

SOLOVYEV
ON
GODMANHOOD

PETER P. ZOUBOFF

GODMANHOOD
AS
THE MAIN IDEA OF THE PHILOSOPHY
OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYEV

By

PETER P. ZOUBOFF

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(*scire*) and will (*velle*); these three manifestations or actions of our spirit are identical not only in their content, inasmuch as the extant one knows and wills itself—their oneness goes much deeper: each one contains in itself the two others, and thus each contains in itself the whole fullness of the triune spirit. Indeed, I am, says Solovyev, but not just “am”—I am as he who cognates and wills (*sum sciens et volens*), i.e. my being includes my knowledge and volition; when I know, I recognize my being and my will (*scio me esse et velle*), so that in my knowing is implied my being and my volition; and I myself necessarily as existing and mentally conscious (*volo me esse et scire*), the will embracing both being and thought. Solovyev might have drawn the simple inference a little further—as it is the same I in all cases of my experience, so it is also the same One God in His three Hypostases.

Besides the threefold general logical form of being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-by-itself, manifest in God as the ultimate First Principle or Self-extant Spirit, as the Word or the eternal expression of that eternal Subject of Being, and as the Spirit ratifying the Logos-expression of the eternal self-extant Spirit and, in returning unto the First Principle, completing the triune oneness of God, Solovyev distinguishes in the relationship of the three Persons of God the three modes of His existence as the will, representation, and sensation, to which correspond the “three images of the essence” of God: Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. And these are united, or are One, in the underlying, all-pervading power of the Spirit of God, which is Love—in a sense, Goodness, Truth, and Beauty are but three “different images” of Love.*

Love is the very innermost essence of the nature of God, the ultimate, last, secret of His own Being: the internal, Life-generating, magnetic power of Unity of the Spirit of God—conditioned, it would appear, by the metaphysical polarity inherent in His very oneness:

“... in order to be what it is, it [the absolute] must be its own opposite, or the unity of itself with its antipode,
 ‘Denn Alles muss in Nichts zerfallen
 Wenn es in Sein beharren will’.

“This supreme law of logic is but an abstract expression of the great physical and moral fact of love. Love is the self-negation of a being, the assertion by it of another being, and yet in that self-negation is effected its highest self-asser-

*Ibid. p. 110.

tion. . . Thus, when we say that the absolute prime beginning, by its very definition is the unity of itself and of its self-negation, we repeat, only in a more abstract form, the word of the great apostle: God is love.

"As the striving of the absolute for its opposite, that is, for being, love is the beginning of plurality; for the absolute by itself, as supra-extant, is unconditionally one. . ."*

Being is the relationship of the Subject of being to Its content; in that primeval self-contained being of God in which, prior to all eternity, the first stirring of His will had been the first manifestation of His existence—as yet within Himself—He willed, desired, His content, His own essence, as its Subject. The very link, association, between the subject and the predicate of being is love, the exerted power of unity, the extraverted force of magnetism, returned—with the inclusion of its own essence, as its spoil—unto itself. And the essence—the subject's content—is it not also that same unity or love?

"The will of the good is love in its internal essence, or the primeval source of love. The good is the unity of all or of everyone, i.e. love as the desired, as the beloved one—consequently, here we have love in a special and paramount sense as the idea of ideas: this is unity substantial. The truth is the same love, i.e. the unity of all but as objectively represented [perceived]: this is unity ideal. Finally, beauty is the same love (i.e. the unity of all) but as manifested [as sensible]: this is the real unity. In other words, the good is unity in its positive potentiality (and corresponding to this, the divine will may be designated as the principle immediately-creative or powerful), the truth is the same unity as necessity, and beauty—the same unity as the real . . . *the absolute realizes the good through the truth, in beauty.*"*

"The three ideas or three common unities, being but three sides or aspects of one and the same unity, form together in their mutual interpenetration a new concrete unity, which represents the full realization of the divine content, the wholeness [integrity] of the absolute essence, the realization of God as the all-One, in whom 'dwelleth [all] the fullness of the Godhead bodily.'**

*V. Solovyev, *Criticism of Abstract Principles*; Works, I, p. 310.

*V. Solovyev, *Lectures Concerning Godmanhood*; Works, III, pp. 110, 111.

**Colossians, II, 9.

"In this full determination the divine principle appears to us in Christianity. Here, at last, we come upon the ground of the Christian revelation."***

"In the historical development of religious consciousness, gradually attaining the fullness of truth, the pagan world which blossomed out in Hellenism established divinity as primarily the *all*. Of the two necessary momenta of the divine actuality: the personal or subjective and the ideal or objective—that world perceived and expressed in a definite way only the second. Judaism, on the contrary, comprising in this respect the direct opposite of Hellenism, perceived and in a definite manner realized the first momentum, that of the personal or subjective actuality: it cognated Divinity as the extant one or as pure Ego."****

But religion which conceived divinity only as ideal cosmos or harmony of all, was purely contemplative, without any positive pragmatic bearing upon the individual and social life of man; for Socrates and Plato, for Stoicism, as well as for Buddhism, "the moral aim consisted of a simple hushing down of the human will."***** On the other hand it is true that divinity "*is not only the one, but also the all, is not only the individual but also the all-embracing being; not only the extant one, but also the substance.*"*

"God is all; i.e. all in the positive sense, *or the unity of all, comprises the proper content, object, or the objective substance of God.* . . ."**

So that in willing, desiring, loving His content, God, as the Subject of being, willed desired loved, *all*. But Solovyev is careful to guard this assertion from any confusion of it with pantheism, either naturalistic or idealistic the "all" does not mean "the particular conditional reality of the natural world":

all can be the object [matter, content] of the absolutely extant

One only in its internal unity and integrity."***

"The eternal God eternally realizes Himself, realizing His content, i.e. realizing all. This 'all', in contradistinction with the extant God as

***Ibid. p. 111.

***Ibid. p. 74.

***Ibid. p. 73.

*Ibid.

**Ibid. p. 84.

***Ibid. p. 110.

the unconditionally One, is plurality as the content of the unconditionally One, as overcome by the One, as reduced to unity."****

The idea of unity is the central, cardinal conception of all Solov'yev's philosophy, the cornerstone of all his ideological constructions, the fundamental criterion in his approach to any and all problems.

God is primevally One; in the pre-eternal unity of the Subject of being with His substance or content, that content—His being—potentially contained the plurality of all possible beings in their unity with Him, and therefore among themselves; His eternal existence eternally realizes that potential content and its unity in the created cosmos which He willed and posited forth as His 'other one'; the simple unity of the unconditionally One becomes the All-unity of God in His full self-realization. Everything else follows, in Solov'yev's mind, from this fundamental truth about the ultimate nature of the ultimate being, the truth of unity as the ontological thesis willing, and working out, the theo-cosmic All-unity as its own predetermined synthesis (which is but the full and ratified expression of the Subject of being in Its own 'other one,' Its own essence—the Word of God, Logos, actuated and in His fullness confirmed by the Spirit).

"The conception of All-unity, in Greek, *en ke pan*, is the central thread in the philosophy of Solov'yev."*

All universe is to be brought into unity with, and thus into, God. It is to become His content, therefore it must be brought into conformity with Him, with His nature, His internal organization, i.e. must be patterned after the manner of His intra-deital relationships. And man, especially shaped after the very image of God, most especially so.

But not all elements of the phenomenal world can be so brought into God, into conformity with His being—only that which constitutes unity in all things, the unifying factor in each item of creation. For there are also other factors in the world of nature, forces which work not towards the unity of all, but oppose it—the forces of self-assertion on the part of each individual created entity. They are the factors of evil.

Individualism is evil because its self-asserting will is directly contrary to the will of God, which is the will of the most fundamental good: that of the unity of all with Him who is the source of all good, the source of life, of existence itself. The divine will for unity is the life-generating Love of God; the individualist particularism not only

***Ibid. p. 113.

*William Henry Dunphy, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solov'yev*, p. ii. (Private Edition, Distributed by the University of Chicago Libraries. 1939.).

monopolizes the portion of being it received from the absolute, but also wills—craves, covets, desires—that of the others, *for itself* i.e., not only deprives the others of its co-operation and the benefit they might receive from association with it, but tends to rob them of what they have in themselves as their little share from the source of all being and good. And even more—in that centripetal attitude of self-centered isolation, individualism, by the very logic of its particularism, works contrary to or *against* the will of God, disrupts the unifying forces of His Love, and introduces, instead, envy, hatred, and death: “all creatures become subjected to the vanity and slavery of corruption,” “the world-organism is transformed into a mechanical conglomeration of atoms,” “the unity of the whole creation falls apart.”* Solovyev calls the egotist particular existence a “heavy, torturous dream” of our reality.

The “constant forms of natural phenomena, their harmonious relations and immutable laws, the whole ideal content of this world” appear to the mind as the “clear reflection of eternal ideas”**, as the norm, as the right order of things or “that which ought to be.” But the self-assertion and egoism of particular existence common to all nature is definitely evil, something which “ought not to be”, the *ab-normal*.

Man is the connecting link of that polarity of the universal unity and the individualist particularism, between the divine and the natural worlds; he “combines within himself all possible opposites, which are all reducible to one great polarity between the unconditioned and the contingent, between the absolute and eternal essence and the transitory phenomenon or appearance.”*

Sophia As a phenomenon, man presents “in his physical aspect only a spatial group of elements, and in his psychological aspect—a temporal series of separate states”; neither the physical nor the psychological organism possesses any real unity, only a correlation of arbitrarily chosen divisions or units. If, however, as a phenomenon man is but “a temporary, transitory fact” of empiricism, as the ideal essence, “he is necessarily eternal and all-embracing.” What is this ideal man? asks Solovyev. It is a being at once individual and universal, mankind in its ideal unity, he says; and gives this being the name of Sophia.

