely fulfilled, then everything would be completely determined and humans would not be free. Thus God must be present gradually and progressively in the world. Third, since we participate in divine freedom, God cannot exist without human freedom. If God reveals himself through our own freedom, without this freedom even God would not be, so that we are collaborators of the whole. God and humans codetermine the course of their mutual self-actualization in such a way that whereas God determines the general trajectory of history, humans determine the particular issues. In this way Schelling asserts the twin themes of modern panentheism: that God's existence is essentially historical and that God and humans cooperate to fulfil their essence in the world.⁷⁹⁴

We can find this idea of double agency in the Bible: "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). The following comes from verse 6: "I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered it, God made it grow." Unless the seed has been planted, God cannot make it grow. Unless the seed is watered, God cannot make it grow. In order to make the plant grow, there must be planting and watering. Thus we human beings are God's fellow workers. Philippians 2:12-13 describes the mutual relationship between God's sovereignty and free acts of human

indissoluble in the divine life. God is in continual exaltation. Everything retrograde is against God's nature. God alone is called the imperishable, immortality. 2) succession in God is a real one. Even in eternity a succession, a time, is included. It is not an empty (abstract) eternity. Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 237-238.

⁷⁹⁴ Cooper, *Panentheism*, 96-97.

beings: “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” In this sense, Ephesians 2:21, “In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” tells that in Jesus we ourselves become holy temples. We participate in God's works.

Here top-down and bottom-up image can contribute to double agency. The top-down analogy shows that the world's Creator also can interact with the world. God interacts with an unfolding process, “allowing creatures to explore the range of possibilities, but also preserving some providential room so that he as Creator can maneuver in bringing about the future”⁷⁹⁵ For Tillich, a creature is rooted in the divine life and also may “actualize one's self through freedom.” Through a discrepancy between existence and essence, creatures can achieve its creaturely freedom, although there is “the point at which creation and the fall coincide.” Tillich calls it “human creativity.” That is, when God creates human beings, God gives human beings “the power of transforming” that they may change themselves and the world. Nonetheless, Tillich obviously makes a distinction between God and the world: “God is primarily and essentially creative; man is secondarily and existentially creative.”⁷⁹⁶

SDA in Suffering

The main thesis in this divine action is that God acts in the world without breaking the natural laws. However, can we keep this formal even in suffering in the world? Don't we need SDA in suffering? We have to find a new way which is neither regularly direct

⁷⁹⁵ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/04/03/how-could-god-interact-with-the-world/>
⁷⁹⁶ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 256.

divine action nor mere divine persuasion, because we need a more powerful model to remove evil and suffering in the world, although it may not break natural laws. Let's consider one example: there is a TV program, 'SOS Solution,' in Korea. This program helps those who are in trouble at home or in society, such as children who are beaten by their parents and who want to forget all their memories from one-year-old, or someone who has been working like a slave for decades in any house without any salary. This TV program together with the support of police, law groups, and social welfare organization goes to those people, saves them from those situations, and helps them to find a new life. We need to see here the fact that they *act*, i.e., perform some special action for the suffering people. If we relate this story to divine action, it can be seen as a model to show us how divine law is to natural law as parents are to their children. Parents should not arbitrarily break their children's rules and impinge on their freedom, inasmuch as when they often break their rules, the children will begin to reject their interruption. Parents, then, must wait for children's responses and try to persuade the children to do what they will do.

However, is it enough? Let's think about another example. If children are in trouble or suffering, should parents not intervene in their situations? One day I saw a girl of about five years old going by herself ahead of her mom. Her mom kept saying, "There is a drive way in front of you," but the child kept going. Then when a car appeared in front of her, her mom shouted, "STOP." I believe that the mother shouting STOP must have been the special action for her daughter who was about to be in trouble. When their children are in dangerous situation, parents have to save them or at least shout "stop." Likewise, when children play with very dangerous tools or weapon, or when they are

kidnapped, or when they fall into a river, do parents not get involved in the situation? Must the parents just wait, or persuade and hope the child will be saved because if they get involved in these situations, they break the child's rule and impinge on the child's freedom? If the parents limit their action, it is often only the death of their children that they will obtain. However, does liberation theology not still hold with this kind of acting for the God who will liberates the suffering people from their miserable situations? The confession of Ebenezer of the Israelite in 1 Sam. 7:12 is the faith confession that God has helped us thus far. Is this not a confession of special divine action in which God listened to the crying of the people and rescued them from the hand of the Philistines? Do we not make some events as SDA through our confession?

Nonetheless, we need to ask that when we see our life situation, we experience SDA in every suffering. This question reminds us of Jesus Christ. Recall, again, that the present goal is to find a model which unifies divine action in classical theism and the influence of God in process theology through Jesus Christ. On the one hand, God's incarnation must be the most concrete divine action, since God reveals Himself in the world. On the other hand, in Jesus' death on the cross it is hard to see divine action. When some people asked to Jesus on the cross to show his authority and power as the Son of God, Jesus showed nothing: "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are Son of God!" (Matthew 27:40). People wanted to see divine action saving his Son, but unfortunately, there was no direct action of God. Is it God's innate powerlessness or a voluntary rejection of power? And is that all that is? Do we not see Jesus' resurrection? Resurrection must be the most powerful type of SDA. If the death of Jesus was the end,

there must be no resurrection. But was resurrection not SDA? (I will develop this part in the section, “Revised Omnipotence of God”).

Panentheistic Prayer and Divine Action

In this section I employ a phenomenological method, combining individual thought experiments and the language of faith with biblical theological reflections. In later sections I work out the results in a more systematic manner.

Example 1: Dawkins introduces the “Great Prayer Experiment,” which asks whether praying for patients contribute to their recovery. Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton scientifically analyzed whether praying for the health of the royal family is efficacious, but he found “no statistical difference.”⁷⁹⁷

Example 2: In the “Toyota 911 Call of Family’s Fatal Lexus Crash,”⁷⁹⁸ we can hear a voice screaming, “Pray, pray!” And then there was no answer.

In whatever forms of divine action, do we not believe in God’s saying that “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go”? (Isaiah 48: 17). Thereby we pray to God who gives us hope: “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).⁷⁹⁹ However, sometimes when we do not see such a hope from God, we also beg to God as in Jeremiah 14:7-9, “Do something for the sake of your name... why are you like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who stays only a night?... why are you like a man

⁷⁹⁷ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 61.

⁷⁹⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03m7fmnhO0I>

⁷⁹⁹ David asks God to show such attitudes as a bird do. Psalms 17:8, “hide me in the shadow of your wings.” We should also pray to God this one, because there is nowhere we can protect ourselves in the world. God’s wings are the only place where we can rest. God always keep us. We should also ask God to keep us every time. Psalms 17:8, “Keep me as the apple of your eye.” What does it mean to keep us as the apple of our eye? Have we ever seen our apple of eyes moving? We can see our eyes moving when we see our eyes. However, we cannot see our eyes moving, when we see other things not the apple of our eyes. If we see it, our eyes are strabismus. When David prays “keep me as the apple of your eyes,” it means that keep me always whether you see your eyes or you see other things. We cannot simultaneously see both our eyes and other things, but God can see everything at the same time.

taken by surprise, like a warrior powerless to save? You are among us... do not forsake us.”

Let us investigate this divine action with regard to prayer. When children ask their parents for something, their parents can respond in two ways: yes or no. Could we judge the parents based on a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ response, i.e., if they say ‘yes,’ they are good; if they say ‘no,’ they are bad? In any case, ‘no’ could be good and ‘yes’ bad. There could be reasons for a ‘no’ answer. For example, if the child is asking for a very dangerous thing, the parents must say ‘no.’ Who would give their babies a dangerous knife, although the babies persistently ask? In this case, ‘no’ must be a good answer for the babies, while ‘yes’ is not. In another case a positive response may be beyond the parents’ ability, they cannot answer, “yes.” In this case, we can say that the parents are powerless, although they are good for their children. Even in this case, although the children complain, they do not ask whether their parents exist or not.

How about God? When we pray to God for something, there can be three responses of God: yes, no, and silence. There are countless examples of God’s yes and no in the Bible. First, to pray to God presupposes that God can help us, since we pray to *God*, not to other finite entities. There seems to be no problem in God’s yes, since the responding (acting) God is the God in whom we really want to believe, so that we call *this* God the gracious God. For example, when Peter was kept in prison, in Acts 12, church members faithfully prayed to God for him. Finally, an angel of the Lord saved Peter. This is a kind of ‘yes’ from God in response to the prayer of church members. In 2 Kings 20, when Hezekiah prayed to God, God gave him fifteen years more of life. When Egyptians made the Israelites suffer, the Israelites cried out to God and God “heard” their

voices, “saw” their suffering, and finally “brought” them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Deuteronomy 26:7-9). When Moses asks for God’s forgiveness of the sins of the Israelites: “In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now,” the LORD replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked” (Numbers 14:19-20). When people cry to God, God remembers his covenant and changes his mind: “But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented. He caused them to be pitied by all who held them captive” (Psalms 106:44-46).

Second, however, we have to think of God’s ‘no.’ Like parents, God also does not give us what we ask for if it is a dangerous thing, or if it is not for the common good, but rather only one’s own pleasures. By the same token, for example, what if God says ‘yes’ to all our prayers? If somebody prays to God, “Kill my neighbor,” and God kills the neighbor, what is this God? One of the pastors in Arizona really prayed for president Obama to die and to go to hell, because, he said, this country is to be saved.⁸⁰⁰ He believed that God also disliked the president and God can do everything. Is this not a kind of projection of anthropomorphism which conservative groups do not accept as their creed? If God accepts this kind of prayer, is this God a good god? We cannot say that this God is good and omnipotent even if God accepts our prayer. Is this God rather not a merciless God or a robot God who does not have any subjectivity but only depends on human input? James 4:3 supports this idea: “when you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

⁸⁰⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq9G44tomKY>

Third is the case of the silence when there is no obvious answer from God. In the case, we sometimes ask these questions: why does God not accept our prayer; why is there only silence; and where are you God now? There could be three possible responses: ‘there is no God’ (atheism), there is only a ‘powerless God or no SDA’ (orthodox process theism), and ‘though, responding and acting God’ (panentheism). In the case, the first response is understandable but very naïve, although most people might have this kind of experience in their life. The second response is very controversial. God is powerless, since there is no direct answer to our prayers. However, should we say that God is powerless in the same way as our parents who cannot accept their children’s asking because of their limitation of economical ability? Although God may be silent, can we say that God is powerless? Is it itself not contradictory to pray to a God who is powerless? If children sometimes say that God is less powerful than their fathers, since God gives them no answer when they pray to God, whereas their fathers give them some present when they ask, is this a good theological education for children? If we say ‘yes,’ why do we pray to “a puny godling”⁸⁰¹ or a powerless God? Why do we pray to God for others who are facing death or who need intercessory prayer? Do we not pray with the earnest hope that God will let the people avoid the death? Nonetheless, when they die, we cry. If death is not a big issue, since everyone, according to the process theologian, will die, why do we cry? Is it just the price of compensation for learning the obvious fact that everybody will die? By the same token, why do we teach our children to pray to God when they are sick? When our sons and daughter ask us to pray for them, do we not pray to God for them to be healthy? Or do we pretend to pray to God for them so as to avoid the persistent asking?

⁸⁰¹ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 180.

We pray to God because we expect God to listen and accept our prayers if they are true prayers. When we pray to God to heal our sons and daughters, we literally expect God to heal our sons and daughters. That is, when we pray, we can pray what we hope: ‘Oh God, my son is dying; Please help me; Please come down in this Minjung’s life’.⁸⁰² “*Kumbaya*, ‘Come by here,’” *Kyrie eleison*: Oh Lord, Have mercy, and “*Veni Creator Spiritus*, ‘Come, Creator Spirit,’”⁸⁰³ hoping “in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2). This must be the suffering people’s petition or prayer to God. In this situation, what would be the more reasonable response between these: that the powerful God will save you or that the powerless God will save you? Isn’t it a kind of contradiction to pray with sincere hope to a God who cannot change our lives even in a difficult situation? When we see some people who were almost dying and even the doctor had also given up, surviving by the prayer of others, how can we interpret this event? Although there may be many other answers, is this not a result of prayer? Is this not God’s special action?

When Elijah and the prophets of Baal debated whose God is the true God on Mount Carmel, Elijah began to taunt them: “Shout louder! Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.”⁸⁰⁴ When Elijah prayed to God, however, God answered with the sign: “the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice...” Then all the people saw this and cried, “The LORD.

⁸⁰² “Jesus of the golden crown,” by Ji-ha Kim, was the first minjung song in minjung-movement. Roughly translated, it would be:

“The frozen sky, the frozen field
The sun loses the light, Ah, the dark street of the poverty
Where does the poor come from
What do the eye and the thin hands search for
(Refrain) Oh, Lord, now and here
Oh, Lord, now and here, be with us here”

⁸⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veni_Creator_Spiritus

⁸⁰⁴ 1 King 18: 27 (NIV).

He is God! The Lord—he is God.”⁸⁰⁵ Here we know that God is not a sleeping God, but the one who responds to our prayer and is powerful God. Is it not, in a sense, that the God whom Elijah taunted is the powerless God? Do atheists or skeptical people not despise this powerless God for the very same reason?

However, the problem is not simple since although our prayers are very faithful and true, we often experience God’s silence. Let’s consider the following instance: When two teams (A and B) in a soccer game pray to God with a faithful and true mind, which team’s prayer should God accept? If team A won at the game, did God accept the prayer of team A alone? Why not B? Was the prayer of team A more faithful than that of team B? Or was the ability of team ‘A’ superior to that of team ‘B’? If team A won over team B again, even without prayer at the next game, do we need prayer to win at some games? By contrast, if team B finally won at the other game, even without prayer, what is the relationship between our prayer and God in a soccer game?

When we are in trouble, whoever we are, whether we are conservative, liberal or process people, there would be hardly any difference in the hope of prayer itself, the hope that God will listen to our prayers and change our situation.⁸⁰⁶ I call it ‘panentheistic prayer’ as a third position. That is, although God is silent, we believe that God will listen to our prayer. This idea leads me to the God’s absence in our prayer. I understand ‘presence’ or ‘absence’ of God as follows: when my son was two years old, he usually used to cry whenever he did not see his mom and me even though we were always with him at home. However, when he became four years old, he did not cry even

⁸⁰⁵ 1 King 18: 39 (NIV).

⁸⁰⁶ The following famous quotation written in front of an old German opera house tells us about a deep meaning of prayer: “‘Bach gave us God’s word, Mozart gave us God’s laughter and Beethoven gave us God’s fire, and God gave us music so that we can pray without words.’”
http://www.copperwiki.org/index.php/Bach's_Spiritual_Life.

when he just played by himself in the living room. He did not care whether we were with him or not. I think he recognized that we were always with him even when he did not see us. If someone regards this case as the absence of parents, does a policeman take my son and should my wife and I go to jail? In that case, where is the boundary between presence and absence of parents? Does presence have a meaning only when we appear? Or are we absent when we do not appear in front of him? Is it not true that whether we appear or not, though, we are always with him?

In the case of God, how can we understand the presence or absence of God? Does God appear in front of us as I appear to my son? No, and thus we must not interpret 'presence of God' as the 'appearance of a person.' What does 'presence of God' mean? How should we understand absence of God? When I call offices or institutions, I often listen to a voice mail: "I am not available now. Please leave a message, and I will call you as soon as possible." S/he is not there. S/he must be absent. Can we also apply it to God? Is God absent? If God is absent, how can we say that God is always omnipresent? There must be two faces of God or paradox of presence or absence of God. We have to explain perichoresis of presence or absence of God. However, we frequently ask God when we might get an answer. When my daughter was four years old, she wanted to be five years old. I told her, 'You should wait four months.' However, she could not understand what I said and she said, "Daddy, you say always wait and wait and wait." Sometimes we have to wait for God's answer in our life.

Tillich properly responds to this situation: prayers cannot ask God directly to interfere with existential conditions, although they are prayers of supplication and prayers of intercession, for a prayer is a condition directing God's creativity. Nonetheless, Tillich

argues that “every serious prayer contains power, not because of the intensity of desire expressed in it, but because of the faith the person has in God’s directing activity—a faith which transforms the existential situation.”⁸⁰⁷ This position used to evoke the problem of divine action, since we would experience God’s absence or no direct divine action to our urgent prayer.

Conclusion

God can become involved in the actualities of any number of cases but this involvement does not hinder either natural law or human freedom of choice in this world. In this sense, there must be human subjectivity, which God does not touch, although the world, including human beings, may proceed counter to God (For example: Eve and Cain). Nevertheless, isn’t there at least one case in which God directly acts in human affairs such as in the suffering? Does God still persuade human beings, even in this suffering before they act in something? Should God not act against this suffering? There must be SDA without supernaturalism in human affairs. (In Exodus 4, God persuaded Moses to be a leader of the Israelite and gave him power as a sign which showed God’s being with him). We have to properly interpret these direct divine actions. Whether God’s actions in the face of suffering are fact or not, do we have any authority to stop others from such events as their confession of faith? The language of the Bible is that of confession: God concretely helped them in their lives, although God did not act physically. Then, how can we recognize God’s lure for us? In order to recognize even God’s persuasion or lure, we have to pray to God. Just as it is important to say that our prayer changes God’s mind and decision, so it is also important to say that God must be powerful to change the world,

⁸⁰⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 267.

though. Whatever the answer about divine action would be, we know that “God is at work in the created world.”⁸⁰⁸ Solomon’s expression is very appropriate to prayer with regard to divine action: “hear from heaven and act” (2 Chronicles 6:23). Suchocki also maintains the importance of prayer, saying that prayer is “a dance with God” that can make differences and change the world.⁸⁰⁹ Thus, divine action can be a bridge between classical theism and process theism.

4. TPT Model

Although one of the tasks of theology is to defend the classical creeds of the church, it cannot be merely a repetition of classical creeds, since it should also deal with the contemporary issues of the world, and be open to the future in the interpretation. In this section, I plan to draw together the various conclusions that have arisen out of the previous sections, connecting them within what I call the TPT model. My exposition starts with one of “Seven Core Christian Questions,”⁸¹⁰ i.e., “Who is God?” (Theology). TPT has both sides, that is, transcendence and immanence. Luke 2:14 shows this double structure: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” Panentheism keeps both “glory to God” and “on earth peace to men.” In the sense, Philippians 2:5-11 shows us both “kenotic trinitarian panentheism” and, if I may coin, “lifted trinitarian panentheism.” By the same token, Ephesians 4:9-10 has the same structure. God who descends into the world is the one who ascended into heaven “in

⁸⁰⁸ Polkinghorne, “Kenotic Creation and Divine Action,” 106.

⁸⁰⁹ Majorie Suchocki, *In God’s Presence: Theological Reflections on Prayer* (Missouri: Chalice Press, 1966), 66.

⁸¹⁰ Philip Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 73. Other loci: who is Jesus, called the Christ (Christology); who is the Spirit (pneumatology); what is humanity (anthropology); what is problem of sin and salvation (soteriology); what is the nature and function of the church (Ecclesiology); what is the future (Exchatology). Ibid., 73-74.

order to fill the whole universe” The constructive theology I defend here has five major features: the kenotic God; the relational God; the suffering God; the knowable God; and revised understanding of the power of God.

1) Kenotic God

Although God does not have to create the world, God created the world in Godself and incarnated to the world so as to reconcile with the world. God came down at the level of the world’s eye, which means God’s kenosis. Even though there are disanalogies between God and the world, because God is necessary but world is contingent, they are really intertwined. Phil. 2:5-7 shows us the model of God’s free self-limitation, the kenosis of God, and free self-expenditure:⁸¹¹ “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself.” Clayton finds the most attractive model of God from Kenotic Christology in that the kenotic God with self-surrendering love appears as self-limitation. God does not stay in himself, but chooses to limit himself by coming down to the world. God and humanity in Jesus Christ are united in mutual self-giving love, which is called “kenotic unity.” Although Jesus’ power was divine power, he did not use the power over others, but, rather, “[took] on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man’ (Phil 2:7).” This expresses a “strange juxtaposition of power and self-emptying.”⁸¹²

In my view, the eternal divine nature does not require a created, contingent world, so that there is no ultimate dependence of God on the world. Nevertheless, God, in

⁸¹¹ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking understanding: An introduction to Christian Theology* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 1991, 2004), 150.

⁸¹² Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 223.

radical freedom, did create a world not “outside” of Godself, but as intimately interrelated to the divine presence, as our bodies are to our minds.⁸¹³ Daniel Migliore talks about both God’s freedom and self-limitation in creation in terms of kenosis. On the one hand, the freedom of God is more active and much greater than the idea of absolute independence of God from the world, since the free God is free for the world and this God freely takes the form of a servant without ceasing to be God.⁸¹⁴ On the other hand, God’s work of creation is “costly grace” as “an act of divine *kenosis*.” Although the metaphor of divine kenosis is usually applied to the divine salvation, the act of creation is already a kind of divine kenosis, i.e., self-humiliation or self-limitation. As Emil Brunner also contends, “The kenosis, which reaches its [highest] expression in the cross of Christ, began with the creation of the world.”⁸¹⁵

Kenosis enables us to think that God’s Word, or God’s Son, is coming in the form of the suffering servant who humbles himself, makes himself vulnerable, makes friends with sinners and has preference for the poor, becomes obedient even to the death on the cross. This kenosis of God, Jesus, gives his life unconditionally for the renewal of the world.⁸¹⁶ Thus, insofar as God embraces the world’s suffering, a panentheistic understanding of the God-world relation relates to a strong kenotic Christology and soteriology.⁸¹⁷ In addition, developing this argument, Migliore speaks of the “kenotic unity” of God and humanity in Jesus Christ, which is that God and humanity in Jesus

⁸¹³ Clayton, “God and World,” 218.

⁸¹⁴ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 52.

⁸¹⁵ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 101.

⁸¹⁶ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 149.

⁸¹⁷ Clayton, “God and World,” 218.

Christ are united in mutual self-giving love. It is a union of the Spirit in which there is reciprocal self-limitation and total openness of each to the other.⁸¹⁸

Shekinah

Moltmann explains God's kenotic relation to the world through a conception, *shekinah* (indwelling), that is, "cosmic Shekinah of God" out of his free love. God dwells in creation, "the home of his identity in the world." God's indwelling is God's presence in the world. This is the Moltmann's eschatological vision, that is, "panentheistic vision of God's being 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15: 28)."⁸¹⁹ Although we can recognize God's Shekinah in the Israelites history, Moltmann asks, how can we interpret it in the captivity of the Babylonians? Two answers can be possible: First, God no longer works in the history. Second, God's Shekinah is still in the suffering of the homeless, humiliated, and exiled Israelites and becomes fellow or friend with them.⁸²⁰ From the concept of Shekinah, Abraham Heschel develops "bipolar concept" of one God" who exists in history in a double presence: "in heaven and in his exiled people, unlimited and limited, infinite and finite, free from suffering and death, while at the same time suffering and dying with his people." With the help of the "self-differentiation of God" in Hegel's dialectics, Franz Rosenzweig interprets the concept of Shekinah: "God himself cuts himself off from himself, he gives himself away to his people, he suffers with their sufferings, he goes with them into the misery of the foreign land, he wanders with their wanderings." This

⁸¹⁸ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 150.

