

*In What Sense(s) Am I a "Universalist"?*

I am a "universalist" in *two* senses: (1) in the sense that, as Hartshorne puts it, "in the depths of consciousness we feel and accept the divine ordering without which there could be nothing significant or definite," and that "the worst sinner [*sic*] still does this in his imperfect way" ("A New Look at the Problem of Evil": 211); and (2) in the sense that every human being, however she or he may feel and accept "the divine ordering," authentically or inauthentically, is everlastingly embraced within the love and life of God.

But my "universalism" is evidently qualified in *both* senses. For, with respect to (1), the human response to God's universal ordering of all things is not itself universally the same because of the difference between "imperfect" and "perfect" (= "inauthentic" and "authentic") modes of feeling and accepting it; and with respect to (2), there ever remains even—indeed, especially!—in God's love whatever real difference there is between those who are authentic and those who are not. Although God's love is given freely and impartially to both, and both feel and accept it, however "imperfectly," it is given to the one as to the other as what they are, not as what they are not.

Insofar, then, as Hartshorne is right, that "there is nothing but God, as necessarily existing but contingently experiencing ourselves and other things" ("Whitehead and Berdyaev": 78), there is a sense in which I can agree with the supralapsarian Calvinist, even though in another sense I must agree with the Arminian. The Calvinist is right that the creation of human beings as well as their fall, salvation, and damnation all occur *within* God's life and purpose, not outside them. As a matter of fact, I can even see a certain point in the notion that the damnation of sinners, precisely as damnation, attests to God's glory no less than their salvation; for, as the sole ultimate ground of the worth of *all* things—that ultimate standard or measure apart from which there could no more be loss than gain—God alone endows the sin of human beings with its ultimate (negative) worth. Even so, where the Arminian is surely right is in insisting that, although all things may indeed fall within God and God's purpose, God does not will or

do everything, but must always reckon with the willings and doings of others: God's creatures, none of which, to be sure, could ever be anything at all apart from God—as God certainly could be and be God apart from any of them—but all of which, having once been created by God as themselves, in their ways, creators, stand over against God as well as within God and, to some extent, also determine the *de facto* course of all things.

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