“Just as the divine forces form one whole, absolutely universal and absolutely individual, organism of the living Logos; so all

*Ibid. p. 142.

**Ibid. p. 129.

*Ibid. p. 121.

Sophia

human elements form a like whole, an organism at once universal and individual—the necessary actualization and receptacle of the first one—the organism of the whole humanity as the eternal body of God and the eternal soul of the world. As this latter organism, i.e. Sophia, in its eternal being necessarily consists of a multiplicity of elements, of which she is the real unity, so each of those elements, as a necessary component part of the eternal godmanhood, must be recognized as eternal in the absolute or ideal order.**

It is this ideal essence in man, man as a part and a partaker of the ideal humanity, which is the *real* nature of man.

And in the light of this ideal meaning of man, "in the ideal contemplation (as also in purely scientific knowledge) every individual separateness, every particularity of a real empirical phenomenon, is but 'a fleeting dream', only an indifferent transitory chance, a mere sample of the general and the unitary; what counts here is not the real empirical existence of an object, but its ideal content, which is something perfect in itself and fully clear to the mind."**

"In the light of the ideal contemplation we do not feel and do not assert ourselves in our separateness: here the torturing flame of personal will is extinguished, and we recognize our essential oneness with all else. But such ideal state lasts in us only a moment; and except for these bright moments, in the whole remaining course of experience our ideal unity with all the 'other' [other than we] appears to us as a phantom, as immaterial; for our actual reality we take only our separate, particular *I*: we are secluded in ourselves, impenetrable for others, and therefore they are likewise impenetrable for us . . .

"This same abnormal attitude toward all outside of us, this exclusive self-assertion or selfishness, all-powerful in practical life even though it is rejected in theory, this opposition of ourselves to all others and the practical denial of them—is precisely the root of evil in our nature: and as it is an attribute of everything living, for every living being in nature, every beast, every insect, and every stalk of grass, in its own existence separates itself from everything else and strives to be all for itself, absorbing or repulsing the 'other' (from whence comes the external, material existence) it follows that evil is a common attribute of all nature, being in one respect,

*Ibid. p. 127.

**Ibid. p. 130.

evil + suffering

i.e. in its ideal content or in its objective forms and laws merely a *reflection of the all-one idea*, in another respect, namely in its real, segregated, and severed existence, appears as something foreign and hostile to this idea, as something which ought not to be, or as evil. And it is evil in a twofold sense. For, if egotism, i.e. the striving to put one's own exclusive ego in the place of all, or to replace all with itself, is evil *par excellence* (the moral evil) then the fatal impossibility to actually realize that egotism, i.e. the impossibility of being everything, remaining in one's own exclusiveness—is the root of suffering, in regard to which all other sufferings are only particular instances of the general law. Indeed, the common basis of every suffering, moral as well as physical, is in the last analysis the result of subjection of a being to something external to it, some external fact which forcibly binds and oppresses it; but such external subjection obviously would be impossible if the given subject was in an internal and actual unity with all else, if it felt [found] itself in all: then there would not be anything ultimately foreign or external for it, nothing could forcibly limit or oppose it; sensing itself in concord with all the 'other', it would sense the action of all the 'other' upon itself as concordant with its own will, as agreeable to itself, and consequently would not experience any actual suffering . . . evil is the exerted condition of the will of an individual being asserting exclusively itself and negating all the 'other'; and suffering is the inevitable reaction of the 'other' to such will . . .*

Suffering is thus only "the inevitable consequence of moral evil", and evil itself is but the negative attitude of individual beings towards each other: the "actual existence of the natural world is abnormal, or such as it ought to be, in so far as it opposes itself to the divine world (as the ultimate norm)".

"In itself, the divine beginning is the eternal all-One, abiding in absolute repose and immutability; but in relation to multiplicity of the finite being which left it, the divine beginning appears as the *active* force of unity—Logos *ad extra*. The multiple being in its discord rises against the divine unity, negates it; but Divinity, the principle of all-unity by its very nature, is merely aroused by the negative action of the disin-

*Ibid. pp. 130, 131.

tegrated existence to positive reaction, to the manifestation of its unifying force, at first in the form of external law and then gradually realizing a new positive unification of these elements in the form of absolute organism or internal all-unity."*

But Logos by Himself cannot unify the discordant and rebellious phenomenal beings, according to Solovyev; "because the divine beginning cannot immediately realize its idea in the disunited elements of the material being"—the divine beginning of unity, of oneness, cannot act in the medium of disunity, of discord, he argues. But instead of resolving the conflict through the Crucifixion of Christ—in which these negative powers of the created existence had been once and for all conquered by the Word of God by absorbing in His *infinite**** suffering and bodily death the destructive power of the *Genus* of all negative forces—Solovyev makes recourse to the medium of Sophia as the "world-soul", a concept not altogether unlike that of the different demiurges of Alexandrian gnosticism.

The Greek word for Wisdom, Sophia is scripturally but another name of the Word of God in His pre-eternal existence "in the bosom of His Father", distinctly denoting the Word of God as being also the Spirit of God, the Spirit of absolute holiness*, "the Wisdom of God" in St. Paul's Epistle.** For Solovyev, it is on one hand the world-soul, the ideal humanity, the principle of unity in created nature; and on the other hand, "Sophia is the body of God, the matter of Divinity,"²¹ permeated with the beginning of divine unity."****

Christ is the most universal (and therefore the most individual) organism, the ultimate expression of God. And in every organism there are "necessarily two unities on one hand, the unity of the acting principle which subordinates the plurality of the elements to itself as one; and on the other, that plurality as reduced to unity, as the determined [formed, expressed] image of that principle . . . or unity as the principle (in itself) and unity in phenomenon."****

*Ibid. p. 145.

**Ibid. p. 146.

***Because offered and accepted by in infinite love of God.

*Proverbs, VIII, 22-30; *The Wisdom of Solomon*, VII, 22-27; Colossians, I, 17.

**I. Corinthians I, 24.

²¹Such words as 'body' and 'matter' are employed here only in the most general sense, of course, as relative categories, without any association with them of those particular notions which may be applicable only to our material world but are perfectly unthinkable in relation to Divinity."

***V. Solovyev, *Lectures Concerning Godmanhood*; Works, III, p. 115.

****Ibid. p. 114.

"In the divine organism of Christ the active unifying principle, the principle expressing the unity of the ultimately-extant One, is obviously the Word or Logos.

"The unity of the second kind, the resultant unity, in the Christian theosophy bears the name of Sophia. If in the absolute we distinguish, in general, the absolute as such, i.e. as the ultimately-extant One, from its content, essence, or idea, then the direct expression of the first we shall find in the Logos, and of the second—in Sophia, which is thus the idea expressed or realized. And, as the extant One is distinct from His idea and simultaneously One with it, so also Logos, being different from Sophia, is internally united with it. Sophia is God's body, the matter of Divinity, ²¹ permeated with the principle of divine unity. Christ, who accomplishes this unity in Himself, or is the bearer of it, as the integral divine organism—at once universal and individual—is both Logos and Sophia."*

"If in the divine being—in Christ—the first or the forming unity is Divinity proper, God as the active force, or Logos; and if in this first unity we have, thus, Christ as the divine being: then the second, the produced unity, which was given the mystical name of Sophia, is the principle of humanity, the ideal or normal man. And in this second unity, Christ as a participant of the human principle, is a man, or, in the expression of the Holy Scripture, the second Adam."**

The unfolding or self-expression of Divinity requires the objective stratum in which It could express Itself, says Solovyev, true to the old Aristotelian notion that form, or the forming principle, has to have matter to which it would give form and upon which it could act.

"Consequently, the eternal existence of God [taken here] as Logos or active God, obligates the assumption of the eternal existence of real elements which receive the divine action, i.e. obligates the assumption of the existence of a world subject to the divine action or as giving in itself place to the divine unity. But the world's own unity, i.e. the produced unity—which is the center of the world and at the same time the circumference of Divinity—is humanity."***

²¹ Solovyev's footnote "21" appears on the preceding page.

*V. Solovyev, *Lectures Concerning Godmanhood*; Works, III, p. 115.

**Ibid. p. 121.

***Ibid. p. 122.

"Representing the realization of the divine principle, being its image and likeness, the proto-form humanity, or the soul of the world, is simultaneously all and one; it occupies the mediate [mediating] position between the multiplicity of living beings, which comprise the real content of its life, and the unconditional oneness of Divinity, which represents the ideal beginning and the norm of that life. As the living focus or the soul of all creatures and at the same time the real form of Divinity—the extant subject of created being and the extant object of divine action—participant of God's unity and and at the same time embracing the whole multitude of living souls, the all-one humanity or the soul of the world, is a dual being: including in itself both the divine beginning and the created being, it is not defined exclusively by either one or the other; the divine beginning inherent in it frees it from created nature, and the latter makes it free in regard to Divinity. . . Inso far as it receives unto itself the divine Logos and is determined by Him, the soul of the world is humanity—the divine humanity of Christ—Christ's body or Sophia. Assimilating the divine beginning, one in itself, and binding with that oneness the whole multiplicity of beings, the world-soul thereby gives the divine beginning full actual realization in all; through her mediation God is revealed as the living active force in all creation, or as the Holy Spirit. In other words: being determined or formed by the divine Logos, the world-soul makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to be actualized in all; for that which in the light of Logos unfolds in ideal images, by the Holy Spirit is brought into being in real action."*

"Thus the incarnation of the divine idea in the world, which constitutes the goal of the whole world movement [development], is effected through the uniting of the divine beginning with the soul of the world; the first represents the active, determining, forming, or fertilizing element, and the world-soul appears as the passive force, which receives the ideal beginning and provides matter for the development of the received, the shell for its full self-revelation."*

This is Godmanhood.