⁸¹⁹ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 158. Moltmann, *the Coming of God: A Christian Eschatology*, xiii.

⁸²⁰ Moltmann, "God's Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World," 143. According to Moltmann, this Shekinah theology has the hope to the redemption of the suffering people and God's Shekinah will be saved from the suffering and will return to its eternal home. Ibid.

God must be “the banished God” and will be redeemed and all creatures are in God and God in all creatures.⁸²¹

Moltmann’s doctrine of kenosis not only talks about attributes inherent in divine nature but also relates to a kenosis of the *divinity* (divine being) of the eternal Logos. Moltmann emphasizes that “the act of kenosis is an act of God’s free love for men and women.” Through the divine kenosis, we can recognize that the glory of God is not for “the crowns of the mighty,” but for “the face of the crucified Christ, that the authority of God is represented not by the powerful and the rich but by the outcast Son of Man, and that the kingdom of God is reflected not in world kingdom, but in the service of Christ, “who humiliated himself to the point of death on the cross.”⁸²² Von Balthasar also indicates in a similar view that kenosis is “the essential nature of the eternal Son of the eternal Father”: what the incarnate Son does on earth or in time is not different from what he does in heaven or in eternity.⁸²³ Through baptism we can ponder the God and world relationship. “Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented.” (Matthew 3:15). Although God can do everything God wants and wills, God does not use God’s own authority to fulfill all righteousness but begs baptism from a man John. This reminds me of God’s kenosis or God’s self-emptying from Philippians 2. This image of Jesus may be different from Jesus we make in the fossilized doctrine. The fact that Jesus was baptized by a man John does not mean that the authority of the earth dominates that of the heaven but that through the apostolic tradition or spirit of the earth God fulfills the vision or will of heaven, declaring that

⁸²¹ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 143. God’s kenosis is like lactic acid bacteria. Even though it is bacteria, it is good one. In order to be LAB, milk must be rotten. However, the rotten milk with LAB is ironically good for human health.

⁸²² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 327.

⁸²³ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 139-140.

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” What we learn from baptism is that God works with the world together.

Then, what is the purpose of kenosis? Moltmann argues that “The goal of God’s kenosis in the creation and preservation of the world is that *future* which we describe with the symbols of the kingdom of God and the new creation, or ‘world without end.’”⁸²⁴ Keith Ward also answers that it is “theosis, or covenant with God.”⁸²⁵ It means that “As the beginning of creation is kenosis, so the end or consummation of creation is theosis.”⁸²⁶ In the Philippians 4:21, we can find theosis: “(the Lord Jesus Christ) will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” If I make a term which expresses the relation between transcendence and immanence, it could be ‘Kenotheosis,’ since God’s kenosis is prior to theosis.

2) Relational God

Understanding the God-World Relationship through Human Beings

The God-world relationship is “distinct but not separate,” or, in a sense, “inextricably intertwined.”⁸²⁷ On the one hand, since the world depends on God who is its “necessary and eternal source,” the world without God’s creative act cannot exist. On the other hand, God depends on the world in that God’s actual experience depends on interactions with finite creatures.⁸²⁸ Insofar as God is internally related to and knows the world

⁸²⁴ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 151.

⁸²⁵ George Ellis, “Kenosis as a Unifying Theme for Life and Cosmology,” in Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 109.

⁸²⁶ Keith Ward, “Cosmos and Kenosis,” in Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 166.

⁸²⁷ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 9.

⁸²⁸ Philip Clayton, “Panentheism in Metaphysical and Scientific Perspective,” 83. Johnson argues that a classical theistic God who is unrelated and unaffected by the world describes “the ultimate patriarchal ideal, the solitary, and dominant male.” Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 225.

immediately through the interior understanding, more than we are internally related to and know our bodies immediately, God is “the most radically relational Thou.” Moreover, this knowledge is “empathetic, intimate, sympathetic knowledge, closer to feeling than to rationality.”⁸²⁹ McFague’s model of the world as God’s body gives us two aspects: that since we live in God, we can relax and enjoy, and that since we live on the earth, we should care for our isolated neighbors and the earth for sustainability.⁸³⁰ Insofar as to say “relational” is to communicate each other, we need to ask that we have cosmic ears to listen to the world’s diverse voices. Thus to know, one by one, people who live in the world everyday, in a sense can be a way to lead us to know God better.

In the sense, we cannot help but deal with Martin Buber with regard to relation, which is mutual and reciprocal to all members of the cosmic community,⁸³¹ and it is amazing and fresh to find panentheistic analogy and elements in Buber who is hardly a metaphysician but rather a phenomenologist.⁸³² Buber conclusively contends, “In the beginning is the relation”⁸³³ and true relation can be realized only through the relation of I to the eternal Thou.⁸³⁴ God is the supreme form of Thou⁸³⁵ who cannot be reduced to “It.” In order to reach to the eternal “You,” we should encounter every single you, insofar as single you is a glimpse of eternal “You.”⁸³⁶ In every sphere and in every you, we

⁸²⁹ Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 73.

⁸³⁰ Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 115-116.

⁸³¹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 67. Hartshorne, and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 302.

⁸³² Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 302. According to Hartshorne, Buber is not seeking a formal metaphysics and distrust any such doctrine because Buber thinks it turns God into an It or Object. Ibid., 306.

⁸³³ Buber, *I and Thou*, 69. Now the earth was relationless, ego was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the ego. And God said, Let there be relation, and there was relation. (modified Genesis 1:1-2).

⁸³⁴ A relationship between Christianity and other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism is I and It. However, if we change I and it to I and You, conversation between religions is possible.

⁸³⁵ Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 302.

⁸³⁶ Buber, *I and Thou*, 123.

perceive, address, touch the eternal “You.”⁸³⁷ That is, as soon as we touch a “you,” we are touched by a breath of eternal life.⁸³⁸ In this time we can live in the spirit with our whole being.⁸³⁹ In the sense, Clayton calls Buber’s theory a “lived panentheism.” Buber addresses panentheistic meaning as follows: “God is the wholly other, wholly same, and wholly present. He is the *mysterium tremendum* that appears and overwhelms; but he is also the mystery of the obvious that is closer to me than my own I.”⁸⁴⁰

On the one hand, a strong point for Buber is that we can reach God through the relation of I-Thou in our daily lives. On the other hand, a weak point for Buber is that if Buber really emphasizes the relation, he should use “we” as a basic word instead of I-You insofar as people already live between people. In China and Korea, we say human being as “인간” (in-gan) in Korean and “人間” in Chinese. “人” (in) means “human beings,” “間” (gan) means “between,” and the shape of 人 (in) seems to lean against each other. In fact, insofar as human beings live between and among others, they are thus “between-beings.” That is, a human being is already by nature a relational being. If so, ‘we’ is a more appropriate term to the relational conception. ‘We’ is neither arbitrarily united ‘I’ to ‘You’ nor destroyed nor reduced in its individual character to other. ‘We’

⁸³⁷ Buber, *I and Thou*, 150.

⁸³⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, 112-113.

⁸³⁹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 89. Buber shows us a perfect relationship. For Buber a dualistic perspective concerning God and world, i.e., “World here, God there,” and reduction God to the world, i.e., “God in the world,” are all “it-talk” not I and Thou talk. To have nothing besides God but to grasp everything in him is to comprehend all the world leaving out nothing. By the same token, to find God, we do not have to leave the world or deny its reality but ought to hallow it. One does not find God both if one remains in the world and if one leaves the world. Whoever goes directly to his You with his whole being and carries to it all the being of the world, finds him whom one cannot seek. That is, neither looking away from the world nor staring at the world are help toward God and the world. Rather, whoever beholds the world in him stands in his presence. In the relation to God, unconditional exclusiveness and unconditional inclusiveness are one. Ibid. Actually, the absolute relationship includes all relative relationships and is no longer a part but the whole in which all of them are consummated and become one. Buber, *I and Thou*, 127. Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers Speak of God*, 302.

⁸⁴⁰ Buber, *I and Thou*, 127. Buber accounts of the dipolarity of time and eternity, or permanence and flux. He speaks of God as “in the fullness of his eternity” needing us; whereas the dipolar logic of the matter is that God in his eternal aspect needs only some creatures or other but in his actual *de facto* present reality needs us in particular. Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 306.

means each other. Whereas if I remain in I, I cannot go beyond I, myself; if I go beyond myself, I should be in 'We.' Since relationship does not reduce each individual one to other, 'we' presupposes the individual being, so that 'we' is neither total one nor monarchy one. Native Americans have an idea which offers a deep insight: "We are all related. We are related because we all come from the same Creator and share the same planet. We also all share the same air. What I have just breathed in, you had just breathed out seconds ago."⁸⁴¹ Whether they are the rich or the poor, there is no exception to understanding that relation means interconnection. I as a self have an inter-affective relation with the larger whole of things, as Ogden argues, since each individual life is "the present integration of remembered past and anticipated future into a new whole of significance."⁸⁴²

Relation between God and the World

While playing piano, we can think about God who is tuning and playing the world. For God, the world is not outside God. When God's dipolar aspects—left hand and right hand—play the piano (the world), it is meaningless to make a clear distinction between immanence and transcendence, but rather when two hands cross over each other, there will be harmony between God and the world, so that diverse phenomena of the world are themselves the ensemble of God and the world. The God-world relationship in panentheism can be described as the play of God and the world. If we are in God and God in us, we play in and with God. Although God is the One who receives our worship, God is willing to play with us, since we are children of God. The play is possible not in

⁸⁴¹ Jace Weaver ed., *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 73.

⁸⁴² Ogden, *The Reality of God*, 58.

the distance but in the intimate relationship between God and the world, when God descends into us. Just as parents play with their children, so God plays with us. In the sense, when we smile, God also smiles with us and when we cry, God also cries with us. Thus there is a mutually intimate relation rather than a hierarchical relation between God and the world.

The relationship between God and the world is well revealed in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This can be analyzed as follows: 1) God first loves the world and the world is loved by God; 2) God gives his Son and the world receives him; 3) There must be God’s initiative for the world in that the direction is from God to the world (God→the world); 4) Then, the world returns to God its response (belief) and God receives it (the world→God); 5) In this logic, we can see mutual relationship or connection (God→←The world); 6) This mutual relation makes it possible to have eternal life; 7) If this mutual relation is broken, eternal life cannot be given, but there must be only perishing. God might not have given his one and only Son to the world unless God had loved the world. However, the world is so valuable to God that God loves the world. In this sense, memorizing this verse from preschool, we might be panentheists. This verse shows God’s radical relationship to the world.

After creation, the relation between God and world is interdependent. Is it not more appropriate to say that even though there are infinitively qualitative differences between God and the world, God should be interrelated to creatures after creation? Although the God-world relationship is obviously neither a symmetrical nor an equal relation but a mutual one, argues Moltmann, it has “a retroactive effect on his relationship

to himself.”⁸⁴³ Tillich also indicates the divine-human relationship within religious experience. Although God in nature is never dependent on human beings, God in relation to human beings is dependent on them. Thus insofar as there is a mutual interdependence between “God for us” and “we for God,” the divine-human relation is cor-relational.⁸⁴⁴

We can recognize the problem of attributes of God in classical theism such as simplicity, impassibility, and immutability. Since this God-world relationship is not in reality, but in idea,⁸⁴⁵ it makes God the unmoved mover, as we already see, which is not affected by creatures. Although there is qualitative difference between God and creatures, God should be related to creatures after creation.⁸⁴⁶ In fact, God does not need to have the world as a partner but God nevertheless needs the world. This argument reminds me of Kathryn Tanner’s structure of the Trinity in *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity*. “God does not even need to be with him in this way. It is not just that God does not need us to do something for ‘him;’ God does not need us at all. God does not need us for company; the Trinitarian Persons have all they need in and among themselves... God’s relations with us from creation to consummation are the purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love

⁸⁴³ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 3, 161.

⁸⁴⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 61. According to Tillich, this mutual interdependence is true even in the doctrine of predestination. Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Aquinas, *ST. I*, 13, 7. What does “classical theism” mean? David Ray Griffin criticizes Thomas Aquinas. Thomas built on patristic ideas, especially those of Augustine. Classical theism focus on the following attributes of God. 1) Pure actuality: Aristotle: everything = form +matter and actuality + potentiality. Potentiality means a lack of perfection; something was yet to come. So, God is absolute actuality, pure form and there is no matter to actualize his potentiality. 2) Immutability and impassibility: God does not change. God cannot be “moved” in a true emotional sense. God grieves or rejoices: mere metaphor. The impossibility of God’s being acted upon. 3) Timelessness: God’s eternal existence is timeless, outside of time. 4) Simplicity: God is not composed of parts. If God has no parts, God cannot change, since there are no parts for him to lose or gain. 5) Necessity: God’s existence is necessary in that it is impossible for God not to exist. Everything except God exists contingently. Necessity means that the divine essence itself is necessary. 5) Omnipotence and omniscience. Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 55.

⁸⁴⁶ In addition, Johnson notes that “unrelated and unaffected by the world, such a classical theistic God limns the ultimate patriarchal ideal, the solitary, and dominant male.” Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 225.

extended outwards to us.”⁸⁴⁷ We can attempt to formulate this argument as a syllogism as follows:

1) First Possibility

A: God does not need us at all.

B: (Because) the Trinitarian Persons have all they need in and among themselves

C: (Nevertheless, God loves us with) purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love extended outwards to us.

Both A and B have controversial factors. If both A and B were right, God would create the world by accident without any purpose. Just as the billionaire donates charities to the poor, so God gives us gratuitous acts of beneficent love. However, this makes God’s self-giving love cheap. Are there not some methods to preserve God’s infinite love toward us? Even though one does not insist on both A and B, could one not keep C? I would like to suggest a possibility.

2) Second Possibility

A: God needs us.

B: Because the Trinitarian Persons do not have all they need in and among themselves.

B’: Thus the Trinitarian Persons need human love.

C: (Nevertheless) God’s relations to us are purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love extended outwards to us.

This possibility, however, could make God needy; that is, a limited God who cannot exist without the world. Since this possibility is also awkward, we need the third possibility that has to show a sort of model, which rejects both an independent God and a limited God, but accepts our contingency. Hartshorne and Reese define that God does not need *this* world but rather *a* world and contingently contains this world because the world is essentially “outside the divine essence, though inside God.”⁸⁴⁸ Clayton also rejects God’s necessary creation of the world, but insists that, having once created a world, God must

⁸⁴⁷ Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press: 2001), 69.

⁸⁴⁸ Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God*, 22.

depend on it.⁸⁴⁹ Since necessity may relate to coercion, it is preferable to defend freedom. This means that God has a potentiality in God that is actualized in God's relations to the world.⁸⁵⁰ Still, subsequent to the free decision to create and to be intimately involved with the world, the dependence becomes basic to the divine experience.⁸⁵¹ This kind of dependence is fully compatible with the traditional affirmation. With this panentheism, let me give another possibility.

3) Third Possibility

A: God does not need us at all.

B: (Because) the Trinitarian Persons have all they need in and among themselves

C: (Nevertheless, God loves us with) purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love extended outwards to us.

C': 'C' makes human beings able to love God with *gratefully responsive acts of confessional love* extended towards God.

D: Thus, God would be happy because of our love toward God.

Real relationship consists of not only "purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love" but also "gratefully responsive acts of confessional love." Von Balthasar also maintains that although God "freely and unconditionally" gives us pure grace, human beings have to respond to God with the dignity of a free creature.⁸⁵² Where the infinite chooses the finite and when God makes a covenant with man with pure grace, humans have the dignity of a free creature. Thus God alone cannot bring about reconciliation, as Anselm indicates, although God has all initiatives.⁸⁵³

⁸⁴⁹ Clayton, "God and World," 213.

⁸⁵⁰ "Under the old metaphysics of perfection this would have impossible, for full perfection required full actuality and potentiality was an imperfection; but when the metaphysics does not fit, it must be discarded. The core of divine personhood is a combination of God's essential nature and a potential for experience. Embodiment in the world provides the vehicle for that experience." Ibid.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., 214.

⁸⁵² Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama IV: The Action* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 228-229.

⁸⁵³ TD IV, 228-229. "[S]uch a choosing also implies the demands of covenant righteousness. 'Righteous' means a 'di-rect-ion' toward the 'right,' and ultimately this 'right' is defined by the divine grace offered to man." Ibid.

By the same token, Kallistos Ware argues that since God created the world in God's entire freedom, neither arbitrarily nor accidentally, it is very appropriate to say that "God is necessary to the world, but the world is not necessary to God."⁸⁵⁴

Thomas Oord explains necessity in God and world relationship, not that "Wow, I'm impressed with X, because X is essentially independent from others," but rather that "Wow, I'm impressed with X, because X has a nature of love that everlastingly involves a measure of dependence for giving and receiving with others (in this case, creaturely others)." However, I would like to paraphrase Oord's saying as follows: "Wow, I'm impressed with X," because, although "X is essentially independent from others," X willingly relates to us and even depends on us in some ways. And Oord maintains double necessity: God necessarily exists and God necessarily creates the world.⁸⁵⁵ If double necessity is possible, however, we have to say, "no world, no God." Thus we need to say that God's creation of the world is not arbitrary, casual, or accidental, but totally an act of divine freedom, since God's self-diffusive love is at the very heart of the living God.⁸⁵⁶

Thus gratefully responsive acts of confessional love extended towards God do not damage the purely gratuitous acts of beneficent love of God. By the same token, as Paul Fiddes notes, "[L]ove is relational and not simply attitudinal; the God who is love exists eternally in the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit."⁸⁵⁷ But this model of God denies that "a loving God needs a created world in which to exercise love."⁸⁵⁸ The relation between God and the world is God's expression of love and grace. In this case, God

⁸⁵⁴ Kallistos Ware, "God Immanent yet Transcendent," 167-168.

⁸⁵⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/71815840830/>

⁸⁵⁶ "God Immanent yet Transcendent," 168. "For God is a God of love, and love is by its very nature self-diffusive. It implies sharing, exchange, self-giving, and response. This is true on the eternal level of God as Trinity, and it is true equally of God's self-expression as creator." Ibid.

⁸⁵⁷ Paul S. Fiddes, "Creatin out of Love," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 177.

⁸⁵⁸ Paul S. Fiddes, "Creatin out of Love," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 177.

needs our love not because God needs love or something, but because God created human beings as “children of God.” Like the Law of Gravity, love is also flowing from the above (God) to the below (the world). However, in order to achieve the ultimate love between God and the world, love needs to break the law of gravity. That is, love of the world must go up to God. In this sense, whereas classical theism follows the law of gravity of love, panentheism breaks the law. To that extent, then, Thomas Oord's definition of love is very appropriate: “to love is to act intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including God), to increase overall well-being.”⁸⁵⁹

I return again to the phenomenological method that I have used throughout this dissertation. In the relation between parents and their baby, at first, parents make their baby smile by showing their smile, but, later, their baby makes them smile by showing his/her cute smile. Smiles are also in a mutual relationship. Personal examples may be helpful here. For example, whenever I opened the door of my house, my daughter, who was two years old, came and hugged me. It made me very happy and relieved my stress from my life. It was the expression of love of my baby toward me. I was not only happy when I gave my love to my baby. Even though she was too young, when I received her love, I also became happy. When my daughter hugged me, if I did not give any response to her, how did she know that I love her? Did she not think that I did not love her? It means that I have a deep relation to my daughter and need my baby's love, since I do not have all I need in my wife and me, and that I have to express my love to her in order to let my daughter know that I love her. Likewise, if we, as human beings, love God,

⁸⁵⁹ Thomas Jay Oord, “Morals, Love, and Relations in Evolutionary Theory,” in *Evolution and Ethics*, 290.

although God is not needy in love, God will be happy. When we give our love to God, if God has no response to us, how can we know that God loves us?

3) Suffering God

Examples of Suffering

Example 1) “Those people who live in heaven do not have to think about hell, but our five members of family think about heaven living in this hell today.” This is an expression that shows a concrete reality of our lives from a S. Korean novel, *A Small Ball with which a Little Man Send Up*, written by SaeHee Choi. There are many people who still live in the world like the hell. They need a concrete heaven in this real hell.

Example 2) A Korea movie, “Crossing,” tells us about the terrible situation of N. Korea. In order to get good medicine for his wife, a father escapes from N. Korea, leaving his son with his wife and goes to China. However, he cannot stay at China, so he goes to S. Korea. He works at a factory. His owner says, ‘don’t worry about your family, because Jesus Christ is with you.’ He asked, “Why not N. Korea, if He is here in S. Korea?” His question could mean that there seems to be no God in N. Korea. If God is there, why do they live like that?

Example 3) One mother died with her four or five-month-old baby by earthquake in China. She saved a text on her cellular phone: “Oh, my baby, if you are alive, remember that I love you so much.”⁸⁶⁰

Example 4) Elie Wiesel, in *Night*, introduces a story: “a young boy was hanged before all the prisoners for a minor infraction of the camp rules. As his body dangled from the rope, Wiesel was asked by someone, “Where is God now?” and a voice within him replied, “Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows.” Simone Weil: “Affliction makes God appear to be absent for a time.”⁸⁶¹

Example 5) “When were you most sad in your entire life?” “I am sad everyday.” This answer was the one of any woman in Africa.

When we look at the reality, we face with the dipolar phenomena that “where there is laughter, there is also weeping; where joy, sorrow; where birth, death; where power, powerlessness and subjection; where shrewdness, folly; where an openness to the absolute, a closed mind.” Although most people hope for peace or happiness without

⁸⁶⁰ <http://www.cbs.co.kr/Nocut/Show.asp?IDX=924871>

⁸⁶¹ Migliore, *Faith seeking Understanding*, 121.

antagonisms, we know that these are not even imaginable.⁸⁶² In the same vein, Whitehead also sees the same phenomena, the “multifariousness of the world—the fairies dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross.”⁸⁶³ We cannot deny these distinctively dual facts. However, whenever we see the concrete places of suffering, we recognize that we need not only to see and analyze the various phenomena but also to actively overcome the problem of evil.

There are two kinds of evil: Natural evil and Moral evil. Natural evil is the suffering caused by diseases, earthquakes, tsunamis, and so on. Migliore argues that vulnerability and finitude are not evil but part of the goodness of life, in that being a finite creature entails the possibility of suffering and even death. Since suffering belongs to a structure of life, “to wish the world were immune from every form of struggle and every form of suffering would be to wish not to have been created at all.” Thus finitude and mortality cannot be called inherently evil. But we cannot but ask about providential care when we see “abysmal form of suffering in the natural order” such as disease of baby.⁸⁶⁴ Moral evil is the suffering caused by human action such as Auschwitz (the Holocaust) or social inequalities. In the face of this kind of suffering in the world, we should not say that this world is the best world. Whitehead very properly points out the problem: “The Leibnizian theory of the ‘best of possible worlds’ is an audacious fudge produced in order to save the face of a Creator constructed by contemporary, and antecedent, theologians.”⁸⁶⁵

The suffering people are waiting for someone who can help or solve their suffering. In the Bible the Israelites are waiting for “the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25) and “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3).