*Ibid. pp. 140, 141.

*Ibid. p. 146.

The nativity of the Christ-child in Bethlehem, the first manifestation of the Incarnate Word, had been preceded by countless preparatory stages in the progressive subjugation of the "chaos of disjunct elements" to the unifying power of the "absolute idea", or Logos, acting through the nascent Sophia; and has continued after the Assension of Christ, mainly (but not exclusively) through the Church He founded and empowered with the Spirit of God at the Pentecost for action, in the continued incarnation of the divine idea, "or the deification (theosis) of all that exists by bringing it in"—as a subdued captive of the unifying power of the divine Love or Idea—"into the form of the absolute organism" of Logos-Sophia, or Christ, as the ever-widening manifestation of the Subject of being in its 'other one' i.e. in the phenomenal world of nature. For Sophia is not only the ideal humanity but also the "world-soul", the unity of all created world.

After many stages of cosmological process, in which the divine principle "uniting closer and closer with the world-soul, overcomes the chaotic matter more and more and finally brings it into the perfect form of the human organism", when nature has thus produced "an external shell for the divine idea", a new process commenced—that of "the internal all-unity, in the form of consciousness and free activity", in man:

"In man the world-soul for the first time unites with the divine Logos internally, in consciousness, as the pure form of all-unity. Only one out of the multitude of phenomenal beings in nature, man has in his consciousness the capacity of conceiving all, or the internal bond and meaning (logos) of all that exists; and thus appears, in idea, as the all, i.e. is, in this sense, the second all-unity, the image and the likeness of God."* In man nature outgrows itself as it were, reaching out into the eternal realm of the ideal; and man becomes the *mediator* between the natural world and Divinity. But,

"Man not only possesses the same internal essence of life—the all-unity—which is possessed by God; he is also free, like God, to desire the possession of it, i.e. may of himself desire to be like God. Initially he has that essence from God. . . But, by virtue of being unlimited, he (or the world-soul in him) is not satisfied with that passive unity. He desires to possess the divine essence of himself, wants to take possession of it by himself to assimilate it. And in order to have it not only from God but also by himself, he asserts himself as sep-

*Ibid. pp. 149, 150.

arate from God, outside of God, falls off or secedes from God in his consciousness"**—

and thus starts the long, painful, step by step return to God of the mind of man who had fallen into the abject enslavedness to the "beggarly elements" of the phenomenal world of nature. Solovyev traces out a definite logical evolution in the development of religious thought, from the most primitive through Buddhism and the Graeco-Roman conceptions, to the Old Testament. But, he observes, throughout that whole period "the wicked and suffering will" of man had remained at the basis of all human life: firmly rooted in its evil ways since the estrangement of man from God in his assertion of himself apart from God, that human will had been acted upon in those religious conceptions only externally by the divine beginning, through limitations or repression at first, and then through ideal enlightenment. Only since the incarnation of God in man has the divine beginning found its way into the human soul, has become a living personal force *within* man: and only then was he *regenerated*, born again spiritually, i.e. was again united with God in his will—now voluntarily, by a free choice.

"The incarnation of the divine Logos in the person of Jesus Christ is the appearance of a new, spiritual man, the second Adam. As the first, the natural, Adam connotes not only a single person among other persons, but the all-one personality which includes the whole natural mankind; so also the second Adam is not only that individual being but at the same time the universal [being] which embraces the whole regenerate, spiritual humanity. In the sphere of the eternal divine existence, Christ is the eternal spiritual center of the catholic organism. But as this organism, or the catholic humanity, falling into the stream of phenomena becomes subjected to the law of external existence and must through labour and suffering restore, in time, what it had abandoned in eternity, i.e. its internal unity with God and nature—so also Christ, as the active beginning of that unity, must come down for its restoration into the same stream of phenomena, must subject Himself to the same law of external existence, and from [being] the center of eternity, become the center of history, coming down at a definite moment—in the fullness of time. The evil spirit of discord and enmity, eternally powerless against God, at the beginning of times had overpowered man; in the middle of

**Ibid. pp. 150, 151.

time it had to be overcome by the Son of God and the Son of man, as the first-born of all creation, in order that at the conclusion of times it could be expelled from all creation—this is the basic meaning of the incarnation.”*

With his vivid sense of the reality of evil, Solovyev regarded the cause of Christ not merely as a juridical satisfaction rendered to God the Father for the breach of His law by man—the theory of Anselm of Canterbury, so widely accepted in the West—but the real, dramatic and heroic struggle with evil, the victory over it, the liberation of humanity from its power and tyranny.

Man is a union of the divine beginning with his natural being, which implies, according to Solovyev, the third element—the human element properly so called—as the medium uniting the first two. This “properly human element is reason (ratio), i.e. the ratio [inter-relationship] of the other two”** elements. Only in their perfect union in the (one) person of Christ could the “natural” nature of man and his “natural” will—which is the source of evil—be subjected to the divine nature and will of Christ, by the voluntary submission of the former to the latter; and only through Christ, in Christ, could humanity, subsequently, be brought into a similar reconciliation-sonship—with God: by a voluntary, may it be said again, acceptance and reception of Christ.

The original (“immediate”) unity of the two beginnings, given in the first Adam and lost in the fall of man, could not be simply restored: it had to be *attained*, and attained only through a free and twofold heroic self-denial—that of God, temporarily laying aside His glory and infinite power in the assumption of human limitations, in the incarnation of God the Son; and that of man, abnegating his natural will in favor of the will of God the Father, in the twofold but indivisible person of Christ.

“We have seen before how the interaction of the divine and the natural beginnings determined the whole life of the world and mankind, and [how] the whole course of this life consists of the gradual rapprochement and mutual interpenetration of these two beginnings . . . permeating each other deeper and deeper, until in Christ nature appears as the soul of man, ready for a complete self-denial, and God [appears] as the spirit of love and mercy, communicating to that soul the full-

*Ibid. p. 163.

**Ibid. p. 166.

intimate union-

ness of the divine life: not repressing it by force, nor enlightening it with understanding, but quickening it in His loving kindness." **

The "self limitation of Divinity in Christ liberates His humanity, permitting his natural will to abnegate itself voluntarily in favour of the divine beginning [in favour of the divine will] [regarded] not as external force (in that case the self-denial would not be voluntary) but [recognized] as [its] internal good, and thereby to really acquire that good. Christ, as God, freely abnegates His divine glory, and thereby as man begets the possibility of *attaining* that divine glory."**

The attainment involves the overcoming of "the temptations of evil," of which there are three categories, corresponding to the three elements comprising man: the material or natural; that of reason, or the human element properly so called; and the moral or spiritual (the divine) element. The three "typical" temptations of Christ, as well as His suffering and death in the flesh, are important not so much in themselves, as because through His victory over them, Christ has attained the victory over them for all men. Ahungered, he rejected the temptation "to make the material good the aim, and His divine power the means for attaining it." "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," said the tempter; not by bread alone, but "by every word of God shall man live," answered Christ. Freed from subjection to the material instinct, He faced the temptation "to make His divine power the means for the self-assertion [on the part] of His human personality, to succumb to the sin of the mind—[that of] pride." In answering the devil, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," the Son of man received the power over the minds of all men who would be the children of God.

"The enslavedness to the flesh and to the pride of reason have been removed: the human will finds itself on a high moral grade, realizes it is above all other creatures. In the name of this high moral status, man may desire authority over the world in order to lead the world to perfection: but the world lies in sin and will not voluntarily submit to moral superiority—it would seem necessary therefore to force it into submission, to exert His divine power, [even] as oppression, for the subjugation of the world. But the use of such oppression,

*of
Satan
inquirer*

*Ibid. p. 167.

**Ibid. pp. 168, 169.

(*) i.e. of evil, for the attainment of a good would be [tantamount to] a recognition that the good in itself has no power, that evil is stronger—it would mean *falling down before that beginning of evil which dominates the world . . . having overcome the temptation of the lust for power under the guise of purposing a good*, the human will of Christ voluntarily submitted to the true good, and rejected any agreement with the evil reigning in the world.”*

Having conquered the sin of the spirit, “the Son of man received the supreme power in the realm of the spirit,” and over the spirits of men; “having rejected subjection to the mundane power for the sake of dominance over the earth, He gained the service of the powers of heaven: ‘and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him’.”

Thus Christ had brought His human will into agreement with the divine will, “deifying His humanity after the inhumanization of His Divinity”—the Russian use of the term inhumanization, in addition to that of incarnation, seems to have been very much more fruitful in maintaining the true perspective of the meaning of Christianity—but the cause of His incarnation was not fulfilled until it was consummated on the cross. Conquered by the inner self-denial of His human will, the evil beginning had to be despoiled of its power over the flesh, i.e. over created nature: “this latter, purified by the death on the cross, lost its material ‘separatedness’ and its weight, became a direct expression and instrument of the spirit of God, the true *spiritual body*. With such body Christ had risen and appeared to His Church.”*

(*) This same task of attaining anew the due relationship between Divinity and nature, as the latter is represented in man, since the Resurrection of Christ has become the task of all humanity, and constitutes the meaning and purpose of history.

Hence follows the development of Solovyev’s *practical* philosophy; all his subsequent writings and activities were given to the elaboration of the pragmatic consequences of this general epistemological-ontological-theological theme, and to working out the practical means for the realization of “Godmanhood,” i.e. the deification of all mankind.

But if he was quite certain in his vision of that general pattern of the universe and its meaning—the Subject of being manifesting Himself in His “other one” (first, His own substance, then the created universe, then man) and reclaiming that “other one” for Himself

*Ibid. p. 170.

*Ibid. p. 171.

through gradual deification of it by Logos, concomitantly with the reduction of self-assertion of the created sessionist entities to compliance with the unifying power of God's love, which, however, was not *really* effective until the divine principle of unity *entered inside* the created nature in the person of God-man, and the evil of nature's selfedness was overcome by Him in the subjugation of the human will to that of God—Solovyev wavered in his attempts at charting the continuation of Christ's task very greatly.

Godmanhood, the universalization of Sophia as the task bequeathed to mankind by Logos on return to His Father in Heaven, was certain; but how was it to be realized in the given historical circumstances?

At first, when he was inspired primarily with the belief in the inner and voluntary acceptance of the principle of "all-unity" by the soul of man as its freely preferred good, Solovyev enthusiastically believed, with the Slavophiles, that the Orthodox Church was the only one which had retained that true, inner, live, spiritual meaning of Christianity—the Roman Church appeared to him to be fundamentally false in its deadly formalism and external subjugation to the hierarchical and papal authority set forth in the stead of life in Christ's spirit and love. But then he came nearer to Catholicism, perceived truth in some of its claims and assertions—while, conversely, the Orthodox zeal in guarding "the fullness of truth" of the early Christian tradition in the seclusion of national and denominational aloofness, appeared to him as a very gross evil of exclusiveness, particularism, self-centeredness, as the same individualist separationism which to him was the essence of all evil in the whole created nature.

① towards unity.

Was not *unity* the good, the truth, and the beauty of God—were they not but three aspects of His love, *the* innermost nature of His very being, and the inner power of unity? Was not the attainment of "all-unity" the purpose of all creation? *The purpose of history* is to achieve it among mankind, manifestly and chiefly in the Church: how may any part of the Church persist in self-assertion (Solovyev's earlier charge against Rome) or in maintaining aloofness (his subsequent accusation of the Orthodox Church)?

"Since all humanity represents the same three basic elements as a single man, namely, his spirit, mind, and sensual soul; the temptation of evil is also threefold for all mankind—but in a sequence different from [that experienced by] Christ. Mankind has already received the revelation of the divine truth in Christ, it already possesses this truth as actual *fact*—the first temptation therefore is to use this truth for wrongful pur-

poses, yet in the name of this same truth, i.e. to do evil in the name of the good—the sin of the spirit. . .”*

Christianity could be received either internally, through an inner or spiritual rebirth; or externally, as a mere recognition of the truths of redemption in Christ, and an outward compliance with the letter of the commandments.

The “historical appearance of Christianity had divided mankind into two parts; the Christian Church, which possesses the divine truth and represents the will of God on earth—and the remaining outside world which does not know the true God, and ‘lieth in sin.’ And it may appear to the ‘outward’ Christians, those who believe in the truth of Christ but were not regenerated by it, that they should, nay, ought to, subjugate to Christ and His Church that outside and hostile world: and, as the world which lieth in sin will not voluntarily submit to the sons of God, that it should be subjugated by force. To this temptation of the ecclesiastical lust of power fell a part of the Church led by the Roman hierarchy, carrying with it the majority of the Western mankind in the first great period of its historical life—in the middle ages.”*

To assume that the truth of Christ, “i.e. the truth of eternal love and unconditional lovingkindness,” requires for its realization the means of force and deceit, is to profess that truth as impotent, to manifest the lack of faith in the good, in God.

“And this unbelief, at first hidden in Catholicism as an imperceptible germ, later on was displayed openly. Thus in Jesuitism—the clearest and utmost expression of the Roman-Catholic principle—the love of power became the direct moving force, not the Christian zeal: the peoples were being subjected not to Christ, but to the ecclesiastical authority. . . Here Christian faith becomes a chance form, and the essence and purpose is posited in the dominance of the hierarchy. . .**
“The falsity of the Catholic path was early recognized in the West, and finally that realization found expression in Protestantism. Protestantism arises against the Catholic way of salvation as [against] a merely external fact, and requests personal religious relationship of man to God. . .”***

*Ibid. p. 173.

*Ibid. p. 174.

**Ibid.

***Ibid. p. 175.

Personal faith, however, lacks the necessary assurance of its correctness, of its verity; the Holy Scripture, accepted by Protestantism as the criterion, requires correct understanding; thus *personal reasoning* "becomes the source of the religious truth," says Solovyev—"Protestantism naturally evolves into Rationalism." The "self-assurance and self-assertion of human reason" in pure Rationalism is the second temptation to which the Western humanity had fallen—the pride of reason, the sin of the mind. Reason, furthermore, is a "ratio" of the divine-being to the phenomenal becoming (and vice versa) in man, of the ontological truth in him to his sociological experience (and conversely, again); extolled as the source of truth in itself, this "ratio" could but manifest the insolvency of the claim—and, since it was proclaimed *the sociological arbiter* (by the French Revolution) the inevitable result was the exaltation of the phenomenal, i.e. of the natural, elements in the lives of men. This exaltation of the material interests represented the temptation, the sin of the flesh (and this is the meaning of socialism). Thus the Western peoples had succumbed to the three temptations of Christ, which they encountered in the course of European history in the reverse order of succession.

"The East had not succumbed to the three temptations of the evil beginning—it retained the truth of Christ; but, guarding it in the soul of its peoples, the Eastern Church has not realized it in external reality, has not given it actual expression, has not created any Christian culture, as the West has created the culture of the Antichrist."*

And the East could not have created the Christian culture, says Solovyev; for the Christian culture implies the establishment in all humanity and in all its actions of the same interrelationship of the three elements of man which was established in Christ, i.e. of the voluntary integration of the two lower elements (matter and reason) in the divine beginning in man; but "in the Orthodox Church, an enormous majority of its members was captivated into obedience to the truth through immediate attraction," not through the conscious, mental realization of the Christian principles in the external actuality of cultural relations and institutions.

"If the true society of Godmanhood, organized after the image and in the likeness of God-man Himself, ought to represent a free concord of the divine and human beginnings, then it is obviously determined by the co-operative force of the latter

*Ibid. p. 178.

as well as by the active power of the former. It is required, consequently, that society would, first, preserve in all purity and power the divine beginning (Christ's truth) and, second, develop to the fullest extent the beginning of human initiative and activity."*

And this is precisely what has been accomplished in history by the Eastern and Western halves of humanity:

"The East clave with the entire force of its spirit to the divine, and preserved it, developing in itself the conservative and ascetic attitude necessary for that; while the West spent all its energy for the development of the human beginning, which of necessity was to the detriment [of the preservation] of the divine truth, at first disfigured and then altogether rejected. Thus it is obvious that these two directions do not in the least exclude one another but [on the contrary] are perfectly necessary each for the other and for [the attainment of] the fullness of the stature of Christ in the whole mankind."**

Thus Solovyev had not only reconciled but integrated—for himself—his original problem of the polarity of the East and West, as well as his own religious aspirations and sociological interests, the Orthodox ideals of Slavophilism and the stark reality of the European industrial civilization, including even its rationalism and materialistic socialism; yes, even its individualisms now seen as having had its part in the full development of the "human beginning," necessary for the complete realization of Godmanhood in society.

"As in the pre-Christian historical course, the base or matter was the human nature or element: the active or forming principle was the divine mind, the logos of God; and the result [was] (the nativity) [of] Godman, i.e. God who assumed human nature: so in the course of Christianity, the base or matter has been the divine nature or element (the Word which became flesh, and Christ's body, Sophia); the active or forming beginning is human reason; and the result is man-god, i.e. man who assumes Divinity. And, as man can assume Divinity only in his absolute totality, i.e. in the integrity with all: man-god is necessarily collective and universal, i.e. the all-humanity or the Universal Church."**

*Ibid. p. 179.

**Ibid.

*Ibid. p. 180.

The Eastern Church had given the thesis, the Western civilization has evolved the antithesis: the synthesis requires the fertilization of the West with the true spirit of Christ, with the life and love of His Spirit, and the differentiation and development of the human elements in the society and culture of the East, still bound with the swaddling clothes of the thesis-stage. But how is their synthesis to be effected—how will the two be brought together?

Neither the civilization nor the Church of the West had any interest in the proffers of brotherly love which came in the nineteenth century from the Russian Pan-Slavist enthusiasts. Salvation may indeed be from the East, but . . . industrialism was not interested, and the Vatican had its doubts. As a matter of fact, the official Russian Orthodox Church was even more indifferent to any ideas of Church re-union.

Yet the realization of Godmanhood implied the universal development of man-godhood. "Man can assume Divinity only in his absolute totality," Solovyev insisted, "the man-god is necessarily collective and universal, i.e. [man-godhood is] the all-humanity or the Universal Church."

Readings in Dante and in the old Uniat controversy, during the major crisis in his life (1882), gave Solovyev new ideas about the Church and the State. A new light shone in and about him—he found in his readings the solution for the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between Rome and Moscow. The realization of Godmanhood on earth is to be accomplished by the Church which is to bring all mankind into voluntary obedience to the divine beginning through the universal establishment of *Theocracy*. In this Theocracy, the ecclesiastical government is to be carried on by the Roman Church, for to it has been historically delegated the priestly* function in the realization of Godmanhood in this world: while the Orthodox Tsar is to effect the Kingship of the Son of God, the function represented historically by Byzantium, by the Slavic nations of the Balkans, and by Russia, as the Christian secular power collaborating with the Church in that establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Orthodox Church is to acknowledge the Bishop of Rome as the High Priest of the whole Christendom, accepting his jurisdictional authority in addition to the primacy of honor, which was granted him by the first Oecumenical Council; and Rome is to accept the retention of all Orthodox rites and

*Solovyev, quite erroneously, regarded it as a prerogative of God the Father: the Church and the Scripture speak of Christ as the High Priest, *He* is "the Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

traditions by the Eastern Church. This healing of the rift in the Body of Christ, caused by the schism of 1054, would bring about in the Church the revivification of the real Spirit of Christ, of the original spiritual fervor and true Christian love—and that would be certain to bring the Protestant groups into the fold of their Mother-Church of Apostolic succession. Thus reunited, the One, truly Universal Church could then earnestly go about its "Father's business" of bringing the whole world into obedience to His Son.