⁸⁶² Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama IV*, 115.

⁸⁶³ Whitehead, *PR*, 338.

⁸⁶⁴ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 119.

⁸⁶⁵ Whitehead, *PR*, 47.

Nonetheless, many people ask: What does God do for the suffering people? What are the relationship between God and human suffering? They are not easy questions to answer. Although many Christians believe that there must be mysteries in suffering with which we do not understand, this answer is not enough to give a proper answer to both theology and the concrete reality of evil, because it may neglect the reality of the suffering people.

Providence and Evil in the Theological Tradition

Augustine argues that God's providence appears both in the lives of individuals and in history. In *Confessions*, Augustine explains how God guides his life through many troubles. God does not work coercively, but in Augustine's own free decisions and actions. In the *City of God* Augustine asserts that social problems or evils are not caused by God but by the creature's misuse of their freedom. God uses them to accomplish the divine purpose. Calvin also argues that since God governs over all events "by God's secret plan," not over any event by chance, nothing happens without God's incomprehensible wisdom. Nevertheless, Calvin does not consider providence as fatalism in that God is the "first cause of all things" and we are the "secondary causes."⁸⁶⁶ Divine providence gives us important insights in three ways that God guides our life and controls evils. First, evil teaches us the humility in suffering ("patience in adversity"). Second, evil enables us to give thanks for the times when we prosper ("gratitude of mind for the favorable outcome of things"). Third, faith in God's providence gives us freedom from all anxiety ("incredible freedom from worry about the future").⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁶ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 122.

⁸⁶⁷ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 123.

Luther asserts that “Should I be able to make the whole world happy for one day, nevertheless I must not do so, if it be not God's will.”⁸⁶⁸ However, is it true? Is there any time for God not to think of making this world happy? I would like to say that God really hopes for people in the world to be happy. Thus we need to change his note as follow: “Should I be able to make the whole world happy for one day, I must do so, because it be God’s will, otherwise God cannot be our gracious, lovable God.” Luther also introduces ‘theology of paradoxes’: “God’s alien work (*opus alienum Dei*) and God’s proper work (*opus proprium Dei*).” While the former involves killing, taking away hope, or even desperation, the latter tells of forgiveness, save, or encouragement. So God has both aspects: good and evil. In other words, God makes bad results which we do not understand and even uses Satan for his proper work,⁸⁶⁹ since “God cannot be God unless He first becomes a devil.”⁸⁷⁰ On the contrary, for Barth, evil is “the alien power of nothingness (*das Nichtige*)” that arises not from God’s act of creation but from its own power.⁸⁷¹ Whereas many Reformed theologians asserts that God not only “creates and sustains” the world but also “governs and rules” the human history, contemporary theologians affirm at best “a providence of presence,” that is, God’s presence in the world, not a providence of the rule of human events.⁸⁷² Relating divine capacity for suffering to the nature of creation, Paul Fiddes argues that since God takes a risk of lapse of a free world from the divine purpose, “God is vulnerable to the emerging of something strange

⁸⁶⁸ One of my colleagues gave me this note.

⁸⁶⁹ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 102-103.

⁸⁷⁰ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 118. There must be those who wait for hot weather for their jobs. There must be those who wait for cold weather for their jobs. However, they live together. Good for one is for bad for the other and vise versa. Do we think that one part defeats or must be against the other?

⁸⁷¹ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 127.

⁸⁷² George Stroup, ed., *Reformed Reader: A SourceBook in Christian Theology*, 133.

from the side of created beings—evil and gratuitous suffering.”⁸⁷³ Ward asserts that all suffering arises from God “not as intended by God,” but as necessarily implied in the world God has created, and God will completely overcome all evil by divine goodness.⁸⁷⁴

However, even in this contemporary society, a fundamental group’s interpretation of divine providence, for example, televangelist Pat Robertson’s response to the Haitian earthquake was awful. He said that “Something happened a long time ago in Haiti ... they were under the heel of the French, uh, you know, Napoleon the third and whatever ... and they got together and swore a pact to the devil, they said, we will serve you, if you get us free from the French. True story.”⁸⁷⁵ He meant that because of the swearing with the devil, God punishes Haiti. When we see some bad effects such as sufferings, earthquake, and death, some people consider them as God’s punishment, look for some causes (sin), and simply connect them to each other. Their logic is that bad consequences result from bad causes. Then how can they interpret bad effects which happen to almost everybody everyday? How can they understand the suffering of the faithful Christians? How can they interpret even Jesus’ death according to this logic? Was Jesus’ death the consequence of his sin? How about the earthquake in Japan? Christians should not say that Japan’s earthquake occurred because they did not believe in God. Wasn’t there any Christian who died by this earthquake? Earthquake is not dependent on whether people believe in God or not. What we have to do for them is not to judge them, but instead to pray for them.⁸⁷⁶ This position considers suffering as “evidence of divine punishment (of

⁸⁷³ Paul S. Fiddes, “Creatin out of Love,” in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 188.

⁸⁷⁴ Keith Ward, “Cosmos and Kenosis,” in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 159-160.

⁸⁷⁵ http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2010/01/13/haiti_satan_pact

⁸⁷⁶ It happened on Mar. 11, 2011. More than one thousand people died. Japan’s earthquake is not

the wicked)” or “chastisement (of the people of God).” Calvin notes that the scriptures teach us that chastisement of God such as war and other calamities is something that God inflicts on our sins.⁸⁷⁷

However, we need to ask, was God happy when those things happened? We have to remember that God is not such a mercilessly crazy God, but is the kind of God who can say, “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?... My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused” (Hosea 11:8). Is this not God’s compassionate mind for the suffering people including Japanese people? Please don’t say that Japan’s earthquake is caused by God’s punishment for the numerous idols in Japan, since it makes God the merciless God. To see Japan’s earthquake as God’s punishment is a limitation of classical theism. However, do we not see God’s painful tears for those who died even without saying their last words for their family? If we place ourselves in the place of the suffering people, we know why a compassionate mind is so valuable and significant in human life. In John 9, when Jesus’ disciples saw a man blind from birth, they ask Jesus, “who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.” It does not mean that God planned it for him, but that God achieves his love and work through him. Although this answer has some hermeneutical difficulties to solve, this answer is totally different from Robertson’s. Is Robertson’s response not a kind of shamanism? This kind of response of fundamentalists makes God a merciless God and forces Christianity to separate from the world. Is he really in a sense

only its own problem, but also that of the entire world. Although Korea has a sad history or uncomfortable relationships to Japan, Korea must have compassionate mind for them and help them, since we are in one world-community.

⁸⁷⁷ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 124.

different from atheists who criticize Christianity and who deny God because of these sufferings?

We can relate the triune God to providence. The God who creates and preserves the world is neither a despotic ruler nor a distant God, but “our Father in heaven” who becomes intimate with us “as the incarnate, crucified, risen Lord.” The role of three persons in triune God is as follows. First, God the creator works for the enhancement of life and against all that jeopardizes life. Second, God the redeemer works for the people whether they are strong or weak. Third, God the sanctifier works for hope for the future and for transforming all things.⁸⁷⁸ If a person experiences such a kind of Trinitarian God working for him/her, for that person God is the living God whose passion is revealed to that person. In the sense we can recognize that “the history of the world is the history of God’s suffering,” where “God suffers with us—God suffers from us—God suffers for us.”⁸⁷⁹ Then, how can we still keep providence in the face of real evil? If we understand God in the perspective of Trinitarian, we can still accept the lordship of God even in the reality of suffering, since God is both co-agent and co-sufferer and both are freely vulnerable for the world.⁸⁸⁰ Thus we can have the confidence of providence in suffering: Providence means divine protection and guidance as “transcendent security” in the nature and history. Although we have this confidence and faith in human finite conditions, if this does not occur, we can doubt the confidence and faith. But Tillich encourages us to have “the paradox of the belief in providence,” i.e., “in spite of,” that “just when the conditions

⁸⁷⁸ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 133-135.

⁸⁷⁹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 4.

⁸⁸⁰ Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding*, 132.

of a situation are destroying the believer, the divine condition gives him a certainty which transcends the destruction.”⁸⁸¹

Typologies of Theodicy

What does God do for the suffering people? Isn't it a kind of contradiction between an omnipotent and all-good being and the presence of evil in the world? If human beings have their power in their subjects, could we put the responsibility of the problem of evil only on the shoulders of God? In other words, as I argued at Divine Action chapter, in order to overcome evil, one should locate the origin of evil in the lives of human beings. That is, since God gives human beings free will, God is no longer the Almighty in the classical sense, the Almighty who exists beyond this world and only manipulates people, since God's omnipotence cannot overcome the reality of evil in this concrete life. God is not responsible for all that happens, because an evolutionary world inevitably encounters blind alleys and unavoidable cost for new life.⁸⁸² In facing so many non-understandable events or accidents in the world, in any sense, some think, God must have responsibilities even though those accidents are not directly related to God. How? Should God go to a prison? Should God have the final responsibility?

There are some perspectives of suffering. Migliore and Placher introduce four similar types of theodicy (God's justice, from *theos*, God, and *dike*, justice) respectively and two of their ideas are intermingled here,⁸⁸³ so that there are six types of theodicy. I

⁸⁸¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 268.

⁸⁸² Polkinghorne, "Kenotic Creation and Divine Action," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 95.

⁸⁸³ Here Placher describes first, second, fourth, and fifth. Migliore explains third, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

will indicate which one is consistent with the philosophical theology which I defended in this dissertation.

First is the Counterpart Theodicy (I call). It suggests that some good is impossible without evil, in that God allows evil in order to make greater good. Aquinas' example supports this view: "A lion would cease to live, if there were no slaying of animals; and there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution."⁸⁸⁴ In this perspective, although we do not know why there are so many evils, since it could be finally God's will for more good for us, we must believe in God. Job's story may belong to this perspective in the sense that he "overwhelms men with the realization of their own stupidity, impotence, and corruption" (Calvin, 1.1.3).⁸⁸⁵ However, Griffin criticizes this traditional all-determining theism which considers evil as "‘prima facie evil,’ meaning *that which appears to be evil at first glance.*" It argues that this evil is not genuinely evil, since it can provide more good condition for "the best of all possible worlds," so that God has "good reason for not preventing all (prima facie) evil."⁸⁸⁶ However, it is very absurd to say that prima facie evil is necessary for a compensating good. How can it compensate for the people who suffered in the past? Are numerous evils in the world not genuine evils? If wars and the Holocaust were not evil, what would be genuine evil? And although we are faced with the incomprehensibility of God, this answer creates a problem in that it simply accepts all suffering without any question. By contrast, we have to recognize that Job himself remonstrates with God and asks divine governance.⁸⁸⁷

Second is Free Will Theodicy. If God gives human beings free will, there can be evil as the consequence of free will. Nevertheless, human beings who use their free will

⁸⁸⁴ Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 98.

⁸⁸⁵ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 123.

⁸⁸⁶ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 219.

⁸⁸⁷ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 123.

to create evil are better than robots which do neither have free will (human causes) nor create evil. Alvin Plantinga argues that this theory can explain social evils like wars and terrorism, as well as some natural evils.⁸⁸⁸ This position argues that although God is powerful, since God voluntarily gave human beings free-will, God does not prevent all evil. This position tells us of “God’s permission of evil.” However, Griffin points out four problems in this position. The first problem is that since freedom is restricted to the human being, it cannot explain natural evil such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and tsunamis.⁸⁸⁹ The second problem is the claim that although God could prevent any specific evil, if God does not, this God is problematic. The third problem is that since human free-will is “an entirely gratuitous gift of God,” and not in the nature of things, God could have created another being like us without sin or genuine evil. The fourth problem is that if human freedom is given by God, this freedom can be interrupted by God. However, if God could interrupt human freedom, the human being would not be fully human, since human beings could be human beings only with genuine freedom.⁸⁹⁰

Third is Protest Theodicy. Inspired by Elie Wiesel (including Richard Rubenstein and Arthur Cohen), John Roth coined this name. This position asks “the total goodness of God” and protests the “refrain that God is love,” divine silence or inaction: Like Jacob who wrestles with God; like the psalmist who asks, “How long, O Lord”; like Job who defends his innocence; or like Jesus who cries to God on the cross. Fourth is Process Theodicy. According to Cobb, we have to reinterpret the meaning of omnipotence. God

⁸⁸⁸ Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 98-99. In relating natural evils to human causes, Plantinga notes that death is not just the result from the disease but “from our failure to inoculate its victims.” Ibid.

⁸⁸⁹ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 220-221. This free-will theism differs from traditional all-determining theism, in that God cannot determine the actions of free creatures. Ibid., 220. According to Griffin, some suggests that these elements are good for the human growth and God has good reason for these evil. This position can be overcome by saying that God also gave some degree of freedom to all creatures. Ibid.

⁸⁹⁰ Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, 222-223.

no longer exercises dominant and coercive power but “optimum persuasive power,”⁸⁹¹ “calling to us and coming to meet us,”⁸⁹² since human beings are also subjects with free will. Thus, God is there before us. They find an answer through restriction of divine power. There are things God cannot prevent such as the Holocaust, murders, or cancers, since God is powerless. However, God is responsible for evil in an indirect sense, since God persuades the world to have the potential not only for good but also for evil. However, we cannot blame God, since God intends the good and shares in the creatures’ suffering.⁸⁹³

Fifth is Person-making theodicy. John Hick makes a distinction between the Augustinian and the Irenaean types of theodicy. Whereas Augustinian theodicy is that evil is the consequence of sin, Irenaean theodicy is that the possibility of evil is a mark of mature humanity in the image of God. Accepting Irenaean theodicy, Hick argues that human beings can become totally human only when they experience evil and continue to participate in “the fullness of life in love” even in the face of evil. This position is divine pedagogy that makes use of earthly sufferings to turn us to God and to cultivate our hope for eternal life. It considers all sufferings as an opportunity for spiritual growth. The apostle Paul notes, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18). Paul is thinking of sufferings that are willingly assumed by the Christian for the sake of Christ and the gospel. However, a weak point of this position is that Hick focuses not on the resistance

⁸⁹¹ Cobb, *God and the World*, 90. Persuasion depends on relations of respect, concern, love, and the vision of a better future. Persuasion is the means of exercising power upon the powerful. If we think of God as exercising any significant power upon our lives, we must think of the kind of power exercised by a wise and effective parent, and not that of a potter. Ibid.

⁸⁹² Henry De Lubac, *The Discovery of God* (Eerdmans, 1996), 177. Quote from Ogden, *The Reality of God*. xiii.

⁸⁹³ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 129.

of evil but on the possibility of growth though evil. By the same token, this would lead to ethical quietism or a depreciation of this life. We can learn from our suffering, but it is not to say that is a general truth that suffering is good.⁸⁹⁴

Sixth is Liberation theodicy. How can we reconcile the suffering reality of the poor and the oppressed, and the theological claim that God liberates and saves the poor from oppression? James Cone accepts the divine power and divine goodness in order to solve the problem of evil. From the Servant Songs of Isaiah which reveal its utter form in the event of the cross of Jesus Christ, Cone argues that human beings must participate in “God’s *struggle against* suffering rather than a pious *acquiescence in* suffering.” God grants “power to the powerless to fight here and now for freedom.” Migliore points out one problem of liberation theodicy: “The struggle for justice” must be related to “the practice of forgiveness and the hope of reconciliation.”⁸⁹⁵

In conclusion, we need to realize two important aspects in order to deal with evil: all theodicy must be proved both “by ‘the brutal facts of modern historical life’ and by the biblical witness to the love of God in Jesus the crucified.”⁸⁹⁶ My own view is similar to the Liberation theodicy including protest theodicy, since the problem of evil is not that of superficial theory but that of our concrete life. The oppressed or Minjung really longs

⁸⁹⁴ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 124-125, 130. For example, one day when I had stomachache, I tried to vomit, but there was nothing except a red pepper. It made me hurt. After that, I felt good. Our body is very sensitive, because it is related to all. What if I was patient with a mind that it will be good for me to learn life? However, this position neglects the suffering of evil, which Marilyn Adams calls ‘horrendous evils.’ Ibid., 131.

⁸⁹⁵ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 131. I understand Migliore’s worry about the genuine reconciliation between the oppressor and the oppressed. In considering the relation between Korea and Japan, as a Korean, I hope the real reconciliation between Korea and Japan. Japan must confess their sin and Korea must forgive them, although Korea had suffering for thirty-five years (1910-1945). Similarly, ten years ago: After 9/11, Osama Bin Laden must have rejoiced. However, did he have any authority to kill many people? Ten years later: Many people are rejoicing over the death of Osama Bin Laden. However, do they have any authority to kill Cain (Osama Bin Laden)? Do they have any authority to rejoice his death? If we say “yes” to these questions, there would be no answer for the peace in the world. How can we stop circularity of evil? Do you feel or recognize any critical difference, a turning point, or any political symptom in your life or in the world after the death of Osama Bin Laden? Do you think the world would be better or more peaceful after his death? What is the meaning of his death? Why did he die?

⁸⁹⁶ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 125.

for God's power to overcome the social injustice of evil. No one is free from the holy duty to wipe and stop the tears of the suffering of the people.

The Relation between Evil in the World and God's Suffering

God's Suffering in the Bible

There are many examples in the Bible which support and describe God's suffering, compassionate God, or merciful God. Since God is a merciful God, although a mother can forget the baby, the Bible says that God cannot abandon people (Deuteronomy 4:31, Isaiah 49:15). Then, how can we understand the suffering of God's people? When Jesus speaks to Ananias about Paul in Acts 9:15-16, Jesus considers Paul as "my chosen instrument." However, this chosen instrument does not have any honor or respect but only suffering to carry Jesus' name before the Gentiles and the people of Israel: "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." How can we harmonize between the "chosen instrument" and 'suffering'? A chosen instrument of Jesus must have any authority and privilege, but has suffering. It is very paradoxical.

Likewise, how can we understand God's wrath (Ruth 1:13, 1:20-21)? Jeremiah's complaint is more serious: "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (Jeremiah 12:1).⁸⁹⁷ Even in this kind of asking, we need to remember that although there is God's punishment for people, it is not God's ultimate intention. Isaiah 54:7-8 shows this idea that "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you." Thus we

⁸⁹⁷ God answer is that "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5).

also confess like Job: “He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). Although Paul suffered through all his life,⁸⁹⁸ he confessed that God will save us: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Psalms 89:32-34 also describes this idea: “I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lip has uttered.” Although there are God’s wraths for us, we know God’s ultimate nature of love and mercy through Jonah 4:2 and Exodus 34:6, God is gracious and compassionate, that is, “slow to anger and abounding in love.”

Even the Bible asks us to learn God’s mercy (Luke 6:36): “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Here human mercy and divine mercy are not different, since if they are different, how can human beings be merciful and how can human beings learn divine mercy? Isn’t God’s compassionate mind similar to human compassionate mind? God’s mercy can be shown through human mercy and divine mercy can be known through human mercy. In this sense, anthropomorphism between God and human beings is indispensable, since, without it, only negative theology is possible. We can think God’s suffering in human language and human imagination. Just as God shows his love for us in

⁸⁹⁸ “I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked” (2 Corinthians 11: 23b-27).

Isaiah 49:16, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands,” so our ultimate concern is mercy for others: “Mercy triumphs over judgment!” (James 2:13).

Furthermore, when we understand God’s mind for suffering, we can guess it through human suffering. The story that Solomon’s wise judgment in 1 Kings 3 shows us there can be a real example of compassion. Two prostitutes come to the king and insist that ‘the living baby is their own.’ Solomon tries to cut the living baby in two and gives half to one and half to the other. The one whose son was dead says, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two.” It means that she has no compassion mind. However, what was the response of the real mother? The woman whose son was alive is filled with compassion for her son and says to the king, “Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!” What makes her intend to give her living baby to the other woman? It is because of her love for her own son. If the son could be alive, she could allow the other woman to bring up her son. It is more valuable for her to keep her son alive than to have the dead son. Isn’t this the compassionate love? Solomon has the wisdom to distinguish the right from the wrong, so he helps the real mother have her son. However, when the real mother attempts to yield her son to another woman, it goes beyond the valuation-judgment. In a sense, she would be greater than Solomon. That is, true love can go beyond value judgment of truth and false. Love can go beyond the pride of knowledge. Thus, although there are many examples of God’s suffering, if we neglect these obvious facts, isn’t it a kind of evidence of obvious unfaithfulness? In a sense, although there are opposite phenomena in the Bible, they may say that the whole story of the Bible, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, tells us God’s grace and God’s love for us.

Possibility of the Suffering of God

There are two distinctive responses to God's suffering: no and yes. First, God cannot suffer. Some classical theists disagree with the concept of God's suffering and God's compassionate mind, since they believe that God is not a creature and that suffering belongs only to creatures. At best, they accept Jesus' suffering. Athanasius insists that "Christ... suffered, not in His Godhead, but for us in the flesh."⁸⁹⁹ Thomism also notes the subordinationism which "protect[s] true divinity from the suffering and death"⁹⁰⁰ and the suffering is only a "*suppositum* of the divine nature" which is not related to the divine nature itself, but divine nature in respect of the human nature.⁹⁰¹ There is a fundamental distinction between God's nature and human nature: "God's being is incorruptible, unchangeable, indivisible, incapable of suffering and immortal; human nature, on the other hand, is transitory, changeable, divisible, capable of suffering and mortal."⁹⁰² That is, Jesus' humanity alone suffered.

However, I do not agree with the first response, that God cannot suffer, since this view makes incarnation, i.e., God's humanity, less valuable. If Jesus Christ as a second person alone feels and experiences suffering, not God the Father, how can God the Father feel his son Jesus' suffering? If God the Father cannot feel the son's feeling, how can we speak concerning perfect love and perfect communication between the Trinitarian persons? Is there any room in the triune God for this failure of feeling for each other? Isn't there Godhead in the flesh? Subordinationism in which Son and Spirit subordinate to

⁸⁹⁹ Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 65.

⁹⁰⁰ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 425. Subordinationism means that although Son and Spirit are divine persons, they subordinate or inferior to God the Father, so that true God cannot suffer in the world.

modalism rejects God's possibility of suffering.

⁹⁰¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 229.

⁹⁰² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 228.

the Father, defends God the Father from the suffering. Zizioulas insists on God's impassibility in order to defend the belief that IT is more than ET. Isn't there any way to defend the compatibility between God's passibility and the belief that IT is more than ET? To insist that God can suffer does not bother the fact that IT is more than ET. Karkkainen also does not see Zizioulas' critique appropriating: "This does not mean denying God's ontological freedom but rather highlighting the theme of the ecstatic nature of God's love."⁹⁰³

Thus I insist on the second: God can suffer. I recognize that my view is controversial and diverges in some ways from the traditional view of God. But I will do my best to defend this view as a bona fide Christian view in this section. Bonhoeffer's insight is very appropriate to describe God: "Only a suffering God can help." Here suffering God is the triune God. Thus we can revise Bonhoeffer's dictum as follows: Only a suffering [*Trinitarian*] God can help. This power of the triune God is "not raw omnipotence but the power of suffering, liberating, reconciling love."⁹⁰⁴ If the world is entirely within God, we can regard the evil, suffering, and pain as internal to the triune God. Insofar as "the death of Christ is the God's offering of himself,"⁹⁰⁵ God identified himself with the crucified one.⁹⁰⁶ Moltmann also argues that the history of Christ's sufferings is disclosed by "the passionate love which Christ manifests and reveals."⁹⁰⁷ In

⁹⁰³ Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, 99. Zizioulas argues that "speaking of the suffering of God means that the incarnation is projected into God's eternal being; he becomes suffering by nature." Ibid. According to Karkkainen, this is similar to classical theism, to the extent that "the assumption of humanity by God, the Son, means that human capacity to suffer is not foreign to the being of God." "It is more biblical to think of God as passionate love, the Father who chooses to engage the suffering of the world created by him, than as a Transcendent One whose separation from the world's suffering guards his freedom." Ibid.

⁹⁰⁴ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 132-133.

⁹⁰⁵ Jüngel, *Justification*, 162.

⁹⁰⁶ Jüngel, *Justification*, 163.

⁹⁰⁷ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 52.

short, suffering God (1 Cor.1:25) does not neglect pain of the world but suffers with them because only a suffering God can help.

Patripassionism

Love

Example 1) A Korean novel, *Thorn-Fish*, written by Chang-in Choi, shows us a father's love for his son. The character of Thorn-Fish is as follows: "Thorn-Fish is a very weird fish, because mother thorn-fish runs away after giving birth to babies. Then, father thorn-fish takes care of his babies. He fights with other fish in order to protect them without eating and sleeping. However, after growing up, the children-fish leave their father and father thorn-fish hits his head on the stone and dies." In this book, there is one father who has a son who suffers from leukemia. The mother leaves her son, gets married to someone, and goes France to study art. Then, the father who is a writer takes care of his son. However, he does not have big money to cure his son. He makes up his mind to sell his kidney, although it is illegal. He goes to a hospital, and unfortunately learns that he also has a cancer in his liver. He can live no longer than six months. He sells his cornea (eye) in order to care for his son. However, he dies and his son survives. Who is a real parent? What is a definition of parents? The parent is the one who can die for their sons/daughters. God is like a real parent, because God can die for us and really died for us.

Example 2) After making a snowman outside, my daughter told me: "If we go home, this snowman remains here outside. It is very pity." Her mom asked her, "it is impossible to move this snow man into our house, because it must be melted." She responded: "we can keep it in a refrigerator." How can we love a snowman? Since it is outside in cold days and we think it is very pity, if we move it into a house or warm it, the snowman will disappear. A snowman which disappears if we love... Love for a snowman must be different from the usual love for others. How can we love a snowman? To love a snowman is to leave it as it is. It is the best love for a snowman. In a sense, is love of God for human being in the world always the same? Can God's love for objects not be different according to situations or objects?

Example 3) Bird's love: One day, when I went out on the balcony to dry clothes, a bird flew away. I saw two eggs in the nest. A couple of days later, I saw that the bird gathered her eggs under her wings. It did not move at all. They are still there. I think it became over two weeks. Whenever I open the door, I saw them as they were. It was amazing. It gave rise to thought about the parent's love. Why is the bird still there? How does the bird eat? I heard a male bird catch worms and feed the wife. Why does not the bird fly away? A baby bird will be born in this world sooner or later. He/she also will do just as his/her parents do. I can understand why the bird gathers her eggs under her wings, when I have my children. Ah—ha! They also have love for their babies even though they are not human beings.

Divine love is best understood through the panentheistic analogy. God is not moved by other needs but moves himself only with love, according to Kierkegaard, “for love does not have the satisfaction of need outside itself but within.”⁹⁰⁸ God is love. Thus “whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him” (1 John 4: 16). Love connects between God and the world. This word does not only tell us “visits in love” or “stays in love” but “lives in love,” so that we live in God and God lives in us. In this case, it is love as the mediator that makes a community of life between God and people. In his *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard also argues that human beings can have “inherent kinship with God” in love and can be God’s coworkers in love. Whereas when you love the beloved and your friend, you are not like God, because God does not have preference and distinction, when you love the neighbor, you are like God.⁹⁰⁹

Both human relations including nonhuman organisms and love need relations.⁹¹⁰ Although Classical theism also claims that love is agape, which is pure beneficence and needs no love in return, panentheism regards “love as an inextricable mix of *agape* and *eros*, as the interdependence of giving and receiving.” Since the difference between them is that of human experience, this love experienced by humanity is “the deeper symbol of the love of God” and hence human experience is “the prompt” in panentheism.⁹¹¹ By the same token, according to Cobb, since God has empathy with us, our experience can contribute to the divine experience, so that “God weeps with those who weep and rejoices with those who rejoice.” There is mutual love between God and the world.⁹¹² This must be a model of panentheism.

⁹⁰⁸ Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, 24.

⁹⁰⁹ Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 62-63.

⁹¹⁰ Oord, “Morals, Love, and Relations in Evolutionary Theory,” in *Evolution and Ethics*, 294.

⁹¹¹ Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 14.

⁹¹² Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 76.

Then, God's suffering, patripassionism, is this heresy? If the Son alone among three persons suffers on the cross, how does God the Father feel Jesus' suffering? If God only knows the Son's suffering and death, but fails to feel his suffering, how can we speak of personal perichoresis between them? No matter how much the Son talks about the suffering to the Father, can God the Father have sympathy for his Son Jesus? How can we defend *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of properties), which hypostatic union includes, if it is Jesus as a human being but not a divine being who suffered? Then, in John 3:16, "whoever believes in me shall not perish but have eternal life," is Jesus here just a man? If Jesus is just a man, how can human Jesus save the world? Even in this world Jesus had two natures: humane and divine. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, was he only a man? Wouldn't it be more correct to say that God the Father feels and suffers in God the Son's suffering? If someone sees Jesus' human nature alone suffering, s/he must deny the belief that "Jesus is the Christ, the eternal Word of God in time."⁹¹³ Are they not evangelical Arianisms which insist on *homoiousios* between Father and Son?

Hartshorne also argues that Jesus' love for his fellows was not mere benevolence, but "a feeling of sympathetic identity with them in their troubles and sufferings," so that he took their suffering and even our every grief as his own.⁹¹⁴ In the sense, Aristotle's God, the "unmoved mover," which cannot suffer and is "a loveless Beloved," neither loves nor identifies with the passionate God of the Bible, but is poorer than any man.⁹¹⁵

⁹¹³ Keith Ward, "Cosmos and Kenosis," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 163.

⁹¹⁴ Charles Hartshorne, *Reality as Social Process* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1953), 147. Quoted from, Philip Clayton, "God Beyond Orthodoxy: Process Theology for the 21 Century," (Sept. 9, 2008), 12-13. <http://clayton.ctr4process.org/files/papers/GodBeyondOrthodoxy-r3.pdf>

⁹¹⁵ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 222. God has two aspects: "He is certainly superior to mortal man so long as this man allows suffering and death to come together as a doom over his head. But he is inferior to man if man grasps this suffering and death as his own possibilities and chooses them himself." Ibid. Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 55.

On the contrary, Moltmann asks questions in two different ways with regard to Jesus' suffering on the cross. The first one is a kind of typical question: "How can Christian theology speak of God at all in the face of Jesus' abandonment by God?" However, the second question shows Moltmann's intention against the first question: "How can Christian theology not speak of God in the face of the cry of Jesus for God on the cross?" Since God is love and suffers the death of Christ in his love, he is not "cold heavenly power," but "the human God in the crucified Son of Man." When Jesus was on the cross, God was not absent or silent but "became the crucified God," "suffers the pains of abandonment," and "suffers the death of his Son."⁹¹⁶ Tillich's answer to the patipassinism is that God participates "in the negativities of creaturely existence," in that God as being-itself "transcends" nonbeing and God as creative life "includes" the finite and nonbeing, and in that "The certainty of God's directing creativity is based on the certainty of God as the ground of being and meaning. The confidence of every creature, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground."⁹¹⁷

Admittedly, Luke 15:20 shows us the Father's sympathetic mind for the Son: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." Is this just a parable which speaks of the father's mind for his son? Isn't it really God's compassionate heart for human beings within the world? Isn't this God the Father's lovely mind for His prodigal son? God here acts more actively by using active motions (verbs): ran, threw, and kissed.⁹¹⁸ Love or compassionate mind is not passive but active, because the Father

⁹¹⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 153, 227, 192.

⁹¹⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 270.

⁹¹⁸ When I was a High school student, I received Ozena surgery. My father took care of me without sleeping at the hospital. A long time later when my son had a toothache, I understand my father's

also suffered when the Son suffered outside. To have compassion means to suffer with others. According to the biblical witness, God freely goes the way of suffering and even death for the salvation of the world in the “compassionate journey of God into the far country.” This God’s boundless love is explicitly expressed in the Cross and is the eternal source of human compassionate love.⁹¹⁹

Suffering in Panentheism

In dealing with the problem of evil, classical theism has dilemma: “[E]ither God can and will not, or God would but cannot; hence God is either not good or not omnipotent.”

Peacocke asserts that whereas God of classical theism “witnesses, but is not involved in, the sufferings of the world,” panentheistic God suffers “in, with, and under the creative processes of the world,” because God creates the world from within God and thereby suffering is “internal to God’s own self.” Since God is in the world and the world is in God, “God experiences its sufferings directly as God’s own and not from outside.” In the sense, since panentheistic understanding of God has “cruciform” meaning for the suffering,⁹²⁰ the rise of panentheism entails “the rise of passibility.”⁹²¹ Peacocke relates the dimension of suffering to “feminine panentheistic model” with regard to the “pangs

mind. My father must have been sick like me, because I felt I was sick like my son. Likewise, if God is the real Father of Jesus, God must have been sick like Jesus, because God is his genuine Father.

⁹¹⁹ Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding*, 81. Bonhoeffer argues that “God’s people must dwell in far countries among the unbelievers, but it will be the seed of the Kingdom of God in all the world” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, Tr. John W. Doberstein (New York: HarperSan Francisco, 1954), 18. This sentence not only tells us about Christian mission but also about our concrete life (kenosis). God’s kenosis is a kind of travel to a far country. I received a card from my daughter (seven years old), a card which really made me moved, since it said, “Dear Mom and Dad, Merry Christmas. I love you! You are always there when I need you.” Do I confess that God, “you are always there when I need you”?

⁹²⁰ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 25.

⁹²¹ Michael W. Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution: The Panentheistic Turn in Modern Theology,” 13. “The panentheist revolution mirrors the passibilist revolution in being driven forward by experiences of suffering: just as the First and Second World Wars gave additional impetus to passibilism, so it can be no coincidence that panentheism gained popularity in a century which sought to reinterpret the love of God in the face of world-wide suffering.” Ibid.

of childbirth” from Romans 8:19-22.⁹²² And this panentheistic God does not neglect the suffering of the least. How can we explain a shepherd’s earnestly compassionate mind to seek for a lost sheep all over the places? It is not proper to an economic concept, since we cannot compare one lost one to ninety nine neglected ones. However, the shepherd is not concerned with the economic value, but only with the little sheep’s tear. This shepherd is analogous to the image of God in panentheism: “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Luke 15:7).

Our Task of Eliminating Evil

Then, what should we do in this reality? We have to ask more concrete question: How can we resist evil? The dust on the computer screen hidden by shadow is still there. We need to clean it. Likewise, we cannot hide the concrete reality of evil, but need to remove it. We need, first, a compassionate mind. While watching a play, “No Vacancy?”, Eunyou (my daughter) finally cried out. Deoksun, whose role was an inn owner in the play and who had a mental disability, wailed over seeing the pity situation of Joseph and Mary, and, forgetting that she played a role in the play, she told them that since she had an empty room for them in her real house, they could go. My daughter also cried with her. How should I respond to this situation? I wanted to say something to my daughter. “Eunyou, I know that you usually have shed many tears. On the one hand, I worry about you how you can overcome those sad moments whenever you meet them. On the other

⁹²² Arthur Peacocke, “The Cost of New Life” in ed. by. John Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 38. Requoted from the sam source: “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now.”

hand, there would be no more big love than that we can cry for others. Eunyoun, I love you.” Whenever we see this world, we cannot see easily our own pure smile or our own pure tears, since almost all our smiles and tears relate to others’ tears and smile. We need to think as follows: If our smile is the smile which consists of tears of others’ suffering, let us not show the smile to others. If our tears are the tears which consist of smile of others’ happiness, let us not show the tears to others. Why? Do they not also at least smile in this suffering world? And then, let us show the smile and shed tears which are regardless of smiles and tears of anyone else, in front of God. Was this not analogous to human Jesus’ compassionate mind? We have to have a compassionate mind for others and nature and even to comfort them in any suffering “with the comfort we ourselves have received from God,” especially for the value of life, since God first comforts us in our suffering (2 Cor. 1:4).

Second is praxis. In her amazing book, *The End of Evil*,⁹²³ Marjorie Suchocki shows us a new possible solution to the problem of evil, insofar as evil is the actual issue, and is ultimately overcome in God. With regard to that, however, one can find a weak link in her thought: she lacks an immediate solution to real evil. Can one delay in overcoming serious evil, in which one experiences in the daily life, until the eschatology of the future? One positively should ask, “How can we stop the evil that we face in our daily lives?” Where is our *via dolorosa*? Paul gives us a duty to overcome evil: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). Feuerbach also considers suffering as the highest command of Christianity, since “the history of

⁹²³ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The End of Evil: Process Eschatology in Historical Context* (Anbany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

Christianity is the history of the Passion of Humanity.”⁹²⁴ Whenever we deal with the suffering of the world, we must remember our practical tasks as Jesus’ disciples to change the world which God created, by overcoming evil and having a thorough paradigm shift of thought and life. The justice that Christians should emphasize is to help the oppressed. The Bible is more interested in resistance to evil than in the origin of evil. Even a little effort of making peace with others in this society and the world can transform the world. In the process, such people become the children of God.⁹²⁵

For example, we live on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., who lived a practical life for the oppressed. However, he does not simply give us a national holiday, but wants us to remove evils and to dream a hopeful dream so as to achieve a better life for all the oppressed in the world. If we simply spend this day for our pleasure alone, it must dilute the meaning of his message, life, and death. Let me add an example to help illustrate my conceptual point. Although the air is one of the most important elements supporting life, people cannot keep it in themselves. Rather, if they hold it in themselves, because it is precious, ironically they cannot breathe but will die. No one can monopolize it, since it is for all. People must let it go in order to live. If we recognize that the wealth is like the air, the world should have become a much better place to live. I really hope that everyone without exception feels and tastes happiness wherever they are and whatever their situations are,⁹²⁶ confessing that “You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and

⁹²⁴ Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 61.

⁹²⁵ Insofar as there are tears of the individual, of the oppressed people, and of the creaturely world, God’s tears cannot stop. After all, when the end of evil is achieved in God, tears of suffering will perish, and will be transformed into tears of joy. The end of evil is built upon the assumption that God is a power for the redemption of history’s tears. To that extent, then, we all will be within the circle of God’s grace.

⁹²⁶ While watching the movie, “The Pursuit of Happyness,” I shed too much tears, not because I was in a similar situation with the main character, but because I saw his love for his son and his desire for dream and happiness.

not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever” (Psalms 30:10-12), and accepting Jesus’ urging to “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:28-29).⁹²⁷

4) Knowable God

Example 1:

My son (five years old) asked his mom: “Is God real?”

Mom: “Yes. God is real.”

Son: “But I cannot see God.”

His mom explained to him something in general: “You cannot see God, but God is everywhere and even in you.” Can I explain it better? I want to know what I should explain in particular. What could be proper answers?

Example 2: “Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied.” (Genesis 22:1)

When I say something, you can recall any image of it. For example, if I say, “Barack Obama,” you can recall his image. When I say “Paris Hilton,” you can think her sexy image. Then, when I say “God,” what image, form, or *eidos* do you have? “To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?” (Isaiah 40:18).

Could we see God through the world including people’s faces? If God is omnipresent, how can we perceive or feel God in the world? We know well what happened after that in the second example. However, have we ever heard this kind of a direct calling from God? If someone directly hears God’s voice and is to sacrifice his son, is s/he not called a crazy person? Do even those who call Abraham “the Father of Faith” not also call him a crazy person? And, why does God’s direct presence manifested many times in the Old

⁹²⁷ Revelation 21:1-5, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

Testament not appear today? Why do we not trust those crazy people today? What is the relationship between “the father of faith” and “a crazy person?”

Let’s think more deeply about this topic. God is, first of all, not a substance, but the Spirit. Then how can we see the Spirit in the world which is governed by natural law? Can we human beings comprehend God or not? How can the corrupted human beings know God’s attributes? An attempt to know or understand God is analogous to a game in which one tries to find the words on the ground covered with sands under which someone wrote. Finding each letter one by one, one could finally know what s/he wrote. How about God’s writing in the world? Is it clear or not? Can we know God through the writing in the world? There must be many answers or debates about this question. Theology is an attempt to express the unknowability or ineffability of God.

Henri De Lubac asks, “Did God make man in his image, or is it not rather man who has made God in his?”⁹²⁸ That is, can we really know God? What do we mean when we say that we know God? Answers to these questions cannot simply be satisfied by faith, “I believe in God,” but should also rely on reasonable explanations, which makes it ultimately possible to do theology in our human language. No theology is possible without names, images, or symbols. Leonardo Boff appropriately points out the significance of the language: “Words are more important in theology than in any other science, since no one can see or experience God empirically, as the realities of the world are experienced.”⁹²⁹ Martin Buber also argues that insofar as the relation to a human being is the proper metaphor for the relation to God, God reveals Himself as language.⁹³⁰ By this “analogy of being,” contends Ogden, God can be recognized as “a genuinely

⁹²⁸ Henry De Lubac, *The Discovery of God*, 5.

⁹²⁹ Quote from Karkkainen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, xv.

⁹³⁰ Buber, *I and Thou*, 151. *Analogia entis* is possible.

temporal and social reality” and as a “truly supreme, a unique reality.” That is, to establish God’s conception through *analogia entis* can be given by experience.⁹³¹

I believe it is possible to find a way to be able to speak of knowledge of the ineffable God, achieving some balance between “apophatic” theologies and “kataphatic” theologies. When we approach the possibility to comprehend God, according to Anselm Min, we have to avoid sheer *kataphasis* and sheer *apophasis*. On the one hand, we speak of God in the same way we speak of our life or experience. The danger of this perspective is that we make God in our own images and reduce God to an object in our empirical world. On the other hand, we never speak of God at all because of the fear of such reduction. The danger of this view is that it isolates God as an unknowable X. It does not explain the God who incarnated into the world, but eliminates both God’s own initiative to speak to humanity and all philosophical or systematic theology. Min suggests a way that “both preserves God’s irreducible transcendence and allows God’s initiative to address us in the only language we know, the human language.”⁹³²

For example, a shadow cannot exist by itself, because it is revealed by and through any object. However, although there is an object, the object itself cannot make a shadow, since without the sun, shadow is impossible. Only if the light and the object exist together, is the object revealed as a shadow. Thus a shadow is revealed in relationship. That is, a proposition, “a cloud reveals a shadow,” can be satisfied by a pre-condition: the sun must exist. Without the sun, a cloud cannot reveal a shadow. We can recognize a reality through phenomenon and the reality can be revealed through phenomenon, if there is a satisfactory condition. What can be revealed is revealed only through relationship.

⁹³¹ Ogden, *The reality of God*, 59.

⁹³² Anselm K. Min, “Naming the Unnameable God: Levinas, Derrida, and Marion,” (Int J philos Relig, 2006), 99-100.

Can we not apply this logic to the relation between what is revealed and the reality (God)? Two answers are possible. First, they are same but our human ability cannot fully know what is revealed. Second, they are different, because the reality itself cannot be fully revealed.

What we should remember, when we do theological reflection and praxis, is that the human effort to know God, as Karkkainen notes, should have a principle in the light of faith. That is, the task of theology is in tension between “obligation and impossibility.”⁹³³ In order to harmonize “the great break for philosophical theology,” i.e., the opposition “Kant versus Hegel,” Schelling’s approach is correctly balanced between the need to do theology [Hegel] and the need to acknowledge the limits on theological knowledge [Kant].⁹³⁴ In a sense, are we not a kind of self-contradictory or *contradictio in adjecto* beings between “ought to” and “cannot,” or beings in obligatory impossibility or impossible obligation? However, does it mean a despair of “cannot” or an indispensable, humble will of hope of “nevertheless?” As Augustine states, we need to say at least something about God: “Thy nature, Lord, is thus and thus.”⁹³⁵ In the following part, I’ll argue both “unknowable God” and “knowable God,” finally properly harmonizing both of them.

Unknowable God

⁹³³ Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, 9. Barth notes, “As ministers we ought to speak of God. We are human, however, and so cannot speak of God. We ought therefore to recognize both our obligation and our inability and by that very recognition give God the glory. This is our perplexity.” Ibid.

⁹³⁴ Clayton, *The Problem of God*, 469. There are two way of responding to the Kantian limits: “To be satisfied with the Kantian limits would mean, for example, assigning the concept of God a merely regulative role... and then, perhaps, jumping across the great divide into the field of ethics, where language about God becomes tied to the language of moral obligation. To be dissatisfied with the Kantian limits requires a new mode of reflection on the divine... The task for the philosophical theologian, then, is to show how one can accept this limitation without falling back again into the complete agnosticism about God that Kantian dualism entails.” Ibid., 475.

⁹³⁵ Hartshorne and Reese, eds., *Philosophers speak of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 306.

When my children were babies, I wanted them to talk any word, and I said to them that, “If you say any word, I’ll give you whatever you want.” However, I am telling them nowadays, “Please be quiet. If you keep quiet, I’ll give you whatever you want.” In any sense, since we speak of God too much, we need to be silent and listen to the Lao Tzu’s famous insight: “道可道 非常道 名可名 非常名” (“The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal Name”).⁹³⁶ It means that if we say of “something,” something cannot be something. Could we apply this idea to God: The God that can be told and named is not the eternal God? Augustine says, “If you have understood, then it is not God. If you were able to understand, then you understood something else instead of God. If you were able to understand partially, then you have deceived yourself with your own thought.”⁹³⁷

This thought reminds me of Tim Hughes’ song, “Beautiful One,” because he nicely expresses God who cannot be nameable.