For the second great commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," extends beyond the individuals unto the nations, Solovyev asserted; for *one* Cup was given by the Lord of all to His apostles, and by them—from them, on—to all peoples.

Solovyev spent many years (1883-1899) in arduous activities propagating his ideas of the Universal Theocracy before he conceded the futility of his efforts. Then he came to the problems of individual salvation; and it was in the working out of these problems (in the *Justification of the Good* and other works of that period) that he perceived at last the simple Scriptural truth that salvation will not be accepted by the whole world: that "when the Son of man cometh," He will not be greeted by glad mankind, to the last man converted to His glorious truth—He will hardly find any faith upon earth . . . "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes," "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."* Solovyev understood that the Transfiguration of Christ was not a symbol for the world—that, rather, Golgotha was the forecast for the Church; that the earth and all mankind had to go through their crucifixion before the phenomenal universe could become fully deified Sophia: even Christ's *most holy* Body had to undergo the death of the cross. Hence Solovyev's *Narration About Antichrist* in the *Three Conversations*; hence a renewed emphasis on individual salvation: and hence the reconciliation with his Russian friends, and with the Russian Church, **so aloof from** the problems or politics of the world. Only a minority, even among Christians, will be found faithful when the Son of man cometh for Judgment—and that is near, Solovyev believed, "even at the door."

* * * *

Few men encompassed the range of human problems as fully as Solovyev; and fewer yet attempted an integration of that vast domain

*St. Matthew, XXIV, 7-12.

of existence and thought, from the primitive notions of nature worship through all the complexities of the metaphysics of Idealism.

"Permeated with the consciousness of the universal presence of the truth, Solovyev sought and found it everywhere: he saw it in the most diversified prismatic angles, in every, or more exactly, above every human teaching. It is not surprising [therefore] that in his conception of the universe became integrated the most diverse trends of religious and philosophic thought."*

Solovyev had an almost organic quest for, love of, belief in, the inherent unity of all being and thought. It was a deep conviction of his whole person that all things in the life of men and the universe have come from God—who is the very oneness of unity—and will freely re-unite with Him, and in Him, after they will have come to know themselves and will have fully revealed themselves in their independence of Him. Because then they will also come to know *Him*, and perceive Him to be so great a good—the good itself and the source of all that is good, true, or beautiful—that they will freely choose Him and the return to Him, will choose their re-union with Him as *their own* greatest particular good: whether they be saints, heathens, molecules, or political nations.

The whole creation had room in Solovyev's heart, was genuinely, organically, dear to him. Not only did he throw himself into that one-man crusade for bringing together the Orthodox and the Catholics; he defended the Protestants as certainly a part of the one Church of Christ, however much they may have deprived themselves of the fullness of grace and truth because of their separation from the main body of the historic Church; and he prayed fervently all his life for the Jews, that they too would come into the fold of Christ's sheep, according to the word of St. Paul that in the latter days they will be released from their "unbelief," i.e. their inability to perceive the Messiah in Jesus. Solovyev regarded all men, of whatever faith or station in life, as in some way, in some measure, carrying out God's will and purpose. He awaited the redemption of all the creatures of this world, groaning "until now" because of man's sin,* which Solovyev felt as his personal guilt before them. Is not the whole of nature also a part of Sophia, in the large sense of the term?

*Prince Eugene Trubetskoy, *The World-View of V. S. Solovyev*; I, p. 35.

*Repentance, in the true Christian sense, ought to be not only individual but also collective, by each nation as a whole, according to Solovyev.

This concept of Sophia is perhaps the most changeable in the whole construction of Solovyev's philosophy. It takes on different connotations in different contexts, although its basic meaning remains the same—that of the passive medium through which alone Logos can reduce humanity to divine obedience and deify it, and through it, in it, all created nature. In the pre-creation plan, Sophia appears to Solovyev as the divine substance or matter—a perfectly spiritual one, to be sure—the “Wisdom of God,” the *ideal* essence, *with* which or out of which God created** the universe *by* His Word, Logos. In Christ, it is the human part of His two-fold nature; but human, again, in the ideal sense, i.e. in the sense of the idea of humanity, or humanity as it was planned in the mind of God, and as it will be after its redemption and resurrection. In created mankind, Sophia is the collective soul of humanity, and in this sense “the soul of the world.” As the medium through and *in* which Logos assumed humanity, as that ideal humanity which enshrined Him, Sophia is likened to and linked with the Holy Virgin, Mother of Christ, in a mistaken interpretation of the scriptural passage, “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.”* Yet there is no complete identification of Sophia with the Virgin Mary: Solovyev made much of a Russian ikon (known as the ikon of Sophia) which portrays the Blessed Virgin by the side of another woman's figure that of Sophia.** The passivity of her auxiliary function (as the co-operative stratum necessary for the action of Logos in humanity) suggests the notion of the feminine character of Sophia; and, of course, the linguistic use of the feminine gender in regard to the term has had undoubted influence on the formation of the concept. It was “the eternal feminine” for him; and also the Church, the Bride of Christ. At the same time Sophia is also “the idea,” an abstract beginning.

Perhaps the most complete single formulation of the term will be found in the following passage:

“The central and perfect personal manifestation of Sophia is Jesus Christ; her feminine complement is the most Holy Virgin, and her universal propagation is the Church. In her feminine personality she is called Mary, in her masculine per-

**This conception of Wisdom was refuted as un-Christian as far back as the second century, by Tertullian.

*Proverbs, IX, 1.

**With John the Baptist on the other side of Sophia, Christ is shown behind her, having His arms stretched upward, toward the book of the four Gospels, which signifies Him as the Word of God.

sonality—Jesus; while by her proper name of Sapiientia or Sophia is denoted her whole and universal manifestation in the perfect Church of the future—the Bride of the Word of God.”***

Treated by most of the mystics, this subject has found a renewed interest in certain contemporary Orthodox writers, such as N. Berdyaev and S. Bulgakov—no doubt, under the influence of Vladimir Solovyev. It will not be amiss to mention that two of the Russian Orthodox Synods, one of the Russian Church abroad and the other inside Russia, officially condemned the teachings of Sophia as heretical. According to St. Paul, it was noted above,* Wisdom is simply and definitely another name of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Word of God.

Students of religion will find Solovyev's schematic synthesis of the development of religious thought in history** one of the most illuminating works on the subject. Students of philosophy will not fail to appreciate his keen critical analysis of the Western schools (in *The Crisis of Western Philosophy, Criticism of Abstract Principles*, and separate articles) as well as his positive constructions (in *The Philosophical Foundations of Integral Knowledge, The Justification of the Good*). The *Narration Concerning Antichrist* affords a striking reading of contemporary interest generally.

The most noteworthy, however, the most technically important contribution to philosophy, will be found in Solovyev's concept of the absolute as the *Subject* of being. Since it was developed in another work, the *Criticism of Abstract Principles*, it could have been but touched upon on these pages, which are concerned with his treatise on Godmanhood. Yet without question it was the fundamental grasp of that crucial problem of ontology and epistemology which made possible the entire run of subsequent integration in Solovyev's work, an inspired perception which gave the impetus to the whole unifying momentum of all his philosophy. In his brilliant analysis of rationalism and empiricism, he revealed that the confusion of the logical and grammatical concepts in the formation of the different ideas of the absolute has been the source of major philosophical errors: boldly dissecting the predicate from the subject, he asserted that being is a mere predicate, an

*In Ch. III, p. 21.

**The third, fourth, and fifth lectures. (See also *The Mythological Process in Ancient Paganism, Judaism and the Christian Problem*, and other essays and articles on the subject of religion in "Collected Works.")

attribute of the absolute, and that the absolute itself is the "*Subject* of being," indefinitely beyond the "being" as such, completely ineffable in the Kantian as well as in the mystical sense. The conceptions of the Idea, of Substance, of Spirit, are merely hypostatizations of the predicates of the subject of being. "The absolute, which is not subject to any definition (for the general conception of it is only for us), defines itself, manifesting itself as the unconditionally extant one through the positing forth of its antipode"*—first, within itself, realizing itself as the triune God, and then in the universe and mankind He has created: it is the Jah of Jahve, the absolute Subject—"I am that I am"—of whom Hegel's *Idee* is the Word, Logos, expressing the being of God the Father, and whose *being*, or Spinoza's substance, is Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, "the Lord and Giver of Life." In His being—which is His "other one," His antipode—God possesses all, and is in all; in Himself, He is totally unknowable, incomprehensible: the absolute "cannot reveal itself as it is in itself, as an external object" (external to the human mind). Only in

"Divesting ourselves of all definite forms of being, of all sensations and thoughts, we can find the unconditionally extant as such in the depth of our spirit, i.e. find it not as manifest in being, but as freed, absolved of all being."**

The very word Absolute, says Solovyev, signifies just these two meanings—first, that it is freed, absolved of all, and then as including all, "the completed," "fulfilled," "whole"—i.e. the absolute as the subject of being, and then also as the "being" which is Its opposite, Its substance, which the Subject of being posits forth and which gives being to all that exists and includes all particular being:

"The second pole is substance, or 'prima materia' of the absolute, while the first pole is the absolute as such; it is not any new substance, different from the absolute, but is [the absolute] itself which has asserted itself as such through the assertion of its opposite."*

Logos, the Word of God, is the expression ("word") and at the same time the *ratio* (the Greek 'logos' = the Latin 'ratio'), the relationship between the Subject of being and His being: the *unity* between the two—the very unity of the absolute within itself—and hence the principle and the power of unity as such, and in all being.

*V. Solovyev, *Criticism of Abstract Principles*; Work, II, p. 311.