“Beautiful One”—by Tim Hughes
 Wonderful so wonderful is Your unfailing love
 Your cross is spoken mercy over me
 No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart can fully know
 How glorious, how beautiful You are

Chorus:
 Beautiful one I love
 Beautiful one I adore
 Beautiful one my soul must sing

The author expresses that we “love,” “adore,” and “sing” God, because we cannot name or know God. Even Clatyon affirms that whereas the character of science is “mastery of

1. ⁹³⁶ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, tr. by Stephen Mitchell (New York: Harper Perennial, 1988), Chapter,

⁹³⁷ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 17.

nature,” that of the religious object is “unpossessability” and that “whereas scientific truth is ‘for us,’ religious truth remains ‘beyond us.’” In the sense, the believer can appeal beyond words, “analogically, doxologically, maieutically, praxologically, even equivocally or apophatically.”⁹³⁸

Knowability of God

There is the incommensurable difference of language between God and human beings, but human beings can and should use language about God. If we know only that we do not know God when we attempt to know God, like Socratic wisdom, why did many apophatic theologians write many thick books about God? Isn’t one sentence enough: I do not know God? Isn’t it a kind of contradiction that they abundantly write and talk about God which they do not know? Isn’t it a kind of external expression that they really want to know about God and that they know God? Wittgenstein finishes with the last thesis, 7, of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* as follows: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.”⁹³⁹ We need to recognize that the thesis is not in the first one but in the last one. It means that we need to say something until we cannot speak of it. Although it is not to comprehend, but “to ‘show’ or ‘point to’ (zeigt) the mystery,” we need to “stretch language to the uttermost.”⁹⁴⁰ If a gift must be revealed, should knowledge of God, which is really gift of the gifts, not be revealed to us as a gift? In the sense, is Marion’s “holy terror” or “a fearful task”⁹⁴¹ about knowledge of God not a kind

⁹³⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 50-51. Apophatic theology: what is difference between process apophatic theology, including Catherine Keller and Roland Faber, and traditional apophatic theology? Is it mystery without transcendence?

⁹³⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr by C. K. Ogden (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1955), 108.

⁹⁴⁰ Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity*, 173.

⁹⁴¹ Jean-Luc Marion, *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 161-162.

of refusal of God's gift? Is this kind of thought not making God the image of "an absolute monarch" or a terrible father to whom sons/daughters cannot easily approach, although they are lovely children of God (father)?

There are two ways of understanding God's existence: Bottom-up and Top-down. What can we choose? Is there any way to combine two methods of divine existence? Although someone says that experiencing God does not make sense, because this makes God finite, when we experience Jesus Christ, does it not experience God? How do we know God then? When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, Jesus could not show them God, but the Father in and through himself. That is, Jesus wanted them to see the Father "who is doing his work" in him. (John 14:8-9). Since Jesus' words as such are Father's words, we can know the word of God through Jesus' words. "For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23). This word which Paul speaks to the Athenians in the meeting of the Areopagus tells us of a main idea that human beings can talk about God who is unknown. That is, even though we cannot fully comprehend God, God is not always incomprehensible, to the extent that the fact that we discuss and worship God exposes the possibility of perceiving God.

Even Calvin relates our blessed life to knowledge of God: "The final goal of the blessed life... rests in the knowledge of God [cf. John 17:3]."⁹⁴² We can know God "both through nature and through revelation." That is, although a true and full knowledge of

⁹⁴² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), I, 5, 1, 51. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

God is possible only through Scripture, a natural knowledge of God is possible.⁹⁴³

Calvin's *Institutes* starts with the words: all our wisdom consists of two parts, "the knowledge of God and of ourselves." The knowledge of God and that of ourselves are intimately connected. Without contemplating God there is no knowledge of us. Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God. God cannot be known apart from human affairs. However, Calvin indicates that whatever we think about God is "foolish," and "absurd," because the human mind is too weak to understand God without Sacred Word. In order to have a proper understanding of God, we have to look at the Scripture in which God is revealed to us, and be a student of Scripture. In this perspective, Niesel argues that Calvin's theology is not "*philosophia humana*," but "*philosophia Christiana*."⁹⁴⁴ However, we still cannot understand the Holy Scripture in our natural disposition without Holy Spirit. Why should we understand Scripture? What is the purpose of understanding Scripture? The most significant and simplistic answer is the "recognition of Jesus Christ," because God reveals, communicates, and imparts Himself to us in Jesus Christ, the Mediator who is the "end of the law and the essence of the gospel." And we can have knowledge of God through Holy Spirit who is the "true interpreter of the Bible." Calvin's main concern is not doctrines from Scripture, but the living Christ.⁹⁴⁵

Harmony between *Kataphasis* and *Apophasis*

Although there are infinitely qualitative differences between God and human beings, when we talk about God, do we really use a completely different language from human language? Look at the thick books which apophatic theologians wrote. Why did they

⁹⁴³ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 163.

⁹⁴⁴ Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 23-24. Calvin, *Institutes*, I, 1, 1, 35-37. I, 13, 3, 124, I, 6, 4, 74. I, 6, 2, 72.

⁹⁴⁵ Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 27-28.

write those thick books if they really emphasize different languages between God and human beings? To worship God and to pray to God are nothing other than human languages about God. God loves all our languages about God. On the one hand, I totally agree that we human beings cannot fully touch the knowledge of God, because we are finite beings. However, on the other hand, is it possible to know God's real presence in the world without any image or idea of God? Someone might say that an image of God interrupts knowledge of God, because it relates to just one image of God, not the real God. However, how do we know God's real presence in our lives without images of God?

If we can know God, we cannot help but ask: How could human beings think about God in the history of cosmos and human beings? There can be two answers: by God's revelation or by human thought. On the one hand, evangelical areas believe that we know God since God gives us the ability to know God, which is so called God's revelation. Thus, in a sense, revelation would be a necessary condition to comprehend God. However, do human beings necessarily need God's revelation to comprehend God? When human beings think about God, do they need revelation as a necessary condition? In a sense, we can confess that if there is no revelation, we cannot conceive God. Resisting the "complete mystery" response, nonetheless, Clayton also argues that "God has in some ways made Godself known." Although there is limitation on knowing God from below, "God has broken down the dividing wall (Eph 2:14), making known the divine nature and plans that had been hidden since the foundation of the world (Eph 1:9ff)." In this sense, a 'salvation economy' (Heilsökonomie) cannot be understood without God's action in the world and a sharp distinction between the economic Trinity

and the immanent Trinity would make another problem.⁹⁴⁶ On the other hand, when even non-believers also think and conceive of God without revelation, human beings by nature can think about God (in the examples of Feuerbach, Schleiermacher, Spinoza, and Schelling). For example, FAD in Schleiermacher is a gift which God freely gives to human beings, as Romans 1:19-20⁹⁴⁷ and Acts 14:16-17⁹⁴⁸ say, a gift which enables human beings to feel God before and even after Jesus comes to the world. Thus, FAD can be God's revelation. However, if we do not accept this argument, we limit the history of God's revelation to only the period after Jesus Christ as the special revelation, i.e., at most 2,000 years. Schelling also mentions about it: "[nature] is an older revelation than any written one."⁹⁴⁹

An example can help us understand this argument. When some people who wear eye-glasses wake up in the morning and look for eyeglasses, they have to look for them without eyeglasses. Of course, they usually know where the glasses are, but sometimes they do not know this. Then, they must have an ability to look for eyeglasses without eyeglasses, which can be called "a priori sense." In a sense, it must be already in their innate nature. Likewise, we must have some ability in our nature to seek and to know God, an ability which is already given to us by God's gratuitous grace. Even though the Bible and Jesus are important ways to know God, we already have a priori to know God in us. Then do we not need God's revelation? In a sense, revelation is like sunshine, since

⁹⁴⁶ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 150-151.

⁹⁴⁷ "Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

⁹⁴⁸ "In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

⁹⁴⁹ Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human freedom*, 77. Schelling adds: Nature "contains a typology [Vorbilder] that no man has yet interpreted, where as the written one received its fulfillment and interpretation long ago. If the understanding of this unwritten revelation were made manifest the only true system of religion and science would appear not in the poorly assembled state of a few philosophical and critical concepts, but rather at once in the full brilliance of truth and nature."

we cannot find something without it. When we block the sunshine, we can have only shadow in black. Thus we need both God's revelation and our innate ability so as to comprehend God.

If we presuppose a hypothesis that God exists, there are some ways to arrive at this conclusion: a) hypothesis and faith (faith community); b) hypothesis and knowledge (human science, philosophy); c) hypothesis and faith and knowledge (theology). The hypothesis that God exists needs both faith and knowledge. Ephesians 4:13 shows us this unified model: "[W]e all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Wilber similarly suggests "three eyes of knowing" in relation between being and knowing: "the eye of flesh (empiricism), the eye of mind (rationalism), and the eye of contemplation (mysticism)."⁹⁵⁰ Wilber revises these respective perspectives as follow: monological, dialogical, and translogical. Monological comes from "monologue" by empirical science which has no response from objects. Dialogical comes from "dialogue" by the eye of mind which considers objects as subjects to discuss. Translogical transcends both monological empiricism and dialogical interpretation, and opens to the radiant divinity by the eye of contemplation.⁹⁵¹

5) Revised Understanding of the Power of God and the Knowledge of God

A) Self-Limiting God (Kenosis of Christ) and the Hope for the Eschaton

Classical theists and conservative Christians usually and confidently confess God as the omnipotent God who can do everything in any situation and at any moment without any

⁹⁵⁰ Ken Wilber, *The Marriage of Sense and Soul*, 35.

⁹⁵¹ Ken Wilber, *The Marriage of Sense and Soul*, 36-37.

limitation in power, since they believe that the omnipotent God alone can solve the problem of evil and suffering in the world. As the matter of fact, however, there are many painful examples people do not understand, if God is omnipotent, examples in which God does not act at all even in sufferings such as Jesus' cross, people's lovable babies' death, and many wars or poverty in the world. In recent, three children whose father was a pastor died, because their parents did not take care of them, when they were sick and even after their death, but just prayed to God in order to cure and save them. Their parents must have literally believed that inasmuch as God is the almighty God, if they pray to God for children, when children are sick, God will heal them, and when they die, God will revive them. However, they died and God did not save them again. In any sense, their parents' prayer would be like the Satan's temptation for Jesus in the desert, the temptation that "if you are the Son of God." The expression, if you are the Son of God, means if you are the omnipotent God. If we consider God as the omnipotent God, we would put God to the test. Thus one may object their faith of the omnipotent God as follows:

- 1) God is omnipotent.
- 2) If God can do all things, then God can cure children.
- 3) God does not cure children.
- 4) Thus God is not omnipotent and we have to depend on other sources than God.

That is, if God were omnipotent, God would want to save them. Here we need to remind of the classical argument of theodicy: if God is omnipotent, God can save them. If God is good, God wants to save them. Yet they are unsaved. Insofar as there are many sufferings in our daily life, it is not a properly theological or faithful attitude to believe in such an omnipotent God. If one only prays to God concerning one's problems, does the

omnipotent God always solve the problems? *Nein*. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that God is not omnipotent at every moment. The logic is as follows:

- 1) God is omnipotent.
- 2) God is good.
- 3) Therefore God is able and willing to remove unnecessary sufferings.
- 4) But unnecessary sufferings occur.
- 5) Therefore God is not omnipotent or is not good.
- 6) Nevertheless, every theists hold that God is good.
- 7) Therefore God must not be omnipotent.

Through the death of three children argued before, we can recognize that premise 4), “But unnecessary sufferings occur,” is true. It would not happen, but it does happen. That is my argument why we cannot see that God is always omnipotent.

Of course, there are other answers that defenders of omnipotence might give. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, I will assume that the criticism of divine omnipotence is accurate and look at other possibilities. There is an enough reason for constructive theologians today to explore a different paradigm. There are several possible answers to describe God instead of the omnipotent God. I will consider five responses. The first four I will criticize and the fifth I will defend.

The first possible response is that of atheists who assert that God does not exist. Their logic is as follows:

- 1) There are evils in the world.
- 2) God is incompatible with evil in the world.
- 3) Thus God does not exist.

They insist that because there are evils in the world, God does not exist. This syllogism is valid, that is, it is logically followed that premise 1) and premise 2) support premise 3). But, I don’t think it is sound, because I think the premise 2), “God is incompatible with evil in the world,” is false. I am arguing that although the omnipotent God is

incompatible with evil in the world, a God who is not omnipotent is compatible with evil in the world. Thus we need to look at different models of God.

I have challenged atheists' argument and also believe that there are at least three negative consequences of atheism. Although atheists logically can insist the absence of God because of evil, can they properly suggest any possibility of the overcome of evils? Who can make compensation for the undeservedly suffering people? And can naturalism of atheists explain the meaningfulness of sufferings without reference to God except the objective fact that there are sufferings and evils in the world? However, I note, I have not falsified atheism. It may still be true. I have shown some negative consequences of atheism, but there is also a positive consequence of atheism. For example, we can do whatever we want to do and no God will punish us at all. In this sense, their argument is logically valid, but it is not sound. Therefore I will give another argument.

The second possible response is the metaphysically limited God of process theology.

- 1) If God is omnipotent, there must be no evil.
- 2) There is evil.
- 3) God is not omnipotent.

This argument is an instance of *modus tollens*: if P, then Q. Not Q. Therefore Not P.

Process theology states that evil cannot exist, if God is almighty. That is, insofar as there is evil, God is not omnipotent. Unlike God's self-limitation in diverse kenotic theologies, process theology asserts that God is a metaphysically limited God, since, although God can do everything logically, if God voluntarily limits such power, the problem of theodicy would be more serious. It may maintain that "Can" does not mean "Does Not," but mean being able to do something, so that if "Can" means "Does Not," "Can" is not

“Can.” However, we should not misunderstand that process theology completely denies God’s power. For process theology, God uses the persuasive power, but not the coercive power, because creatures also have power and freedom being able to choose even evil and thereby take a responsibility.

However, here are some objections to process theology. One is that this God would be very passive, because God does not do very much. This metaphysically limited God would be phenomenologically similar to the powerless God or even to the atheism, that is, “there is no God.” Although there is God, if the God is metaphysically limited, what is a difference between the metaphysically limited God and the powerless God and atheism? One proposition, that since God does not exist, God does not act at all, is logically proper. However, another proposition, that although there is God, the God is the necessarily limited God, is not appropriate. And if process theology denies God’s power, arguably, since the power coercively overrules or interrupts everything in the world regardless of human freedom and natural laws, God’s endless persuasion, which process theology suggests as an alternative, may be rejected, because even endless persuasion itself in a sense could be coercive. Another is that the standard devotion and practice of theists would be inexplicable, if process theology is true, because the standard theists ask and pray to this God. Of course, they believe that their God is very active more than most theism and God is always luring people. Nevertheless, my objection is that process theism has weakness. Although I have given some objections to process theology, I have not falsified it. It could be true. However, in this dissertation, I am going to set it aside and to concentrate on something different one.

The third response is the voluntary self-limiting God with no eschaton. Their position is as follows:

- 1) God logically can do everything.
- 2) However, God freely chooses to limit Himself because of the creature's freedom.
- 3) In other words, God is the self-limiting God.

Although this is not a syllogism, it has two premises and number 3) is a short description of premise 2). God is neither omnipotent nor metaphysically limited, but voluntarily limits the power. It means that there is no necessarily outer condition in limitation of power.

But an important objection arises at this point. Why does God limit power to overcome suffering? Is this religiously adequate that there is no hope? If there will be no eschaton, how can there be hope and faith? How can there be prayer? I will therefore consider two modifications of this position which I will call fourth response and fifth response. I am going to argue that the self-limiting God raises a further possibility that the self-limiting God becomes the self-unlimiting God. I think I would say that God can unlimit Godself at many points in history and does unlimit Godself at some points in history. That is, insofar as the self-limiting God needs to answer a possibility of the opposite direction that God can freely choose God's unlimitation, this self-limiting God logically opens to the self-unlimiting God.

The fourth response is the self-limiting God and the self-unlimiting God. It builds the self-unlimiting God on the self-limiting God. The logic is that:

- 1) God logically can do everything.
- 2-1) However, God freely chooses to limit Himself because of the creature's freedom.
- 2-2) In other words, God is self-limiting God.
- 2-3) But there is evil.

- 2-4) Either God does not overcome evil or overcomes evil. If God does not overcome evil, God is the self-limiting God. However, if God overcomes evil, God must be the self-unlimiting God.
- 3) Thus God is both self-limiting and self-unlimiting.

This self-unlimiting God attempts to solve the limitation of self-limiting God, the limitation that the self-limiting God cannot solve the problem of evil, because God limits Himself.

Nonetheless, there are some objections to this fourth response. First, the self-unlimiting God also cannot solve the problem of evil in this current world. As mentioned earlier, God does not save three children. If God is self-unlimiting, God should have saved the three children. If we look at the world, there are righteous sufferers. We see at least very often that God does not unlimit Godself for the suffering people. It does not look like that this position is right. Second, we do not know when God limits Himself and when God does not limit Himself. This position does not tell that when and why God unlimits Godself. If God alone knows the answer, God seems to be the very capricious God. In other words, if God randomly helps some and does not help others, the God is unjust. Why does God help some people and why does God not help others, if God is unlimiting God? This looks arbitrary. Third objection is that if God is self-unlimiting at the eschaton, at that point, freedom disappears. But I think that there is too great a price to pay, so I reject the fourth response. Here is another syllogism:

- 1) The strongest form of self-unlimiting God is that God unlimits Himself at the eschaton.
- 2) When God unlimits Himself even in the eschaton, human freedom disappears.
- 3) We should not reject human freedom.
- 4) Therefore, we should reject the self-unlimiting God.

I have given logical descriptions for the fourth response and have objectified it. In this sense, let us go back to the self-limiting God again and to find a way to solve the problem of evil.

The fifth response is the voluntarily self-limiting God and the hope for the eschaton. This is the view that I will be defending here. The first consequence of this position is that we cannot be certain that God solve the problem of evil, but can only hope for the eschaton. Although the tone of this position may be heard a little bit negative sound, this leads to a very different solution to the problem of evil. Hear is an argument.

- 1) God logically can do everything.
- 2-1) However, God freely chooses to limit Himself because of the creature's freedom.
- 2-2) In other words, God is the self-limiting God.
- 2-3) But there is evil.
- 2-4) God does not completely eliminate the evil here and now.
- 3) Therefore, we can at best hope that the evil and suffering will be overcome at the eschaton.

With regard to premise 2-4), nonetheless, it is still possible to say that God is still working with creatures to solve the problem of evil. (See the last section, "Self-Limiting God and the Hope for the Eschaton," for a developed argument).

In developing this argument, we need to keep a basic principle that runs through the whole of this argument: this concept of omnipotent God should be changed, because it cannot explain diverse phenomena of sufferings in this world. If we spread out these positions argued above, they could be as follows.

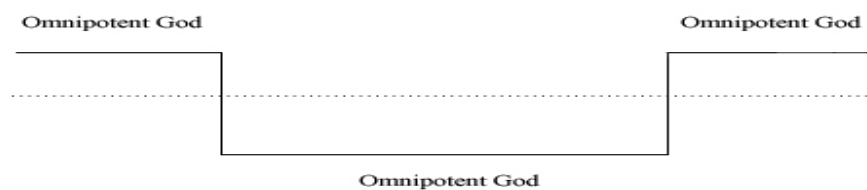
Figure 1: Five possible responses to the problem of evil.

0. Omnipotent God of Classical theism	4. Voluntary Self-limiting and voluntary self-unlimiting God	3. Voluntary Self-limiting God with no eschaton	2. Process Theology: Metaphysically limited God	1. Atheism
		5. Voluntary		

		Self-limiting God and Hope for the Eschaton		
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Here number 1, atheism, appears as the totally opposite direction of number 0, omnipotent God. Number 2, metaphysically limited God, denies the omnipotent God, although it does not extremely go to atheism. Number 3, the self-limiting God with no eschaton, appears as a mediator between the omnipotent God and the metaphysically limited God. Number 4, the self-limiting and the self-unlimiting God, attempts to solve a gap between the omnipotent God and the metaphysically limited God, and to go beyond the self-limiting God. Number 5, voluntarily self-limiting God and hope for the eschaton, overcomes the limitation of the self-unlimiting God and hopes that God will solve the problem of evil in the eschaton. This is a general explanation of the scheme. In sum, we can draw some pictures which explain each position.

0. Omnipotent God of Classical Theism: This omnipotent God always keeps God's omnipotence before creation, in suffering and evils in the world, and in the eschaton. The omnipotent God in the beginning suddenly created the heavens and the earth and will suddenly bring the eschaton.



1. Atheism: Because there is no place of God to solve the problem of evil in the world, only naturalism is possible. There is no supernaturalism or divine action. Naturalism moves together with the historically horizontal line.

Naturalism

2. Metaphysically limited God of Process theology: There is no other possibility of God's omnipotence even before creation and God is the consistently limited God yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The reason I use here the form of passive tense (limited God) is that God is necessarily limited.

Metaphysically limited God

3. The Self-limiting God with no eschaton: God freely limits God's power but there will be no eschaton.

1. Omnipotent God



2. Self-limiting God

4. The Self-limiting God and the Self-unlimiting God: The omnipotent God voluntarily limited God's power, became the self-limiting God, but will suddenly become the self-unlimiting God in a flash of light or coming in the clouds to bring about the second coming of Jesus Christ in the eschaton.



5. Self-limiting God and the Hope for the Eschaton: the omnipotent God voluntarily limited power, became the self-limiting God. The arrival of the eschaton will not be suddenly achieved. It does not mean a qualitative break between pre-eschatology and eschatology as a vertical demarcation line, but is *progressively* achieving. God's working with human freedom *gradually* brings about a period of perfection in eschaton. It could not be like a sudden lightning bolt from above in Barth but a kind of a period of gradual transition. At last, God and the world are more clearly penetrated in each other and they will produce much fruit together.



Let's move one step further.

Omnipotent God in a Limited Sense and the World

Although I assert that I do not accept God's omnipotence, I advocate the omnipotent God in a limited sense. I hold that God is omnipotent before creation only. The logic is as follows:

- 1) There was nothing except God before creation.
- 2-1) The world exists.
- 2-2) "Nothing" itself cannot create something. If "nothing" itself can create something, we do not need God.
- 2-3) In order for something to exist, there must be "original something" which can create another something and this "original something" is God who is omnipotent.
- 3) Thus if there was *creatio ex nihilo*, then God was omnipotent. This logic can only be applied to the realm of the creation.

After creation, however, God cannot be insisted as the omnipotent God. Why and what happened between before creation and after creation? God created the world including agents such as human beings and gave the world natural laws. It means that God shares power with the world. Sharing power with creatures logically means that God is no longer omnipotent. Even after sharing God's power with the world, if God is still omnipotent, it means either that God does not really share the power or that although God really shares it, the shared power may be pseudo power.

Accordingly, the argument that God is no longer omnipotent and creatures have power or freedom means that God can but does not arbitrarily control human power and natural systems by God's omnipotent power in this perspective, although human freedom chooses evil. That is, not necessarily but voluntarily and freely chooses God to limit God's omnipotent power in order to give creatures freedom and natural laws. This God is the self-limiting God. If the world exists, then God is not omnipotent. Thus, the omnipotent God and human freedom and natural laws logically cannot be compatible. The logic is as follows:

- 1) If God is omnipotent even in this world, humans are not free and natural laws are meaningless or already determined.
- 2) If humans are free or creatures have natural laws, God cannot be omnipotent.
- 3) Thus God's omnipotence and human freedom and natural laws are incompatible.