**Ibid. p. 307.

*Ibid. p. 311.

Since all being, issuing forth from God, is organized by the Word; and He, the Word, is the unity, the inner order of God in Himself: is it much wonder that in describing His unifying ordering of phenomenal creation—and of mankind in the historically nascent Godmanhood as the fullest manifestation of Himself in that creation—Solovyev found unity and order, meaning and purpose in the vast panorama of the cosmic and historic unfoldment of the revelation of the Word, the expressed image of His Father?

"By Him" are all things;

*"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."***

And in the meantime,

"To justify the Faith of the fathers, to elevate it to the highest level of rational consciousness, and to show how this ancient Faith, freed from the chains of inner seclusiveness and national self-love, coincides with the eternal and immutable truth,"*

to integrate the philosophical verity of the mind with the religious truth of the faith—this was, in Solovyev's own words, the aim of his life.

That integration was not complete until he had fully perceived the truth of Christ Crucified. His Christianity was still the pantheistic Christianity of the natural world, 'of the world' and *for* the world, when he sought to bring all mankind under the scepter of Christ the King: only after his acquaintance with Western Christianity did he come to realize that Christ's scepter has won—and can be won—only by the agony and the death of the Cross; and that this applies to the world as well.

**Ephesians, I, 10. Italics are mine, P.Z.

*V. Solovyev,; Works, , p. .

VLADIMIR SOLOVYEV'S
LECTURES CONCERNING GODMANHOOD
(1877 - 1884)

LECTURE ONE

I AM going to discuss the truths of positive religion—subjects which are far away from contemporary consciousness, foreign to the interests of contemporary civilization. The interests of contemporary civilization, however, were not here yesterday and will not be present tomorrow. Is it not permissible to prefer matters which are equally important at all times?

I will not dispute those who at the present time maintain a negative attitude toward the religious principle. I shall not argue with the contemporary opponents of religion—because they are right. I say that those who at the present time refuse religion are right, because religion appears in reality not what it ought to be.

Religion, speaking generally and abstractly, is the connection of man and the world with the unconditional beginning, which is the focus of all that exists. It is evident that if we admit the reality of this unconditional beginning, it must define all the interests and the whole content of human life; consciousness must depend upon it; and to it must be related all that is essential in what man does, learns, and creates. If we admit the existence of such an unconditional center, then all points on the circle of life must be linked to that center with equal radii. It is only then that unity, wholeness, and accord appear in the life and consciousness of man. It is only then that all his deeds and sufferings in life, great or small, are transmuted into intelligent, inwardly necessary events from a state of aimless and senseless *phenomena*. It is quite certain that such all-embracing, central importance must belong to the religious principle, once it is admitted at all; and it is equally indubitable that in reality, for the contemporary civilized humanity, even for that part of it which recognizes the religious principle, religion does not possess this all-embracing and central importance. Instead of being all in all, it hides in a very small and remote corner of our inner world, and appears as one of a multitude of the different interests which divide our attention.

Contemporary religion represents a very pitiful thing: properly speaking, religion as the dominating principle, as the center of spiritual attraction, does not exist today; instead, there is the so-called religiosity as a personal mood, a personal taste: some people have this taste, others do not, just as some people like music and others do not.

In the absence of the unconditional centering [of all interests in religion] we have as many relative, temporary centers of life and consciousness as we have different requirements and interests, tastes and inclinations, opinions and points of view.

It would be superfluous to dwell upon the mental and moral discord and the lack of principle, at present prevalent in the realm of society as well as in the minds and hearts of the individuals, for that fact is too well known to anyone at all introspective or observant.

That lack of principle, that discord is an undoubted and obvious fact; but it is also an undoubted and obvious fact that humanity is not content with that, that it is at least seeking some uniting and integrating principle. We see, in fact, that contemporary Western civilization, having repudiated the religious principle as something that in its given form proved to be subjective and impotent, even that civilization is trying to find certain binding principles for the [human] life and consciousness outside of the religious sphere, is endeavoring to substitute something for the gods which it has cast away. Although according to the prevalent conviction all the ends and beginnings of human existence are reduced to the present reality, to the given natural existence, and our life is locked "in a narrow ring of sublunal impressions"; yet even in that narrow ring contemporary civilization is laboring to find a unifying and organizing principle for mankind.

All modern civilization is characterized by this striving to organize humanity outside of the unconditional religious sphere, to establish itself and make itself comfortable in the realm of the temporal, finite interests.

Most logically, with the greatest consciousness and fullness, that trend is manifested in two contemporary constructions: one of these—*socialism*—can be referred preeminently to practical interests of social life; while the other—*positivism*—has to do with the theoretical realm of scientific *knowledge*.

Neither socialism nor positivism stands in any direct relation to religion, either negatively or positively: they would simply occupy the empty space that religion has left in the life and knowledge of modern civilized humanity. It is from that point of view that they should be evaluated.

I am not going to refute socialism. It is usually refuted by those who fear its truth. But we stand upon principles for which socialism holds no menace. Thus, we can talk freely about the *truth of socialism*.

First of all, we can say that it is justified historically, as a necessary consequence, as the final word of the Western historical development which preceded it.

The French Revolution, with which the essential character of Western philosophy became well defined as extra-religious philosophy, as an attempt to build an edifice of a universal culture, to organize mankind upon a purely secular, external principles—the French Revolution, I say, proclaimed as a basis of social order the rights of *man* instead of the former divine right [established as such a basis formerly]. The *rights* of man can be reduced to two main rights, those of *liberty* and *equality*, which are to be reconciled in brotherhood.* The great Revolution proclaimed freedom, equality, and brotherhood. It proclaimed them, but did not realize them: the three words remained empty words. Socialism is an attempt to realize these three principles actually. The Revolution established civil liberty. But with the existing social inequality, the emancipation from one dominating class is a subjugation to another. The power of monarchy and feudal lords was merely replaced with the power of capital and of the bourgeoisie. Freedom alone does not give anything to the popular majority if there is no equality. The Revolution proclaimed the latter also. But in our world based on struggle, on unlimited competition of the individual, *equality of rights* means nothing without the *equality of powers*. The principle of equality, of equal rights, proved to be real only for those who at the given historical moment possessed power.

Historically, however, [state] power changes hands, and the bourgeoisie, as the property-owning class, took advantage of the principle of equality for its own benefit, because at the given historical moment it had the power. In a like manner, the “have-not” class, the proletariat, naturally strives to take advantage of the same principle of equality for its own benefit as soon as the power will pass into its hands.

Social order must rest upon some positive basis. That basis either has the unconditional, supernatural and superhuman, character, or it belongs to the conditional sphere of the given human nature; the social

*If the supreme value of man as such, his status of being a law unto himself, is recognized, then the acknowledgment of his *freedom* follows naturally: for nothing can have power over him who is himself the source of all power; and, as the status of man belongs to all people, [their] equality follows from the same [premise].

Justice, in the moral sense, is a certain voluntary limitation of one's claims in favor of the rights of others; justice thus appears as a certain sacrifice, self-denial; and the more there is of this self-sacrifice, of self-denial, the better it is in the moral sense. Therefore, from the moral viewpoint it is impossible to attach any moral value to the demand on the part of the working class for an even distribution of the material welfare; for justice here—if there is any justice here—becomes coincident for that class with its own advantages; their demand, consequently, is seeking their own good, and therefore can not have moral value.

Sometimes socialism manifests a pretention of realizing the Christian morals. In this connection someone made the well-known jest that there is but one slight difference between Christianity and socialism, which is that Christianity urges one to give away what is one's own, while socialism urges one to take what belongs to others.

Even if we admit that the demand for economic equality on the part of the non-possessing class is the only demand for getting its own, that which justly belongs to it, even then that demand can not have any moral value in the positive sense; for to take one's own is only a *right*, and in no way a merit. In its demands, even if they be admitted to be just, the working class rests evidently upon the legal, not upon the moral point of view.

But if socialism can not have any moral significance as the self-seeking aim of the non-possessing class, it is not thereby precluded from manifesting the moral character as a demand for social truth, irrespective of who presents that demand. Indeed, socialism is right in rebelling against the existing social untruth. But where is the root of that untruth? Evidently in the fact that the social order rests upon the egoism of individuals, whence come their competition, their struggle, enmity, and all social evils.

But if the root of social untruth consists of egoism, then social truth must be based upon the opposite [of egoism], that is to say, upon the principle of self-denial or love [for others].

In order to realize that truth, every single member of society must set a limit to his exclusive self-assertion, must adopt the point of view of self-denial, must renounce his exclusive will, must sacrifice it. But in whose favor? For whom, from the moral standpoint, ought one to sacrifice one's will? Is it in favor of other particular persons, each of whom rests upon egoism, upon self-assertion? Is it to be in favor of all of them together?

It is impossible to sacrifice one's own will, one's own self-assertion, in favor of all men; for all, as an aggregate of separate persons, do not represent and can not constitute the true aim of human activity: for totality is not a datum of experience, it is only a specific group of persons which is concrete. Self-sacrifice [in favor of particular persons] would be also unjust, because it would be unfair, while denying one's own egoism, to confirm it in others, to support someone else's egoism.

Thus, the realization of the truth or of the moral principle is possible only in relation to that which by its very nature is truth. The moral limit of egoism of a given person is not the egoism of others, not their self-asserting will, but only that which in itself can not be exclusive and egoistic, that which in itself, by its nature, is truth. Only when all personally realize the truth and are participants of the unconditional moral principle, only then can the will of all be the moral law for me. Consequently, love and self-sacrifice in their relation to men are possible only when they manifest the unconditional principle which stands above men, the principle in relation to which all equally represent an untruth, and all equally must recant that untruth.