There could be an objection in which although God is omnipotent, humans can have free will. However, it is wrong, because in this logic humans must be puppets which are under an illusion that they have real free will, or because God must be such a narcissistic God who believes that God can do everything. If God is omnipotent, in relationship between God and the world, it means that God neglects or denies the existence of the world. God cannot neglect the existence of the world which objectively and obviously exists. God cannot act *as if* the world does not exist. In order to satisfy God's power, human freedom, and natural laws altogether, there must be concession among them. Since God already gave human beings freedom and let natural systems function by themselves, it was neither human beings nor natural laws but God who must yield a step. God has to withdraw the omnipotence. In sum, I have suggested so far that:

- 1) God is omnipotent, because God created the world from nothing.
- 2) After creation, however, God is no longer omnipotent, because God voluntarily limits God's own power in order for human beings to have their own freedom and in order for nature to have natural laws.
- 3) In other words, God *can* arbitrarily interrupt human freedom and natural laws in the world, but freely *does not* interrupt or violate human freedom and natural laws.

Omnipotent God and Self-Limiting God and Metaphysically Limited God

Then, if voluntarily self-limiting God is between omnipotent God and metaphysically limited God, let us explore the relationship between omnipotent God and the self-limiting God and between the self-limiting God and metaphysically limited God. On the one hand,

with regard to the relationship between omnipotent God and the self-limiting God, we can logically infer that the self-limiting God comes from the omnipotent God.

- 1) Omnipotent God can limit divine power and this self-limiting God is present in creation.
- 2-1) In other words, the self-limiting God logically presupposes the omnipotent God.
- 2-2) In order for God to freely limit God's power, God must be first omnipotent.
- 3) Omnipotent God can become the self-limiting God, not vice versa.

After the omnipotent God limited Godself, the self-limiting God cannot limit God's power again, since, if the self-limiting God limits again, God could be the powerless God. Logically speaking, evil is a product of God's self-limitation, in that there was no evil in God's omnipotence. However, it does not mean that God is the author of evil, since God is not omnipotent, but gives the world its own power. That is, if God is omnipotent even in this world, God must be the author of evil. In order for God to give human beings free will and nature natural laws, God chooses to limit the power. To say that God is not the omnipotent God does neither reduce God's nobility into something of the dimension of the world, nor make God the powerless God or a worthless God.

On the other hand, the self-limiting God is also different from the metaphysically limited God in process theology, since the self-limiting God has no conditions of necessity imposed on God from the outside. If God is already limited before creation, this God cannot be the omnipotent God and cannot create the world. In the process perspective, God and the world must be the co-existing existence from eternity to eternity. However, it could be fallen into Schleiermacher's motto: *Kein Gott ohne Welt, so wie keine Welt ohne Gott* (No God without the world, just as no world without God).

The Self-Limiting God and the Hope for the Eschaton

An important task remains. With regard to the eschaton, will the self-limiting God bring about the eschaton? That is, if God is self-limiting, how can this self-limiting God guarantee the eschaton? It seems to be that just as Christ crucified on the cross is a stumbling block to Jews, the self-limiting God is a stumbling block to Christians who believe in the omnipotent God. However, a possible answer to this question is that we cannot know, insofar as God is the self-limiting God and God preserves human freedom by God's choice, because humans can either conform to God or not to conform to God. Only if humans choose to conform their will to God, they will achieve the state of the eschaton. In other words, because humans are free, they have a possibility that they could not obey the will of God. Thus, we cannot know that there will be the eschaton. However, this would make the suffering people (minjung) sad, because they are waiting for the final liberation. If the self-limiting God cannot promise heaven, then this God cannot sustain hope for minjung. That is problem.

We could have several main options to solve this problem.

Option 1: Because God neither solves the problem of evil nor brings about the eschaton, atheism may assert that whether or not God is self-limiting is not important, because God does not exist. The only one answer to solve the problem of evil depends on natural world itself and human beings, but not on the eschaton. Atheism may argue that human beings can solve the problem of evil and bring about a better world. However, since we do not confidently know whether human beings can bring about a better world, we could not say that atheism gives an alternative answer over theism. Thus I reject this option.

Option 2: As process theology claims, it does not matter whether the final hope will come true or not, because we live in the present and God is with us now. If process theology really maintains either objective immortality or subjective immortality, however, because we live not only at present but also in future as any kind of immortality, the final hope is important. Thus, I reject this option.

Option 3: Criticism is wrong, because the self-limiting God can promise the heaven and therefore minjung has hope for the final emancipation. This must be the good news for minjung. However, this option is self-contradictory, if the self-limiting God can promise heaven and finally solve the problem of evil, because God is not the self-limiting God, but the self-unlimiting God, so that some asks the first question again: how the self-limiting God can promise heaven. This falls into a circular argumentation. Thus I reject this option.

Option 4: Since God limits power, it seems to be that this self-limiting God cannot bring about the eschaton, so that it logically needs the self-unlimiting God who can bring about the eschaton. God at some point becomes the self-unlimiting God and God has the power to bring about the eschaton. No matter how much evil, no matter how much human sin, or no matter what, God is unlimited, God will solve the problem of evil, and God will bring about the eschaton. However, we have to recognize that the self-unlimiting God cannot be compatible with human freedom in the eschaton, because if God is self-unlimiting, humans are not free, that is, if humans are free, God is not self-unlimiting, so that the self-unlimiting God and human freedom are incompatible each other in the eschaton. Accordingly, since self-unlimitation means omnipotence, although expressions are different, we need to go back to the self-limiting God again and to find an

answer how the self-limiting God achieves the eschatological completion. Thus I reject this option.

Option 5: We cannot have a guarantee that God will bring about the eschaton, because God is the self-limiting God, but we have faith and hope that God will succeed in the end. We should not misunderstand that the self-limiting God cannot make progress or that the self-limiting God always does what we already expect. Rather, we need to have hope and faith that the self-limiting God radically indwells in the places of the suffering, gives each individual actual occasion initial aim and novelty as the ground of hope, and finally will save the suffering people in the eschatological consummation, because God is love.

To put it another way, let us think about the relationship between God's power and God's love. Although God freely limits God's power, God does not limit God's love. Insofar as God is love, as every Christian confesses, whether they are conservative or progressive, God is endlessly and at every moment persuading people and leading them to a good way with infinite love. If God does not have love for the people who are in the presence of sufferings, God cannot be deserved to be called the lovable God. Love is not superficial but concrete. God's love must be expressed in any time and in any place, especially in sufferings. Nevertheless, the expression of God's love cannot be shown as God's arbitrarily interruption to the natural laws with omnipotent power. God's love is that of endless waiting and patience. Thus, although power can be limited, love should not, so that God's love enables us to have hope for the future that God will finally overcome all sufferings.

And in order to unite with God in the eschaton, just as God is patient, we need to be patient. In the presence of suffering, however, we cannot easily be patient, but rather have the strongly imminent hope that God directly solves the problem of evil once and for all. However, just as God works for the better world, is patient, and waits for the perfect harmonization, so we have to resist evil for the better world, to be patient, and to wait for the kingdom of God in hope. In this sense, we can have an optimistic worldview for the future, realizing that the new things cannot be given from the supernatural power or miraculous things. Nonetheless, there are those who still maintain a logical argument of the least possibility of supernaturalism within naturalism. It would be that:

- 1) Natural laws could explain most natural phenomena.
- 2-1) Nonetheless, there are some parts of the possibility of intervention of supernaturalism that natural laws cannot explain.
- 2-2) This is the place where “God of gaps” can explain.
- 3) Thus supernaturalistic power of God could act in the world.

However, this position is faced with a serious problem as follows:

- 1) Natural laws could explain the parts of “God of gaps,” if and when science develops later.
- 2) If so, the area of supernaturalistic God disappears.
- 3) Thus atheism wins.

We should not put God’s place in a gap, because if the place of gap is filled with developed science, God’s place will disappear, so that atheism could be the final answer. Although naturalism could explain almost all natural systems, however, we should not deny that God still works in and with the natural system at every moment. This is a way to explain the self-limiting God without supernaturalism.

We hope that God the Holy Spirit will renew the world and act new works with creatures. If we do not see this kind of a new vision, how can we say that God works in and for the world? Hebrew 11:1 supports this hope, saying that faith is not the certainty

of knowledge but assurance of what we hope for. In this position, people who suffer in this world can have the hope for the heaven. However, this hope is not like the opium which makes us deny the reality here and now and turn our interest from this world to the other world. Hope is the power to enable us to live in this suffering world. In the eschaton, God preserves human freedom, God is still the self-limiting God, and every Christian hopes and has faith that God will bring about a final state of justice. This position does not take away any part of Christian faith that God will overcome evil, because Christian faith is always faith on hope. We only hope that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and that God has always been faithful to his people. God will succeed in the end even along with human freedom. However, it is not by coercion but by persuasion, because, if heaven is won by violence, it is not heaven, and because the heaven won by persuasion is the kingdom of God. In this sense, faith and hope are exactly appropriate for Christian theology and can be expressed as the “hope-plus-faith” that Clayton maintains. Finally, I accept this option.

Some Criticisms of the Self-limiting God and the Hope for the Eschaton and My Responses

There might be some criticisms of the self-limiting God and the hope for the eschaton.

First, faith and hope for the eschaton for the self-limiting God are empty, because the self-limiting God does not have power to bring about the eschaton. Insofar as we think that the omnipotent God alone can achieve the eschaton, we conclude that the self-limiting God cannot do it. However, it is not true. We need to recognize that the self-limiting God is not the powerless God who literally can do nothing. The self-limiting

God denies such a coercively powerful God who can arbitrarily wield power. Then where do faith and hope come from? We can have faith and hope in the mutual relationship among God, human freedom, and natural laws. Hope for God's magical power is not hope but illusion or magical injection of our hope to God. Hope does not break natural laws. Hope cannot call for God's arbitrary interruption. Hope and freedom and natural laws work together. And hope is not for what we already had, but for what we do not have yet. In this sense, we need to wait for. Nevertheless, it is not empty. If critics say that you cannot know that God will bring the eschaton, because God is self-limiting, I agree that I cannot know. I cannot say that I know what I do not know about. I do not know what I do not know about. Although I do not know, nevertheless, I can hope for it. I can only hope what I do not know about. That is, I do not know that the eschaton will come, but hope that the eschaton will come and God will overcome evil. This hope or faith is not empty but in any sense the most honest expression for the eschaton and for the overcome of evil.

Second, how would it even be possible to have the eschaton come about if God is self-limiting? It is possible to have the eschaton by a cooperation of God's will and human will. God limits Himself in order to invite human will. God can do whatever God wants to do, but God calls people for the kingdom of God and people participate in God's will. God does not work alone. For example, when God attempts to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, God does not act by Himself alone. Although God can act by Himself alone, God works together with Moses. Moses denies several times, but God persuades and waits for Moses several times. It does not mean that God alone cannot liberate the

Israelites. Although God can liberate the Israelites from Egypt, God does not act by Himself alone, but works together with Moses.

God calls human beings and humans can freely participate in this work of eschaton. Accordingly, God and human beings work together to bring about the eschaton. Romans 8 helps us understand the cooperation of God and human beings. The Holy Spirit empowers human beings to answer for dilemma between our will and God's will. If we do not receive the Holy Spirit, we do evil what we do not want to do (the law of sin). When we are in the Holy Spirit, we can do what we want to do (God's law). That is, if we are God's children, we can conform our will to God's will, share both God's glory and God's suffering, and can be adopted as sons. God works for the common good of those who obey God's will, calls them, justifies them, and finally glorifies them. This is the process of sanctification (glorification). No one can separate this process from the love of God in Jesus Christ. If we do not see God's working with human beings, we are like Philip who asked Jesus to show God's physical presence in the world. We need to remember that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, lives with us always and forever. Jesus' prayer to God in John 17 is hope for the mutual participation between God and human beings. I believe that the Holy Spirit works together with human spirit. That is *Heilsgeschichte* (Salvation history). The eschaton does not remove human freedom and suddenly create the second coming of Jesus Christ, but rather works together to make it happen.

Third is liberalism. However, this is neither liberalism, nor humanism, or Marxism, but the cooperative product of God and creatures. This does not reduce God's dimension into human dimension. This does not lift up human dimension into God's

dimension. This is a faithful confession of logic to solve the problem of evil. If this argument is liberalism, the Bible in which God in self-limitation works with human beings would be an expression of humanistic or liberalistic stories. On the contrary, it must be the very product of dogmatism that denies the dynamics of the Bible.

Conservative Christians or classical theists should not judge or construe other voices as liberalism or as a form of heresy, but recognize that the Bible itself contains such stories in many places. Thus, to consider this view as liberalism is a kind of fixed idea and this fixed idea cannot contribute at all to a theological development. This is not liberalism but progressive gradually moving forward the eschaton with pietistic longing for God.

Fourth, hope seems to be just optimism. Is it only optimism? Is hope merely a psychological attitude or difference? Are we optimistic for future if we are optimistic person? Are we pessimistic for future if we are pessimistic person? Are theists optimistic because they have hope for eschaton? Are atheists pessimistic because they have no hope for eschaton? When we see the same situation, someone could be optimistic or others could be pessimistic. Then is hope only difference of personality? This could be interpretation A) of hope which expresses that hope is merely a psychological attitude. But it reduces eschatology to a psychological difference. Interpretation B) of hope is evidence. We have a current reason to know that the eschaton will come. There must be logical reason for hope to trust that the eschaton will come. But I reject this view, because God is the self-limiting God, not the self-unlimiting God. There can never be proof or evidence that the eschaton will come. We cannot give evidence, but only hope. Under interpretation A), hope would be merely a psychological or merely a personality characteristic. Under interpretation B), we cannot have evidence for hope, because I

support the self-limiting God. Then, is there another way to answer to this criticism? Interpretation C) of hope is theology of hope. Hope is not merely a psychological attitude. Hope is not dependent on evidence. My answer of hope is similar to Jürgen Moltmann's answer in his theology of hope. Theology of hope has some richness such as prayer (liturgy), hope-flus-faith, dependence on the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), and constitution of the body of Christ (ecclesiology). Prayer is not for the past but for the future. It means that prayer is longing for the future. This is a kind of faith and its concrete form is "hope-flus-faith." We cannot have hope by ourselves without the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is the initiative of hope. This hope for the eschaton makes us constitute more solidly the body of Christ, namely, the church. Those people who have the hope of the resurrection are bound together by grace through the Spirit into the body of Christ.

Theology of hope is about God of hope and it is also about God's hope. Our hope could be God's hope. Hope is the motivation of our life. It is not too much to say that the motivation of our current life comes from the future. Hope for the future is not in vain but has power. Hope for the future can change the life of the present. The present can change the future, but insofar as the future also can change the present, future is already in the present. The past, the present, and the future are not separated each other, but intermingled. Jesus' life is alive in the present and affects still the life of the present. As soon as I say "now," the now is already the past. We live in the present for the future, not in the present only for the present. In a sense, whatever we do in the present in our daily life is nothing else than for the future. Furthermore, hope is possible in the self-limiting God, not in the omnipotent or the self-unlimiting God. Hope for those who are in

suffering and for those who lost their children is all among all. Nothing is better than hope in this sense.

With regard to panentheism, this self-limiting God and the hope for the eschaton give some insight. Insofar as panentheism's definition is that although God is in the world, God is more than the world, whereas "God is in the world" refers to self-limitation, "God is more than the world" refers to the hope for the eschaton. Can God who creates something from nothing not show self-unlimiting power in the world? Yes God can do. But God does not, because the self-limiting God acts with a precondition, that is, "without breaking natural laws." Nevertheless, God is not a deistic observer who only sets the natural systems and sees the world through a window open to the world. Then how can God interact with the world? Although God's self-limitation means that God does not interrupt human freedom and natural laws, it does neither mean that God does not act at all, nor that natural laws rather can control God under the natural systems. That is, natural laws cannot keep God as a hostage of natural systems, since a hostage means God's reduction to the natural systems. The meaning that God does not reject natural laws but instead uses them in order to fulfill God's will does not mean that God is subject to the natural system. This opens to spiritual worldviews. Although we should not draw a sharp demarcation between physical realm and spiritual realm, physical views cannot explain all things in the world but needs in any sense spiritual views. Since physical views can explain only facts, not meanings of the facts, we need spiritual aspects which can explain meaningfulness. In this sense, self-limitation and hope for the eschaton in God can be integrated in the scheme of human freedom and natural laws' bottom-up

dimension and of God's top-down. Just as since there is a limitation or gap in a bottom-up agency alone, it needs a top-down agency, so that they consist of the double agency.

In conclusion, we can suppose a trinitarian scheme flowing through this argument: the omnipotent God (God Father, primordial nature) in metaphysics, the self-limiting God (God the Son, consequent nature) in kenosis, and the hope for the eschaton (God the Holy Spirit, superjective nature) including human freedom and natural laws. There is a continuum among omnipotent God, self-limiting God, and hope for the eschaton. In a chronological timeline, whereas the omnipotent God is applicable to *creatio ex nihilo*, the self-limiting God refers to *creatio continua* in the world, and finally to *creatio nova* in the eschaton. How do we believe that? Although we recognize that faith without theological analysis could bring about a paralysis of theology, we believe that the last place to appeal after our intensely logical deployment is to our faith.

B) The Knowledge of God

Many people often ask whether God knows everything in the future. Whereas if God knows everything, that implies divine predestination; if God has limitation in knowledge, the future is open. Although I obviously reject the former and accept the latter, in order to develop this argument, I need to mention predestination from the Bible and classical theists, to criticize them and to seek a different direction including free will. Problems of predestination in the Bible and Christianity are one of the most controversial issues in that God decided and predestined everything before the creation of the world. As a matter of fact, there are many verses in the Bible which support this doctrine.

- “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a

word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain” (Psalms 139:2-6).

- “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23).
- “Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalms 139:16).
- “He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will” (Ephesians 1:5).
- “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).
- “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:11).

The Bible verses quoted from open theism are enough to develop this argument. There must be intimate relation between God’s plan and God’s foreknowledge to satisfy the condition of predestination. God knows everything beforehand since God planned it by Himself. Aquinas argues that “Whatever takes place in the world proceeds from the plan of the divine intellect: except, *perhaps*, in voluntary agents only, who have it in their power to withdraw themselves from what is so ordained; that is what the evil of sin consists in.”⁹⁵² However, we should reconsider “stoic resignation” which means “whatever happens as ordained by God.”⁹⁵³ In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book III, chapters 21-24,⁹⁵⁴ Calvin explores the doctrine of predestination, “Eternal

⁹⁵² Placher, “Is God in Charge?” in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 100.

⁹⁵³ Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding*, 125-126. Barth argues that the Doctrine of providence is “not a mere logical deduction from abstract claims about the omnipotence and goodness of God. It must be worked out in the light of a genuinely Christian (i.e., Christocentric and trinitarian) understanding of God as the one who loves in freedom, who wills to live in communion, and who from all eternity elects Jesus Christ and in him the people of God and all of creation.” Ibid.

⁹⁵⁴ The order of *Institutes*: Book I, doctrine of creation; Book II, doctrine of redemption; Book III, predestination. Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Westminster: John Knox, 2008), 243.

Election,” that is one of the most controversial doctrines in Christianity. Its basic idea is that, although the subtitle is “the universality of God’s invitation and the particularity of election,” God does not create everyone in the same condition, but in different conditions, “some to salvation” and “others to destruction.”⁹⁵⁵ It means that God predetermined everything “before time and before the foundation of the world.”⁹⁵⁶ In this view, election “precedes faith” and is “mother of faith.” However, it excludes fatalism but includes “the contingency of second cause” and “the freedom of rational creatures.”⁹⁵⁷

Reformed theologians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Barth describe providence as God’s preservation (*conservatio*), accompaniment or concurrence (*concursus*), and governance (*gubernatio*) of all creatures. First, God preserves the whole creatures even after God created them, so that without God’s preservation, the creatures cannot exist. This God’s preservation is “an act of serving, an act of free grace to the creature.” Second, respecting free action of creatures, God sustains even every action of creatures, not as the tyrant, but as the sovereign who lets every creature act within its own finite autonomy. Third, God governs all things to God’s goal or purpose, not by unilateral

⁹⁵⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*. III, 21, 920. III, 22, 10, 943. III, 21, 5, 926.

⁹⁵⁶ Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 160.

⁹⁵⁷ Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 243, 240. Wilhelm Niesel and Charles Partee maintain that this doctrine of predestination for Calvin is not the product of speculation, inasmuch as human beings cannot understand God’s predestination, which is “tremendous and unfathomable abyss,” (Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 161), “a mystery of divine love,” “our experience of God’s grace,” or “biblical in origin and mysterious in conceptualization,” (Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 251), so that we should not investigate this doctrine by human reason. Niesel asserts that all simple thinking concerning eternal election occurs “uncertainty and despair,” (Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 243-244), since God is not a merely Being described in Scripture, but “reflected in life and religious experience.” It means that the doctrine of predestination explains “sovereignty of God” which is in biblical/personal rather than philosophical/abstract categories.⁹⁵⁷ (Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 246). Predestination “builds up faith soundly, trains us to humility, devotes us to admiration of the immense goodness of God towards us, and excites us to praise this goodness.” (Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 243). It does not demand our silence, because God reveals His will through the word of God. Calvin wants one to have knowledge of divine predestination from the Holy Scripture of which the concern is not with doctrines but with the “one joyful message” that demands our radical obedience (Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 161-162).

and coercive power based on a “logic of control” but by God’s Word and Spirit.⁹⁵⁸ The doctrine of providence for Barth is a conception of “divine omnicausality.”⁹⁵⁹

Providence for Tillich means both “fore-seeing” and “fore-ordering.” On the one hand, the emphasis on the fore-seeing makes God become the omniscient spectator who knows everything in the future but does not hinder the freedom of creatures. On the other hand, the emphasis on the fore-ordering makes God a planner who has planned everything before the world. In the former, God is a spectator and creatures have their subjectivities. In the latter, God is the only active agent, but creatures are “cogs in a universal mechanism.” However, Tillich does not accept these two interpretations of providence, but rather insists that providence is an everlasting activity of God who is not a spectator, but always leads everything toward its completion. Tillich here points out a significant element in divine providence that God’s directing creativity occurs through both human freedom and through whole structures of all other creatures.⁹⁶⁰ Providence for Tillich, first, is not interference, but creation, second, a quality of inner directedness which ‘drives’ or ‘lures’ toward fulfillment, and third, ‘the divine condition’ present in every situation. Thus since providence is not a supernatural, miraculous physical or mental interference of God in the world, a special divine action cannot alter the conditions of world. The person who believes in providence is always in the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8).⁹⁶¹ We have to understand a doctrine of providence

⁹⁵⁸ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 126-127. Placher, “Is God in Charge?” in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 98.

⁹⁵⁹ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 125. Migliore argues that “God is not the impersonal or mechanical ‘first cause’ of all that happens but the one whom Jesus revealed as the heavenly Father.” Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 266. Tillich argues that God’s directing creativity includes all existential “conditions of individual, social, and universal existence, through finitude, nonbeing, and anxiety, through the interdependence of all finite things, through their resistance against the divine activity and through the destructive consequences of this resistance.” Ibid.

⁹⁶¹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 267.

based on Jesus Christ, the crucified God, since, otherwise, we cannot understand suffering of those who believe in God. Predestination is providence in one's ultimate destiny and "the highest affirmation of the divine love, not its negation."⁹⁶²

However, nonetheless, I ask, is this doctrine not a kind of stumbling block to any attempt to introduce Christianity to the world?⁹⁶³ Could we still accept this provocative doctrine even in this 21st century? In the tradition of Christianity, grace is absolutely gift from God, because it does not coercively need any reward or response from outside God. However, if grace in predestination is not for everyone (universality) but for someone (particularity), in that case, is it really grace? If everything is determined by God, why do we pray to God? If there is only one way from God to us, is it meaningful to pray to God? Predestination does not need our prayer. Thus does this predestination make sense?⁹⁶⁴ Since the theory of determinism makes God the unique sinner, in a sense, predestination or determinism theory is one of the most dangerous theories in the doctrine of God.⁹⁶⁵ In this sense, we have to listen to David Griffin's a very appropriate question concerning the problem of this doctrine: "At the very center of our faith is the affirmation that our world is essentially good because it has been created by a good and loving creator. If this affirmation is not contradicted by the doctrines of hell, damnation for those outside the church, and double predestination, what could contradict it?"⁹⁶⁶ What would be our

⁹⁶² Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, 286.

⁹⁶³ Personally speaking, when I grew up in a Presbyterian background, I could not understand predestination since middle school and even after becoming a Presbyterian pastor. I cannot accept it in my theological work but rather find in my mind rejection and anger to this doctrine.

⁹⁶⁴ However, in fact, we can ask that if God does not know future, what does God do now? What is the God's role? If God does not know what will happen in the future, why do we pray to God who does not know future? Do we not pray to God with belief that God can lead us and help us because we do not have power, even though we believe in prayer that the future is not predestined?

⁹⁶⁵ If God is the author of evil, God attacked on the World Trade Center, on September 11, 2001. If so, America must turn their army from an armed insurgent group to God. It must be not a criminal but God who has to stand in front of a judge and to go to jail. Does this make sense?

⁹⁶⁶ David Griffin, *Two Great Truths: A New Synthesis of Scientific Naturalism and Christian Faith*, 37.

answer? We can say that God did not decide and predestine everything before. Although God can and does know possibilities of all numbers of cases which will happen in the world in his primordial nature, because God is the voluntarily self-limiting God, God freely limits God's full knowledge for the future.

Predestination (Providence) as Determinism?

Example: While having dinner, my elder daughter asks her mom: "Do you decide every menu by yourself everytime? I hope I have a menu book, because I want to choose menus everytime like at a restaurant." If she knows that God alone chooses and decides everything for every life in the world, what could be her complaints? It must be free will rather than predestination that she wants.

How could we mediate between Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 31 ("God saw all that he had made, and it was very good") and Genesis 6:6 ("The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain")? Admittedly, while the former seems to be attributable to the almighty God, the latter seems not to be proper to God, since we may ask how the almighty God was grieved at what he had done, that is, how the omnipotent God could repent. Another example is Jesus' sigh for Judas Iscariot: "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." (Matt 26:24). Jesus' sigh is exactly against God's will and plan for the world which the Bible describes and most Christians believe in, the will that without God's permission, no trivial thing can exist. If God planned Judas' betrayal of Jesus before Judas was born, this Jesus' sigh is totally contradictory to God's plan and design. Jesus' mention about Judas may be paraphrased as follows: God should not have allowed Judas to be born.

When we deal with predestination in the Bible, we need to do hermeneutical investigation. That is, if someone says that I accept this doctrine because the Bible says so, it is not true; s/he accepts what s/he interprets from the Bible. We are all already in the middle of interpretation. Brian McLaren also seeks a reason for declination of mainline Protestantism from a lack of “a willingness to question traditional interpretations of Scripture.”⁹⁶⁷ We need to make a balance. Did God not know already what will happen in the world? If God did not know, on the one hand, what is this God? If God had known everything that happened, happens, and will happen, on the other hand, why did God allow any evil thing into the world and why did God allow these things to happen which caused God to repent? If God created the world, although God had known everything of the future, what did God want human beings to know in the world? What was God’s intention? An important factor that we have to remember and to investigate here is the fact that God *repented*. Moltmann also relates God’s repentance to God’s suffering: although God cannot suffer and change in negative terms, God can repent with passion and mercy in the biblical history, so that God can love and suffer.⁹⁶⁸

Christians often ask this question: “What is God’s will?” When they decide their majors, universities, or marriage, they used to ask: ‘Is this my way, Lord? Should I get married to this girl? Is this guy my man?’ Did God plan my wife as my wife before the creation? Why not a more beautiful wife? (Sorry honey ^^) Did God plan Eve’s breaking of God’s commandment and Cain’s life of killing his brother, Abel? Did God plan and decide all cases of strikes and balls in base ball games? Did God plan spectators’s intrusion in some games for the fun of the people? Did God prepare for attacks on the

⁹⁶⁷ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-d-mclaren/will-love-wins-win-were-e_b_839164.html
⁹⁶⁸ Moltmann, “God’s Kenosis in the Creation and Consummation of the World,” 142.

World Trade Center, on September 11, 2001? Did God plan an accident, “259 cars in mass pile-up on German motorway”?⁹⁶⁹ Then, were these all human affairs decided by God? If God made an arrangement for these human affairs, should we consider Eve, Cain, Al-Qaeda, and numerous drivers as sinners? It is not hard to find the real sinner, if God planned all, since God must be *the* sinner and *the* author of evil, so that police and armies all over the world must catch God. It must be not criminals but God who has to stand in front of a judge and to go to jail. If God planned double predestination and planned that some should become believers in God, others not, will it be reasonable for God to judge all people at the last judgment? If God should ask the people who did not believe in God, ‘Why didn’t you believe in me,’ is it not easy to answer: ‘because of you?’ What would be God’s answer?⁹⁷⁰ Open theists ask, “How can there be moral responsibility, if our choices are determined?”⁹⁷¹ Predestination would make God “the author of evil.”⁹⁷² Thus if we say that God excludes people “through no fault of their own,” but only through God’s predestination, it undermines the good news that “the creator of the universe is pure unbounded love.”⁹⁷³ However, God (Jesus) is not the author of evil, but “the author of life” (Acts 3:15).

Free Will

⁹⁶⁹<http://kr.news.yahoo.com/service/news/shellview2.htm?articleid=20090721094514390h2&linkid=624&newssetid=1540&title=%C1%F6%B1%B8%C3%CC+%C7%B3%B0%E6>

⁹⁷⁰ Tanner argues that God is responsible for everything that happens in the world, since God is not a kind of thing in the creatures. If God is a kind of thing in the world, then God has limited responsibility. And if God is responsible for everything, “God is a comprehensive productive principle, in short—the creator of the whole world, both heaven and earth.” Kathryn Tanner, “Is God in Charge?” in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 120.

⁹⁷¹ Pinnock, “Open Theism,” 242.

⁹⁷² Pinnock, “Open Theism,” 238.

⁹⁷³ Cobb and Pinnock, *Searching for an Adequate God*, 18.

When someone offers me a chance to do something and I think about whether I have to do it or not, did God decide something before my decision? We need to go to the other side, that is, free will, in order to logically and coherently overcome the problem of predestination, to investigate the conception of free will, and to develop this argument. In physical systems in which all current events have previous causes, what is the function of free will? According to Peter van Inwagen, ‘free will’ can be defined by a simple word, “able” and determinism by a definition that the past determines the one unique way.⁹⁷⁴ It is appropriate to say that if something determines other’s behavior, it must constrain their free will.

Rob Bell argues a relation between freedom and love. “[L]ove, by its very nature, is freedom,” because, without freedom, love is not love. In the sense, God does not intervene in us and the world regardless of human freedom and natural rules, but “respect our freedom to choose” something. If God robs us of our freedom, then God has violated the essence of love.⁹⁷⁵ According to our freedom to choose even isolation or despair, we can have the hell, because “God allows us that freedom” and “love wins.”⁹⁷⁶ However, it is not easy to accept God’s allowance for us to choose even hell because, although it shows us the maximum value of freedom, if God allows that freedom, God could be one of the authors of evil. How can we solve this problem? We need to satisfy two conditions; our freedom and God’s unauthorship of evil. If we have the freedom and God’s persuasive love, not God’s coercive interruption, we can solve the tension between human freedom and God’s love. We can ask why God’s allowance connects to the author

⁹⁷⁴ <http://www.scienceandreligiontoday.com/2009/02/13/what-is-free-will/> For example, traffic lights make me run and stop. System and free-will: interrelation alone not only protects my life but also conserve social systems.

⁹⁷⁵ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 103-104.

⁹⁷⁶ Bell, *Love Wins*, 113, 117, 118-119.

of evil. Does God's allowance for humans to choose even hell or evil not bother us? I do not want to say God's allowance, because God's allowance makes God at least connect to any kind of problem of evil, although it does not make God a direct author of evil. Thus rather than God's allowance over our freedom to choose evil, although God gives us free will, I want to say God's persuasion not to choose evil. To choose evil totally depends on our free will. In this case, God is not the author of evil.⁹⁷⁷

Relation between God's Will and Free Will

We have recognized so far that God's predestination is not valid in this argument. Then, is there only human free will? Does God act nothing in the world? We need to think of God's will, not of God's predestination, for the world. What is the relationship between God's will and free will? Seeking a new way to harmonize between free will and God's will, I will analyze Jesus' prayer: "not my will but your will."

Are free will and God's will compatible or incompatible? First of all, I would like to delve into this question through the relation between justification and faith. Admittedly, justification's motto is *sola gratia, sola Christus, sola fide*, which means that we are obviously saved and justified by God, only by God's grace. And faith is also a result or consequence of grace. However, is faith not also a result of free will? If not, how can we explain unfaith? Are faith and unfaith not a set of responses of human free will to God's grace? For example, in Acts 17, Paul taught the Bible in two different regions:

Thessalonica and Berea. Some people in Thessalonica rejected Paul, but the Bereans

⁹⁷⁷ Ironically, although they are opposite conception, if we emphasize too much one position alone, free will and predestination in a sense would fall into the same pitfall, deism, which means that "God had created the universe but was not further involved in it." Placher, eds. *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 373. While emphasis of free will does not allow God's involvement, emphasis of predestination does not allow God's new involvement because of the past predestination.

accepted Paul: “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11). This verse exactly shows the role of free will in human faith by God’s grace. However, although human beings have free will in theology and faith, we should not say that free will makes them become anthropological production. In short, although God’s grace is given us, our responses to God’s grace are the results of our free will.

Second, seeking a new way to harmonize between free will and God’s will, I will analyze Jesus’ prayer: “not my will but your will” or Jesus’ free will and God’s will from Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane in Matthew 26. There are two wills in verse 39: Jesus’ will (“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me”) and God’s will (“not as I will, but as you will”). Although Jesus’ will is God’s will and vice versa by the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*, the form of two wills in this world must be different from each other. Human Jesus’ will is not fully same with God’s will, since we see Jesus’ earnest prayer and his agony. If his will were completely unified with God’s will from the beginning, he would not have to deeply consider about it.

He must deeply have thought about two possibilities: No and Yes. 1) Jesus’ will > God’s will: If his will were bigger than God’s will, he would reject the cross. This was the case of Jesus’ disciples. They did not have any will of God to follow or obey. Their will was bigger than God’s will. Jesus uses a term, “willing,” when he told his disciple: “Watch and pray so you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is *willing*, but the body is weak” (Matthew 26: 41, Emphasis is mine). 2) Jesus’ will ‘→ and =’ God’s will: However, although Jesus was deeply depressed, Jesus gradually accepted, conformed to

and unified with God's will. Furthermore, Jesus relates God's will to the kingdom of heaven. In order to enter the kingdom of God, we also should do the will of God who is in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

In conclusion, just as Moltmann accepts patripassionism from heresy of the early church, so we need to accept Arminianism in order to explain free will and predestination. The relation between predestination and free will with regard to God's grace is similar to that of sneezing and blowing the nose, in that whereas predestination and sneezing are inevitable, free will and blowing the nose is a self-made decision. That is, whereas since sneezing is inevitable, one needs not to say "excuse me," in my culture and thought, but since blowing the nose is self-decisive, one needs to say "excuse me." Likewise, whereas since predestination is inevitable, one needs not to say "sorry" to God, since freely chosen actions of one's free will are self-decisive, one needs to take responsibility for God's grace. When we attempt to solve the problem between the providence of God and the problem of evil, without any effort to find an appropriate answer, it is not a proper theological attitude to ascribe radical evil to the mystery alone. Are the evil related to the free will? The answer is yes, because of the very nature of free will.⁹⁷⁸

Possibility of *Apocatastasis*

Using the phenomenological method:

Example 1) I've asked my son several times about these questions, but his answers were always same. Do you like your mom or me? Mom. Do you like your sister or me? Sister. Do you like rice noodle (his favorite food) or me? Rice noodle.

⁹⁷⁸ George F. R. Ellis, "Kenosis as a Unifying Theme for Life and Cosmology," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 116. "[F]or any restrictions on the natural order that prevented that self-centered and selfish use of will which is the foundation of evil action, would simultaneously destroy the possibility of free response and loving action which is the aim of the whole. God then shares in the resulting suffering—thus transforming it." Ibid. This relationship between free will and God's providence can also make it possible to address the relationship between God's grace and human freedom, which can be explained by "the concrescence of each individual actual entity" which has double causes, that is, "internally determined and externally free." PR, 46.

Nevertheless, I always love my son, whether he loves me or not, because he is my son. I rather learn this love from my son. If I did not have my son, I could not realize this wonderful insight of love. Thus love occurs in relation to my son. I think this is true love or unconditional love, although it cannot be compared to God's love for us. Does God not still love us although we do not love God?

Example 2) "Daddy, hold me up and let me sit on your shoulder. Please!" My son asked me it in a marketplace. I thought this was the best opportunity to make him say, "I like you more than mom," so I asked him again, "Do you like your mom or me more?" That meant, if he says, "I like you," I'll do that for him. However, he hesitated to answer, saw mom once, and finally said with smile, "Both of you." It was much better than before: He liked me less than rice noodle. However, I know it is not his honest mind, since I forced his answer, which he gave me only in exchange for some fun. To make my son love me is not possible by enforcement. Did God force us to love Him? What would be my next conversation with my beloved son?

Just as children cannot fully know their parents' love for them, so we cannot fully know how much God loves us. It has been said that children usually used to realize it when they finally became parents. However, because we cannot become God's parents, how can we fully realize God's love? It must be totally impossible to know God's gracious love. In the sense, if God's love for us does not require our faith, because it is gracious love, isn't it that much more gracious? If God's love is the true gift, it should require nothing, since, if a gift is to be called a gift, it does not have to expect any response from a receiver. Why does unconditional love of God demand our response (faith)? Is this really unconditional love? Nietzsche answers to those questions with a proper attitude that the loving one loves regardless of reward and requital.⁹⁷⁹ In this sense, God's love demanding our faith may be less gracious than God's love undemanding of our faith. How can we harmonize between God's true gracious love and our faith? If God is love and a gift does not need or require any exchange, or economic value, why does Christianity need the faith of people? Nonetheless, if we love God in a responding way, it is a good posture as a receiver of

⁹⁷⁹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 231.
<http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/nietzsche/tszarath.pdf>.

unconditional love. However, although a receiver of such a love cannot respond to God, God should not express any wrath. If God expresses any such a negative feeling, is God's unconditional love really true?

Furthermore, Christianity has been teaching that, with regard to hell, it is waiting for those who do not have faith. Is this real love or a real gift to put hell into the nonbelievers? Can the hell go together with love (gift)? If God is love, why is there hell? If God is the gift, why does the gift demand faith without which hell is waiting? Of course, without revelation, we cannot recognize God's gift. The gift should be prior to faith and it must be applied to all people, but not to the limited people. However, this revelation should not force us to have faith. What would be the answers of Barth and Marion? If grace or the gift attributes hell or damnation to us, because someone does not have faith, how could it be grace or a gift? In any sense, is Christianity not the most atrocious religion, because it revenges on those who do not believe in God? If a gift is to be a gift, it must be a gift regardless of choosing anything. Although we do not choose God's gracious love, there must be no hell, because a gift is a gift. The offer of the gift should not require any response.

That is, how can we apply this dogma of Christianity, belief=heaven and non-belief=hell, to the proposition, "God is love"? Romans 6:23 says that "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Although sin here means non-belief, however, is it appropriate to say that since someone does not believe in Jesus, s/he has to go to hell? Is this God the God of love? And, how can we understand God in the Old Testament who killed people? Does God really love all people who do not believe in God and who really interrupt God's mission? How can God have equal love

for all people without any complaint against people? How are God's love and God's gift harmonized with God's damnation of those who do not believe in God? Does God not want all people to be saved? 1 Tim. 2:4 says, "[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."⁹⁸⁰ If only a select number will go to heaven and every single other person will suffer in hell forever, asks Rob Bell, is this God a loving God? Why did God create people? Did God create people for punishment for thousands of years with infinite, eternal torment for what they did in this life? How can we belong to a select number? How are we confident that we are in the selected? Is it chance, luck, or random selection? Did God choose you but not others? If this is true, we have to ask, "What kind of God is that?"⁹⁸¹ In the sense, a series of parables in Luke 15 such as "a woman who loses a coin, a shepherd who loses a sheep, and a father who loses a son," says Bell, are not about things and people being lost, but about things and people being found. It means God's endless effort to save all people who were lost.⁹⁸² Thus if we give up what God does not, it must be the most serious blasphemy. Bell considers hell as "the very real consequences we experience when we reject the good and true and beautiful life that God has for us" and as "chaos that comes when we fail to live in God's world God's way."⁹⁸³ Bell argues that eternal life does not start at death but now "that can endure and survive even death"⁹⁸⁴ and Jesus invites us "in this broken, beautiful world, to experience the life of heaven now."⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸⁰ Universal salvation, "from judgment to restoration, from punishment to new life," (Bell, 85) in the Bible, can be found in Jeremiah 32, Lamentations 3, Hosea 14, Zephaniah 2, 3, Isaiah 57, Hosea 6, Joel 3, Amos 9, Nahum 2, Zechariah 9, 10, Micah 7, Psalms 24, Isaiah 45, Acts 17. Romans 11. Ephesians 3. From Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, in chapter 3, "Hell," and chapter 4, "Does God Get What God Wants?"

⁹⁸¹ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 2.

⁹⁸² Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 101.

⁹⁸³ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 93.

⁹⁸⁴ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 59.

⁹⁸⁵ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 62.

Let's consider another example. Suppose that there are parents who believe in God, but their children do not believe in God. When they see their children not believing in God, the parents' hearts must be uncomfortable or even broken. However, nevertheless, do parents not love their children? Parents love them regardless of whether they believe in God or not. Is there any mother who asks cost (money) or something from her baby, because she got pregnant for ten months and finally gave birth to the baby? Does God ask money or something from us, because Jesus took the cross and finally saved us? There is a common ground between mother's love and God's love. When do we feel this wonderful proposition that "God loves us"? When we are healthy, when we are doing well without any trouble, or when we make big money, do we feel that? Do we not experience God's love for us when we are depressed or in trouble and when such difficulties are eliminated?

Likewise, God also loves both believers and non-believers, although God still wants non-believers to come back to God. Thus, we have to consider the universal salvation (*Apokatastasis*) "in the unfailing faithfulness of the God of love (*chesed*)."⁹⁸⁶ An expression that *extra deus nulla salus* (outside God no salvation) is proper for panentheism, since everything is in God and everything will be saved by God. Even Calvin wishes that all human beings be saved, because we do not know who are predestined.⁹⁸⁷ However, there are some tasks to solve such as Jesus' cross and mission duty so as to keep *apocatastasis*. If we confess universal salvation, why do we believe in Jesus Christ? Why did he take the cross? Why do many missionaries go to the end of the world in order to give them the gospel at the risk of their lives? Apocatastasis does not

⁹⁸⁶ Polkinghorne, "Kenotic Creation and Divine Action," in Polkinghorne, *Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, 91.

⁹⁸⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, III, 23, 14, 964.

neglect Jesus Christ who is the gate of salvation, because universal salvation is completed through Jesus Christ and because “Christ died for us,” “while we were still sinners” (Rom 5:8). Hosea 2:23 demonstrates God’s apokatastasis: “I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’” God not only saves elected people but also every created world including non-elected people and creatures. God does not only make a covenant with people alone but also all creatures, so that we all may lie down in safety in God’s bosom. At last, God wants everyone to call God as “You are my God.” Then, when do we really feel God’s omnipresence in the world? Do we really feel God’s presence in daily life? If we do feel God’s presence in our life, we must be panentheists.

5. Potential Objections to My View and My Response to Those Objections

Since nothing is perfect in theological investigation, in this section, I consider some potential objections to my view. First may be an objection from the conservative church which may ask: What is the ecclesiology in panentheism? Does panentheism need a church if God is everywhere? Second is about the relations between panentheism and Christology. Whereas panentheism means that God is ubiquitous in the world, Jesus existed in a particular place as “the scandal of particularity.” In this sense, how and why did the omnipresent God live just in a particular place? In other words, how can we explain that Jesus in particularity can be represented as universality? How can we explain Jesus who is in and beyond time and space? Third, one process theologian suggests trans-panentheism which means that if God is more than the world, the world is also more than

God, according to process metaphysics. That is, God and the world must be mutually transcendent each other.

First, we cannot help but consider church with regard to panentheism. The most serious criticism of church members concerning process theology is that God of process theology has nothing to do with Christianity's tradition. They are asking: Are doctrines of God in Christianity not the most urgent task that process theology should really explain prior to the issues such as religious pluralism or relation between religion and science?; Why does process theology try to go beyond Christianity?; Is it impossible for process theology to stay within Christianity? In these questions, we should suggest a proper view of church: Church should not limit God's existence to its boundary, although theology also should not neglect church. Brierley unusually recognizes the importance of ecclesiology in panentheism. However, its emphasis is different from classical theism, in that whereas church in the classical theism is "the ark of salvation" distinct from an evil world, the church in panentheism cannot dominate salvation, since God's goodness is expressed all over the world. The church must contribute to "increase salvation in the world." In this sense, the ecclesiological task is "to name the things of God in order that love and justice in the cosmos might be more fulfilled." In this sense, we need a more extended ecclesiology, which can assist the world's salvation.⁹⁸⁸

Nonetheless, church takes a very important place in panentheism, although we seem to live in a perfectly coherent, natural system, since we are also religious beings. However, honestly speaking, many people left churches and Christianity, because they no longer see any church's productive contribution to the world. Consequently, Christianity is deeply divided theologically and practically into "progressive" and "conservative." On

⁹⁸⁸ Brierley, "Naming a Quiet Revolution," 14-15.

the one hand, after progressive camps lost their ways, conservatives took their dominant places in Christianity. In this situation, progressives seriously have to find and to play their proper roles, and to answer to one of provocative questions: Why do we have to keep the Christianity and churches, if we want to make a better society a common ground or goal? On the other hand, those who want to change church or theology are really thirsty for new alternative theologies and for various forms of church which are attractive to the contemporary society. Especially, we should not give up the church, because we need spiritual practice, and the church, which is the incarnation of the Spirit of Christ, i.e., the body of Christ, tries to find out as many alternative faces as possible regardless of denomination.⁹⁸⁹ Thus church should implement both inner, or individual, functions and outer, or social, functions. It is obviously difficult but not impossible to connect both sides. In order to achieve this vision, we need to remember the reformed church's motto: *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda* ("the church reformed and always reforming").⁹⁹⁰ And since this ecclesiology was based on Peter's confession that, "You are the son of living God," in response to Jesus' asking, "who do you say I am?" we need to connect to Christology.