Otherwise, if such an unconditional principle is not acknowledged, if all other men appear only as conditional beings, representing a certain natural force, then subjection to them will result only in oppression on their part. Every power that does not represent the unconditional principle of the truth is oppression, and subjection to such a power can be only a forced one. The *free* subjection of each to all, then, is evidently possible only when all are themselves subjected to the unconditional moral principle, in relation to which they are *equal* among themselves, as all finite quantities are equal in respect to infinity.

At the same time it is quite unimportant who advances the claim to exercise that power, whether it be a single person, or the majority of the people, or even the majority of mankind; because quantity in itself does not, obviously, give any moral right, and the mass as the mass does not represent any inner preeminence. (If one was to speak about convenience, then undoubtedly the despotism of a single person is much more convenient than the despotism of the mass).

By nature men are not equal among themselves, because they do not possess equal powers; and as a result of the inequality of their powers, they necessarily find themselves in a state of a forced subjection one to another; consequently, by nature they are not free either; finally, by nature men are strange and inimical towards each other—natural humanity by no means represents a brotherhood. If, thus, the

realization of the truth is impossible on the ground of the given natural conditions, in the kingdom of nature, then it is possible only in the Kingdom of grace, that is to say, on the basis of the moral principle, as the unconditional or divine.

Thus, by its demand for the social truth, and by the impossibility of its realization on the finite natural bases, socialism logically leads to the recognition of the necessity of the unconditional principle in life, i.e., to the acknowledgement of religion.

Positivism leads to the same conclusion in the realm of knowledge. The so-called enlightenment of the eighteenth century proclaimed against traditional theology the rights of the human reason. Reason, however, is only a means, an instrument, or a medium of knowledge, but not its content. Reason gives the ideal *form*, while the content of reason or of rational knowledge is *reality*; and, as the supernatural, metaphysical reality is rejected by the rationalist enlightenment, there remains only the conditional reality of the given natural phenomena. Truth [verity] is the given fact, that which occurs or happens. Such is the general principle of positivism. One can not fail to see in it a lawful desire to *realize* the truth, to actualize it in the far limits of reality, to demonstrate it as a visible, palpable fact; just as in socialism one can not deny the presence of a lawful effort to realize the moral principle, to carry it out to the extreme limits of life, into the sphere of the material economic relations. In order that the [moral] truth could be manifested by man in a lower sphere of life, it must previously exist by itself, independently of man; in the same manner, before the truth [as verity] may become a fact for man, it must have its own reality. Indeed, as each separate given will does not represent by itself any good or any truth, but becomes righteous solely through the normal relationship or consent with the general will—general not in the sense of mechanistic union of the wills of many or of all, but in the sense of the will which is by its nature universal, that is to say, the will of Him Who is all, the will of God—in the same way, a separately taken fact, an individual phenomenon, obviously does not represent the truth by itself, in its detachment, but is acknowledged as true only in a normal relation, in a logical connection or accord with the whole or with the reality of the whole; and that, again not in a mechanistic sense, not in the sense of the totality of all phenomena or facts. For, in the first place, such a totality can not exist in our knowledge, because the number of facts and phenomena is inexhaustible and, consequently, can not represent any definite sum; and secondly, even if such a totality existed, it would have not represented the truth by itself, because if each

separate fact is not the truth, then obviously, the summing together of all such separate facts which are not the truth, will not obtain the truth (as a multitude of zeros will not produce a unit, and a multitude of rascals will not produce a single righteous man). Consequently, the reality of the whole, the universal, or the entire reality is the reality of *Him Who is all*—the reality of God. But that unconditional reality is accessible, as such, only to an immediate perception, in an internal revelation; that is to say, it represents the object of the religious knowledge.

Thus, both socialism and positivism lead, when their principles are logically developed, to a demand for the religious principles in life and in knowledge.

* Religion is the reunion of man and the world with the unconditional and integral principle. That principle, as integral and all-embracing, excludes nothing, and therefore the true union with it, the true religion can not exclude, or suppress, or forcibly subject to itself any element whatever, any living force either in man or in his universe.

The re-union, or religion, consists in the bringing of all natural forces of human life, all particular principles and forces of humanity, into correct relation with the unconditional central principle, and through it, as well as in it, into correct, harmonious relationship among themselves.

As the unconditional principle, by its nature, can not admit (any) exclusiveness or coercion, that union of particular aspects of life and individual forces with the integral principle, as well as among themselves, must be unconditionally free: at the same time, all these principles and forces, each inside of its own limits the limits of its own function or its own idea, have equal rights for existence and development. As, however, they are all united into a single, common, unconditional whole, to which they are related as different but equally indispensable elements they mutually represent a complete solidarity or *brotherhood*.

Thus, from this point of view, the religious principle appears to be the only actual realization of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

I said that according to the meaning of the religious idea, the reunion of separate beings and particular principles and forces with the unconditional beginning must be free; this means that those separate beings and those particular principles must of themselves or by their own will come to a re-union and unconditional accord, must themselves deny their own exclusiveness, their own self-assertion or egoism.

The way toward salvation, toward the realization of true equality, true freedom and brotherhood, is that of self-denial. For self-denial, however, a previous self-assertion is necessary: in order to deny one's own exclusive will, it is necessary first to have it; in order that the particular principles and forces might freely reunite with the unconditional beginning, they must have first separated from it; they must stand on their own, must strive toward exclusive dominion and unconditional significance; for it is only actual experience, a tasted contradiction, the experienced fundamental insolvency of that self-assertion, that can lead toward a voluntary self-denial, as well as toward a conscious and free demand for a union with the unconditional beginning.

Hence can be seen the great meaning of the negative [or] the Western development, the great purpose of Western civilization. It represents the complete and logical falling away of the human, natural forces from the divine beginning, their exclusive self-assertion, the striving to found the edifice of universal culture upon themselves. Through the insolvency and fated failure of that trend comes forth self-denial, and self-denial leads towards the free reunion with the divine beginning.

A fundamental change, a great crisis in the consciousness of the Western part of humanity has already begun. A clear expression of it is manifest in the development and the success of pessimistic ideas according to which the existing reality is evil, deceit, and suffering; while the source of that reality and, consequently, of that evil, deceit, and suffering lies in the self-asserting will, in the will to live—which means that salvation is in the negation of that will in self-negation.

This pessimistic point of view, which turns toward self-negation, has been manifested so far only in theory, in a philosophic system; but one can foresee with certainty that soon — namely, when the social revolution in the West will be victorious and, after it will have won its victory, will see its own insolvency, the impossibility of establishing a harmonious and correct social order, of realizing the truth upon the foundations of a conditional transient existence—when the Western part of humanity will be convinced by facts, by historical reality, that the self-assertion of the will, no matter how it may manifest itself, is the source of evil and suffering; then pessimism, the turn toward self-denial, will pass from theory into life, and the Western humanity will be ready to accept the religious principle, the positive revelation of true religion.

According to the law of the division of historical functions, however, one and the same cultural type, one and the same nation can not

realize two universal ideas, perform two historical acts; and if Western civilization had as its task, as its world function, the embodiment of the negative transition from the religious past to the religious future, then the task of laying the foundation for that religious future is reserved for another historical force.

LECTURE TWO

I HAVE said that the purpose of the Western development, of the Western extra-religious civilization, was to serve humanity as a necessary transition from its religious past to its religious future.

We can obtain some idea of the general character of this future if we consider the sins of the religious past, the essence of its chief untruth, which necessitated its negation as well as a negative transition toward other forms.

The religious past about which I now speak is represented by Roman Catholicism. Although the insolvency of this form [of religion] by now has been understood, yet until a change from it to a new and better form, a still more positive and all-embracing one, will have taken place, until then Catholicism will retain both its conditional power and its conditional right. Until the positive creative principles of the future will become realized in the life and consciousness of civilized humanity, until then the positive past will continue to weigh over [dominate] the negative present. It can be nullified, and will be effectively and finally nullified only by a principle which will give more than it [the positive principle of the past] has given, but not by any feeble empty negation. That is why Catholicism still stands and carries on a stubborn struggle against the intellectual and social progress—the progress that will gain a fate-like unconquerable power over the old principle, but only at the time when it will reach positive deductions, when it will establish such foundations upon which it will be possible to build a new world, not only *freer*, but also *richer in its spiritual forces*.

Who would venture to say that modern Europe is richer in spiritual forces than, for instance, the Catholic and knightly Europe of the Middle Ages?

There is going on at present among our Western neighbors the so-called cultural struggle against Catholicism; in that struggle it is impossible for any impartial man to take a stand on either side. If the defenders of culture justly reproach Catholicism for having employed force against the enemies of Christianity, as if following the example of its patron, St. Peter, who drew his sword in the garden of Gethsemane in order to defend Christ; if they justly reproach Catholicism for its striving to create external, earthly forms and formulas for matters

as the foundation, and at the same time as the aim. For [the attainment of] an external unity as a [deliberate] aim, however, there is but one means—an external force; and Catholicism adopts it and [thereby] places itself in the ranks of the other external, i.e. the worldly, forces. But asserting itself as a worldly external force, Catholicism thereby obviously justifies also the self-assertion of those other external forces which it strives to subject to itself, and thus itself renders that subjection impossible.

As the higher principle, the principle of the general, Catholicism demands subjection to itself on the part of the particular and individual, the subjection of the human personality. By becoming an external power, however, it ceases to be the higher principle and loses its right of dominion over the human personality (which does possess internal power); while its factual domination appears only as coercion and suppression, provoking a necessary and just protest on the part of the personality—in which lies the essential meaning and justification of Protestantism.

Beginning with Protestantism, Western civilization represents a gradual emancipation of the human personality, of the human *ego*, from that historical bond, founded on tradition, which united but at the same time enslaved men during the period of the Middle Ages. The great meaning of the historical process which began with the Reformation consists in the fact that it has segregated the human personality and left it to itself in order that it might consciously and freely turn to the divine beginning, enter with it into a perfectly free and deliberate union.