Second, in relation to Christology, my goal is to explain Jesus Christ from the perspective of theistic naturalism. Jesus Christ is both *Vere Deus* and *Vere Homo*. That is, Jesus has "one person, two natures." How can it be possible to assert an "exchange of properties" between the human and the divine (*communicatio idiomatum*)? This definition must be a dilemma and "a theological gadfly,"⁹⁹¹ since, although it is obviously

⁹⁸⁹ Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology*, 59-60.

⁹⁹⁰ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 256.

⁹⁹¹ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 30.

a focal doctrine in Christianity, no one gives a satisfactory answer. There are some models to answer to this dilemma.

The first model is “degree christologians” who assert that Jesus is different from other persons not by kind but by degree. If God is in the world, God in Christ is not special but has some continuity and connection to the world. Otherwise it is an “unpanentheistic dichotomy” between God in Christ and God in the world.⁹⁹² In the same vein, some liberal theologies affirm Jesus’ resurrection not in the body but in the Spirit or maintain purely human action, so that the mind of Christ remained available to his disciples and to believers in the church.⁹⁹³ However, although this view can and does manifest the attribute of Jesus’ *Vere Homo*, it does not and cannot show the attribute of Jesus’ *Vere Deus*.

The second model is Peacocke’s naturalistic interpretation of Jesus. When Jesus is *Vere Homo*, like us, how can we accept the “virginal conception?” That is, if Jesus is entirely a human being, that is, “not only flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, but also DNA of our DNA,” he cannot avoid human “evolutionary history.” If he is not, he cannot save us, because “what he has not assumed he has not healed.”⁹⁹⁴ Insofar as Jesus did not break a natural law in his birth, Feuerbach’s asking is appropriate: “Why did God become man only through woman?” If God is the Almighty, can God not choose another

⁹⁹² Brierley, “Naming a Quiet Revolution,” 12. John Robinson, Macquarrie explicitly claim this position and Griffin, Peacocke, and McFague are similar to this view. Norman Pittenger inter alie most explicitly asserts this degree Christology. Ibid.

⁹⁹³ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 109.

⁹⁹⁴ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 30-31. “Since females possess only X chromosomes, conception without a father to provide a Y chromosome could lead only to a female child with two X chromosomes—unless there was some kind de novo creation of a Y chromosome in the ovum entering Mary’s uterus, for the New Testament narratives, even if taken as historical, never deny, and indeed affirm, a normal gestation period. Even such a magical act would be beset with problems: what genes should the DNA of this Y chromosome possess? Those that give the facial characteristics of Joseph, or, if not, of whom? Thus one can go on piling Ossa on Pelion, one improbability on another. Thus the assumption of the full biological humanity of a Jesus possessing the normal set of chromosomes is entirely justified.” Ibid., 31

manner?⁹⁹⁵ This means that God cannot totally break natural laws. And, another question is that if he is *Vere Homo*, he must be a sinner like us. If so, how does he save us? Thus crucial is the question as to how it is possible to say that Jesus is not a sinner without denying the *Vere Homo*. Jesus' virginal conception can be explained as mythical stories like "non-historical and non-biological truths" in those of Adam and Eve. Thus, God alone has the authority to form the person and life of Jesus of Nazareth. Peacocke calls it "*theologically imperative*."⁹⁹⁶ By the same token, argues Schleiermacher, the beginning of Jesus' life cannot be explained by the narrow circle of human genealogy, but only by human nature in general. That is, Jesus must be understood as the original human nature not affected by human sin, but radically severed from human generations. Thus, Jesus' life was obviously "a new implanting of the God-consciousness."⁹⁹⁷

The third model is Clayton's "a kenotic Christology" in which Clayton keeps both sides, that is, Jesus as God's revelation and Jesus as an exemplar for humanity. Panentheists maintain that all are in God "in no less a sense than Jesus was." Then, is there no difference between Jesus and us? *Nein!* Whereas there was no gap between what God wills and what Jesus wills, because Jesus perfectly knew God's will and lived a life of perfect union with God, there are gaps between what God wills and what we will. And whether we believe in Jesus' physical resurrection or spiritual resurrection, we believe that God's power and presence is revealed as we accept the mind of Christ. When we say that we are in Christ, it means that we subordinate our own will to the God's will, allowing God's will to actualize in our own minds and actions. Since there was already divine action in Jesus' consciousness of God, Jesus' action *is* the divine action (Emphasis

⁹⁹⁵ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989), 72.

⁹⁹⁶ Peacocke, *All That Is*, 31.

⁹⁹⁷ CF, 388-389.

added). This connection of human and divine is similar to the traditional doctrines such as “two-natures” and “incarnation.” Insofar as God can be really revealed through human beings who submit themselves to the divine will, there is combination between human and divine.⁹⁹⁸

Third, the insistence of trans-panentheism is a kind of pantheism, in that it does neither allow God’s transcendence over the world nor God’s existence without the world. However, if we radically place God and the world at the same level, there is no reason to confess God as God. Although God is intimately related to the world, it does not mean that God can be reduced to the world or that the world can replace God’s role and position. I would like to find a clue of a transition moment from pantheism to panentheism from the stories of two people in the Bible: Abraham and Paul. In Genesis 17, God gives Abram a new name Abraham. Abram and Abraham are different names of the same person. However, Abraham without Abram cannot be thought. When Abram fell facedown (Genesis 17:3, worship), God gave him a new name, Abraham. This is a turning point in Abraham. In Acts we can read a story of Paul. His name was Saul, but his name became Paul by the experience in Damascus. The process of a transition from Saul to Paul is as follows: Saul fell to the ground, could see nothing, was filled with the Holy Spirit, was baptized (Acts 9, Acts 13:9), and finally was also called Paul. What is the difference between the before and the after in both Abraham and Paul? The recognition of God’s presence (God more than the world) and their worship of God make them new persons. By the same token, although pantheism and panentheism are connected, because panentheism without pantheism cannot be thought, when pantheism

⁹⁹⁸ Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit*, 109-110. Jesus is in and beyond time and space. Russell Stannard, “God in and beyond Space and Time,” in *In Whom We Live and Move in Our Being*, 109.

is baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit and recognizes a distinctive place of God, it could be panentheism.⁹⁹⁹ To that extent, then, worship must be the one huge difference inter alia between pantheism and panentheism.

⁹⁹⁹ Clayton finds plausibility of panentheism in Spinoza's approach to the problem of God, which avoids theories of perfection of medieval and Cartesian. Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, Chapter 7.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

“O MY BRETHREN! With whom lieth the greatest danger to the whole human future? Is it not with the good and just?... O my brethren, into the hearts of the good and just looked some one once on a time, who said: “They are the Pharisees.” But people did not understand him.... The good *must* crucify him who deviseth his own virtue! That *is* the truth!... They crucify him who writeth new values on new tables, they sacrifice *unto themselves* the future—they crucify the whole human future!”¹⁰⁰⁰

“Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? Him who breaketh up their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker:—he, however, is the creator.”¹⁰⁰¹

“With the creators, the reapers, and the rejoicers will I associate: the rainbow will I show them.”¹⁰⁰²

Longing for the Novelty

I have dealt with affinities and differences in the God-world relationship between a modified process theologian, a panentheist, and open theists. Bracken, Clayton, and the Open theists both criticize and accept classical theism and process theology. The primary task of theology is simply neither to defend nor to repeat the classical creeds of the church, but to deal with the issues of humanity and the world and to search for the living God in the coming new period without ignoring classical creeds. If theology were a defense of the classical creeds, the creeds would be a dogma and idol. Accordingly, theology should enter into the creeds with new questions which we are realistically facing and elicit new answers out of them. In this respect, the above quoted Nietzsche’s sayings give us an insight that since classical theism in a sense has been crucifying theological creators, we need to attempt to supply theological answers to the contemporary issues and to write new values on the new theological table. It must crucify the future and the

¹⁰⁰⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 193.

¹⁰⁰¹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 31.

¹⁰⁰² Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 32.

rainbow of theology. In contrast, we can recognize the importance of change or transformation from three metamorphoses of the spirit: a camel (humiliation), a lion (lordship), and a child (innocence). The camel kneels down to take heavy things. The lion says, “I will,” to express lordship in a wilderness. The child needs a holy Yea to play a creative game.¹⁰⁰³ Theology can follow these metamorphoses, that is, theological humiliation, theological insistence, and theological play, to develop theological discourses.

In the sense, we need to note Whitehead’s insight: Although the world is longing for novelty, it is afraid of the loss of the familiar and lovely past.¹⁰⁰⁴ For example, the art of progress is to preserve both “order amid change” and “change amid order,” because order is not by itself sufficient but needs novelty (change).¹⁰⁰⁵ As Whitehead holds, when we are faced by new challenges, even in theology, we are not disposed willingly to open to new alternatives. That is, despite the actual concurrence concerning these new challenges, when we try to do any new constructive theological task in a new period, we sometimes hesitate because of the unknown and the vague anxiety that we may lose our identity or foundation. However, these fears will be proven as groundless if we see a better novelty in our work. In order to overcome the past, to acquire new learning, and to search for novelty, however, we need to first awaken ourselves out of our fixed ideas, so that we can build a new alternative with a new idea, by shaking the foundations on which we stand.¹⁰⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this does not neglect the past, but “receives from the past; it lives in the present.”¹⁰⁰⁷ This insightful intuition of Whitehead could and should be also

¹⁰⁰³ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 33-35.

¹⁰⁰⁴ PR, 340.

¹⁰⁰⁵ PR, 339.

¹⁰⁰⁶ PR, 61.

¹⁰⁰⁷ PR, 339. “The old dominance should be transformed into the firm foundations, upon which

applied to theology. In order for a theology or a community to renew, it has to reframe a new system which is flexible and appropriate to new situations. Thus we can speak of the harmony between the traditional and the contemporary, neither ignoring tradition nor rejecting novelty.

As an alternative, I seek the possibility of panentheism. Panentheism must flow between classical theism and pantheism so as to form a more appropriate type of doctrine of God. Panentheism pantarei! Of course, we also recognize that panentheism is not “a perennial philosophy,” because it appeared in the specific context in order to overcome a conflict between supernaturalism and pantheism.¹⁰⁰⁸ Nonetheless, it could suggest hope in theology: “Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live” (Ezekiel 47:9). Likewise, wherever panentheism or relational thought flows, I hope, everything in theological discourse will be renewed and alive.

Panentheistic Spirituality and Panentheistic Life

As we already see, we cannot underestimate the role of the church. With regard to the relation between church and the world, we need to reflect on Bonhoeffer’s insight into the relation between individuality and community: “We recognize, then, that only as we are within the fellowship can we be alone, and only he that is alone can live in the fellowship. Only in the fellowship do we learn to be rightly alone and only in aloneness do we learn to live rightly in the fellowship. It is not as though the one preceded the

new feelings arise, drawing their intensities from delicacies of contrast between system and freshness. In either alternative of excess, whether the past be lost, or be dominant, the present is enfeebled.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Gregersen, “Three Varieties of Panentheism,” 34.

other; both begin at the same time, namely, with the call of Jesus Christ.” Spiritual health of each individual being in a rapidly changing society can be kept with the proper balance between solitude and fellowship. We need an exquisite harmony between them.

Bonhoeffer considers “silence” as the mark of solitude and “speech” as the mark of community.¹⁰⁰⁹ Analogically speaking, human beings need two glasses: a mirror and a window. Whereas we can see ourselves through a mirror, we can see outside and into other worlds through a window. Human beings, however, already have an ability to see both sides without a physical mirror and window. One is introspection and the other is extrospection.

Any kind of theology must relate to a concrete life. Without this connection, although a theology has a perfect metaphysical structure, it must be superficial.

Panentheism can show this connection. Just as an existing purpose of a star is to shine for some objects in the world, so Zarathustra descends into the world. Like Zarathustra’s decision and action, we must go down into the concrete life. When Zarathustra goes down the mountain, he meets an old man who wants to go into the mountain. Their conversation is similar to that between a progressive theist and a classical theist, since the old man says that he no longer loves humans, because they are imperfect; he now loves God. After hearing this, Zarathustra leaves him and says to his heart: “Could it be possible! This old saint in the forest hath not yet heard of it, that “*God is dead!*”¹⁰¹⁰

However, we need to consider God here not as the literal God but as the God of classical theism, since there is a possibility for Nietzsche to accept God in the sense that “I should

¹⁰⁰⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 77-78.

¹⁰¹⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 19-21.

only believe in a God that would know how to dance.”¹⁰¹¹ In the sense, we should not place Nietzsche in a group of atheists, since he had found nothing but the God of classical theism. If he had found a dancing God, he had to believe in God. And we can see God dancing with the world in panentheism. Thus panentheistic spirituality must go toward public spirituality including individual spirituality and connect with a panentheistic life. I would like to explore panentheistic life in three ways.

First, panentheistic life means kenotic life. Insofar as every doctrine in Christianity must relate to our concrete life, we need to listen to a concise imperative: “Begin from where you live.”¹⁰¹² Kenotic Christology (Philippians 2:5-8) must be expanded into the kenotic life: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). This verse tells us that since “the pattern of this world” does not mean kenotic life but exalted life and greedy life, which follows and pursues the material success of life, we need to renew our mind. We can find an attitude of a kenotic life in parables of the kingdom of God from Luke 13. Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?” Here we need to recognize that the kingdom of God is not such a place as will be established in another world. Jesus said, “It is like a mustard seed.” What does it mean? It means that although it is very small, when it grows, it becomes a tree, and the birds of the air come and perch in its branches. A tree is not a tree from the beginning, but starts from a seed and grows like a tree. Jesus asked again, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to?” It is like yeast in the dough. What is yeast? It makes the dough swollen. The

¹⁰¹¹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 47.

¹⁰¹² Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology*, 96.

kingdom of God does not require a splendid life but a kenotic life or self-limiting life, voluntarily rejecting the wealth in the world, based on a parable of the rich young man in Matthew 19. Rob Bell's insight is proper here: "Lose your life and find it, he (Jesus) says. That's how the world works. That's how the soul works. That's how life works when you're dying to live."¹⁰¹³

By the same token or more radically speaking, Job 1:21 says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart." This word has two meanings of "nonpossession." First is the nonpossession of a passive meaning in that we cannot bring our possession into the next step after death. Second is the nonpossession of a positive meaning in that we do not have to bring our possession into the kingdom of God, because there must be everything that we need there. Which one is better to understand kenotic life? If you read Matthew 6:19-24, you can find Jesus talking about our mind. Jesus says, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth." Why? "(because) moth and rust destroy" and (because) "thieves break in and steal." So, Jesus says, "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Why? There are no moth and no thieves in heaven. However, you may ask: How can we store our treasures not on earth but in heaven? In order to live very well, we think we have to have big money on earth. It seems to be right. If we store money in bank, there must be neither moth nor thief there. It is safe. However, Jesus says "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). What does it mean? If your treasure is here, your mind is here. If your treasure is there, your mind is also there. Jesus teaches us a totally opposite direction of life, because we are the people of God and because we are the citizen of heaven. And Jesus knew that "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24). A rich man in the Bible asked

¹⁰¹³ Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, 136.

Jesus: “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Jesus said, “Sell all your possessions and give to the poor and then come, follow me.” What was a rich man’s response? The Bible says, “he went away sad.” (Matthew 19). What does it mean? He did not follow Jesus because of his money. It is not easy to follow both God and money together. The people of the world pursue the abundant life in this world to have good houses, good cars, and enough money to do everything. When we say that we live in this world, it means that we need money and we need material, but in a panentheistic life we should not live with the same values as the world. Although we live in this world, we have to have the values of the kingdom of God. Thus if we pursue the same values as the world, we are not different from the people of the world. However, the kingdom of God is not same as the values of the earth. That is the message of the Bible. Thus we need to renew our mind.

Second, panentheistic life must mediate between the conservative and the progressive. If the definition of panentheism is described as “all-in-God,” the panentheistic life must be related to the networks of all others including the nature of the cosmos. In such a relation, we need to have a holarchical mind in which we relate to others in both a part and a whole.¹⁰¹⁴ If we set any limitation on the relation to others in the cosmos, because of any political or personal likes or dislikes, we cannot be called panentheists, since God does not set any limitation on the relation to the world. Thus there must be no negative prehension in “big tent”¹⁰¹⁵ of panentheism, although there would be parentheses for those dislikes. The final purpose of human life is to live a

¹⁰¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holarchy>. David Spangler argues that “[I]n a hierarchy, participants can be compared and evaluated on the basis of position, rank, relative power, seniority and the like. But in a holarchy each person’s value comes from his or her individuality and uniqueness and the capacity to engage and interact with others to make the fruits of that uniqueness available.” http://www.sevenpillarsreview.com/article/a_vision_of_holarchy1

¹⁰¹⁵ Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology*, 123.

panentheistic life in the world. This is the point of contact between theory and praxis.

Seeing diverse phenomena of a society, we judge them as progressive or conservative.

However, what is progressive or what is conservative in life? Are the progressive and the conservative two wings which make a balance of a body in living organisms?

Analogically speaking, when we say that a bird can fly with two wings and that a wagon has two wheels, if two wings and two wheels are on the same side, it is neither easy for the bird to fly nor for the wagon to move. Only if two wings and two wheels are on each of the two sides can the bird fly and the wheel roll. Since if it is tilted to the one side, it may be fallen into the sands of the desert, it should always make a balance. Left wing and right wing cannot help but co-exist and should exist together. However, it is not enough to explain a bird's flying, since, without the driving force, momentum, or will to fly that unifies and sublates (*aufheben*) both left and right, a bird cannot fly. Likewise history cannot proceed progressively without them. Are we really progressive if we are only on the right side in the intersection between X and Y on the diagram? Or, are we really conservative if we are only in the left side on the diagram? If the progress and the conservative of life do not simply mean right and left on the diagram, then, what on the earth are the progress and the conservative? Are we really progressive if we are in the camp of progressive theology? Are we really conservative if we are in the camp of conservative theology?

Naïve in any sense is the logic of the life of those who make a simple distinction between the progressive and the conservative. Just as the progress of thought in our lives is not necessarily the progress of existence, so that of language is not always the progress of existence. Furthermore, the progress of action does not always lead to that of life. Only

when there is the sort of progress of life in which thought and language are melded into a concrete whole is it the progress of existence, only then can we bring about the progress of human kind. Thus since vain thoughts do not help further the progress of human kind, we should neither sigh thoughtlessly, nor act incautiously. If one says that a person is on the side of progress, but there are discrepancies between thought and language in one's life, the existence is distorted, and one's life is far away from the life of the progress, isn't s/he on the (0.0) of X and Y on the diagram? If so, how can s/he be a progressive person? If our existence could be the house of both thought and language, the house which contains such progress, and if our action could support the wave of the progress, could not our existence itself contribute to the stream of the progress? Thus, the progress is to live by reflecting at every moment on the life which is given to us daily. Progressive and conservative are to learn from air. Just as the air which I breathe in is not mine, so the air which you breathe in is not yours. Don't you breathe in the air which I breathe out, and vice versa? Is the air which the conservative breathes different from that of the progressive? Isn't it true to say that the progressive breaths in the air which the conservative breaths out, and vice versa? We need to take a deep breath to think of a more proper theology. Progressive minjung churches are to learn from conservative mega churches and conservative mega churches are to learn from progressive minjung churches. Isn't that true communication? How long should we adhere to our own respectively pure orthodoxy? Whether it is progressive or conservative, pure orthodoxy is always a problem.

Third, panentheistic life is a life of pursuing the common good in a society. Since we are all in God by the definition of panentheism, we all must be happy in this life

without exception. We cannot achieve this hope without the reflection of God in that “the worlds of theology and social justice interweave in a rich tapestry of belief, conviction, and action.”¹⁰¹⁶ Is God not the foundation of the reflection? It is the life that God who leads the huge history has given us, so that we have to accomplish God’s plan in our life. In other words, it is the conservative or the rebel who incautiously abuses God’s gift to us of this chance. God calls us to build up the body of Christ, to grow up into Christ, and to attain to the fullness of Christ, because from Christ the whole body is connected in love. (Ephesians 4:12, 15, 16). Thus, first of all, it is time for those who are on the earth to listen to the voice of the sky. Does progress not start from listening with all our hearts and with all our minds to the voice from the sky? After hearing the word of God, what should we do? Where should we go? Where must be our place of life? Just as Matthew 28:7 says, “He (Jesus) has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him,” so let us go to our Galilee, hug Jesus who is waiting for us there, and start our life again. In human life, a form of panentheistic life is “universal altruism” which, by self-emptying, lives for the common good of the world.¹⁰¹⁷

If we are really in God, we feel God every moment. If we feel that God is with us at every single moment, we must have a deep relationship with God. Jesus must be such a person, since he knew God’s will more than anyone else. What gradually becomes obvious is that to support panentheism is to live a ‘panentheistic life’ in our life, which must be the most progressive life. To that extent, then, prayer and genuine dialogue with God with open mind are the best way to know God. In the sense, we can follow the spirit of the gospel which shows co-working between God, nature, and human beings: “the

¹⁰¹⁶ Clayton, *Transforming Christian Theology*, 135.

¹⁰¹⁷ Philip Clayton, "Adaptation, Variation, or Extinction: How Can There be Theology after Darwin?" (Darwin Festival 2009), 13.

great love story of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a divine love story in which we are all involved together with heaven and earth.”¹⁰¹⁸

I asked this question in the introduction: “Is Christian theology still possible?” We can say “Yes,” insofar as we do not forget God, but remember God who is “the reason for the hope” (1 Peter 3:15). In the individual conversation, John Cobb slightly changes 1 Corinthians 13:13 as follows: “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is hope.” In this hope, we may ask, what would be the last word of God, after God and the world dance together? God may say: It was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the seventh day, i.e., the final day when you are in me and I am in you (If we can put in the Bible, Revelation 22:22).

¹⁰¹⁸ Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann, *Humanity in God* (New York: Philgrim Press, 1983), 88. Quoted from Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 68.

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