* Such a union would be impossible if the divine beginning were purely external to man, if it were not rooted in the human personality itself; in that case man could find himself in regard to the divine beginning only in a forced, fated subjection. The free internal union between the unconditional divine beginning and the human personality is possible only because the latter itself has an unconditional value. The human personality can unite with the divine beginning freely, from within itself, only because it is itself in a certain sense divine, or, more exactly, participant of Divinity.

The human personality—not, however, human personality in general, not the abstract idea of it, but [taken to mean] a real living person, an individual man—has unconditional, divine value. In this affirmation Christianity agrees with contemporary mundane civilization.

In what does this unconditionality, this divinity of the human personality consist?

unconditionality - negative & positive.
Western civ. has asserted the negative & denied the positive hence positive thing man.

Unconditionality, like other similar concepts (such as infinity, the absolute) has two meanings, negative and positive.

The negative unconditionality, which undoubtedly belongs to human personality, consists in the ability to transcend every limited content in the capacity not to be limited by it, not to be satisfied with it but to request something greater: in the capacity "To seek beautitudes, for which there is no name or measure," in the words of a poet.

Not satisfied with any finite conditional content, man does, indeed, declare himself to be free from any internal limitation, declaring [thus] his negative unconditionality, which constitutes the surety of an infinite development. The dissatisfaction with any finite content, with any partial limited actuality is itself a request for full reality, full content. In the *possession* of the whole reality, however, of the fullness of life, lies the *positive* unconditionality. Without it, or at least without the possibility of it, the negative unconditionality has no significance, or, rather, means only an internal insoluble contradiction. The human consciousness of today finds itself in just such a contradiction.

Western civilization has liberated human consciousness from all external limitations, acknowledged the negative unconditionality of the human personality, proclaimed the unconditional rights of man. At the same time, however, having rejected every principle unconditional in the positive sense, that is to say, in reality, and by its very nature possessed of the entire plenitude of being; having circumscribed the life and consciousness of man with a circle of the conditional and transitory: this civilization has asserted [thereby] the striving and the impossibility of its satisfaction.

Contemporary man is aware that he is internally free, deems himself to be higher than any external principle independent of him, asserts himself as the center of everything; but with all that, appears in reality to be only one infinitely small and disappearing [transitory] dot upon the circumference of the world. *

Contemporary consciousness acknowledges that the human personality has divine rights, but does not give to it either the divine powers or the divine content; for contemporary man admits—in life as well as in knowledge—only a limited conditional reality, the reality of particular facts and phenomena—and from this point of view is himself but one of those particular facts.

Thus, on the one hand, man is a being with unconditional significance, with unconditional rights and demands; and [on the other hand] the same man is but a limited and transitory phenomenon, a fact among the multitude of other facts, on all sides limited by them and dependent

upon them—and this is true not only [of] the individual man, but [of] the whole humanity. From the atheistic point of view it is not only the individual man who appears and disappears, like all other facts and phenomena of nature; according to that point of view the whole of humanity, having appeared on this globe as a result of natural conditions, may, as a result of a change in the same natural conditions, disappear without a trace from this globe, or perish together with it. Man is everything for himself, and yet his very existence appears to be conditional and constantly problematical [precarious]. If this contradiction were purely theoretical, if it pertained to some abstract problem and object, then it would not be so fatal and tragic, then it could be disregarded, and man could flee from it into experience, into [its] live interests. When, however, the contradiction lies in the very center of human consciousness, when it concerns the very human *ego* and spreads over all his vital forces, then there is no way of fleeing from it, no escape from it. We have to adopt one of the two parts of the [following] dilemma: either man really has that unconditional value, those unconditional rights which he, in his inner subjective consciousness allows himself to have—in such case he must have also the possibility of [means, innate endowments, for] realizing that value, those rights; or else man is only a fact, only a conditional and limited phenomenon that is present today but tomorrow may not exist, and in some few score years *certainly* will cease to exist; in that case let him be only a fact. A fact in itself is neither true nor false, neither good nor evil—it is merely natural, merely necessary; [and if he is only a fact] then let man cease striving for the truth and the good, since there are merely conditional concepts, essentially but empty words. If man is only a fact, if he is inevitably limited by the mechanism of the external reality, then let him seek not anything greater than that natural reality, then let him “eat, drink, and be merry”; and if he is not gay, then he can, perhaps, terminate that his factual existence with just as factual an end.

Man, however, does not wish to be a mere fact, to be only a phenomenon; and this unwillingness is already a hint that actually he is not a mere fact, that he is not a phenomenon only, but something greater. For what is the meaning of a fact which refuses to be [but] a fact? or of a phenomenon which does not wish to be [only] a phenomenon?

This does not, of course, prove anything beside the fact that, in accepting the first part of the dilemma, by resolutely and logically tak-

view do not deny the reality and independence of spiritual forces (the reduction of spiritual forces to the physical ones, the assertion that the soul, or thought, is an emanation of the brain just as bile is the secretion of the liver, is true only of the poorer representatives of the mechanistic world-view, of poor scientists and poor philosophers); if, I say, from this general point of view, there is no basis for denying the existence and independence of spiritual forces known to us, then there is not any more ground to deny from this point of view, the existence and the full reality of the infinite multitude of other forces, unknown to us, *occult* for us in our present state.

In the same way, agreeing that all that occurs, occurs of necessity, we must distinguish various kinds of necessity. It is of necessity that a stone, when let down, falls to the ground; a ball striking another ball, of necessity sets it into motion; it is of necessity also that the sun by its rays generates life in the plant: the process is determined, but the means of that determining action are different. A certain mental picture in the mind of the animal calls forth this or that movement; a sublime idea, once it has found its way into man's soul, stimulates him to noble exploits; there is [an element of necessity] in all these instances, but necessity of different kinds.

The idea of necessity [taken] in a broad sense—and there is no reason for understanding it in a narrow way—the idea of necessity does not by any means exclude freedom. Freedom is but one of the species of necessity. When freedom is contrasted with necessity, this contrast usually signifies the contrast between the *internal* and the *external* necessity.

For instance, it is necessary for God to love all and to manifest the eternal idea of the good in [all] creation; God can not nourish enmity, in God there can be no hatred: love, reason, freedom, are necessary with God. We must say, [in other words] that for God *freedom is necessary*—which indicates that freedom can not be a concept logically, unconditionally excluding the concept of necessity.

Everything occurs according to immutable laws; but in the different spheres of being, obviously, must obtain diverse laws (or to be more exact, different applications of one and the same law): and out of this diversity naturally follows the difference of the interrelations among particular laws, so that the laws of a lower order can appear to be subject [subordinate] to the laws of a higher order; as when we admit specific differences between universal forces, we have the right to admit also the difference in their relations, to admit the existence of

the higher and more mighty forces capable of subjecting to themselves other forces.

Thus the fundamental propositions of materialism, which are undoubtedly true, by their generality and indefiniteness do not exclude anything and leave all problems open. Materialism appears to be a definite point of view only in its negative, exclusive aspect, in the assertion that there are no other forces except the physical [ones], that there is no other matter except that with which experimental physics and chemistry have to deal—that there are no other laws in nature except the mechanical laws which regulate the movement (and, possibly, also the laws, just as mechanistic, of the association of ideas within human consciousness). If we encounter in experience something which does not appear to have the mechanical character (for instance, life, creation), then it is only an illusion, [materialism maintains]; *essentially* all is a mechanism and everything *must be* reduced to mechanical relations. On what grounds are this negation and this demand based? Certainly not on science, for science, studying the phenomena given in experience and the mechanism of their external relationships, does not set before itself ultimate problems which concern the essence of things. Undoubtedly, all that exists must have a mechanistic aspect, which is subject to exact science; but, obviously, it would be a very gross and arbitrary assumption to acknowledge the reality [only] of this one aspect. If exact science stops where mechanism ends, does it mean that the end of exact science is also the end of everything, or at least of all knowledge? Obviously this is the sort of a logical jump that is possible only in a mind completely possessed by a preconceived idea. Science deals with matters and forces, but what matter and force really are, that question is not any of its concerns; and if a scientist should have from a metaphysician that matter is in reality but sense perception, and that force is really the will, then he, as a scientist, cannot say anything either for or against such an assertion. If, however, the negative principle of materialism is not—and it is certain that it is not—the result of exact science (which, in general, is not concerned with the universal and ultimate principles) then it is only a philosophical proposition. But in the realm of philosophical perception (as is well known to anyone who is but slightly familiar with this domain) not only is there no ground for denying the existence of the spiritual forces as independent of the physical forces, but there are solid philosophical grounds for the assertion that the physical forces themselves can be reduced to the spiritual. It would be inappropriate to try to prove that proposition here, but it is obvious that in philosophy whole doctrines—

one can even say, the greater number of philosophical doctrines—accept the reducibility of the physical forces to the spiritual ones; so that materialism, at best, is only one of the philosophical opinions.

But if materialism as a theory is only one of the philosophical opinions, and, consequently, the acknowledgment of the unconditional correctness of that opinion is but an arbitrary belief—in what, then, does the indubitable practical strength of materialism consist? If that force has no positive basis, then it must have a negative one: it is based on the impotence of the principle opposite [to it], the spiritual principle, as the strength of any falsehood consists of the impotence of the [corresponding] truth, and the strength of an evil in the impotence of the [corresponding] good. The impotence of a truth lies, of course, not in truth itself, but within us, in our inconsistency: by not carrying out a truth to the end, we limit it—and any limitation of the truth provides an expanse for falsehood.

As truth cannot contradict itself, complete consistence [in carrying out the truth of any local pattern] will inevitably bring it to victory; just as the same consistence is fatal to falsehood, which maintains itself only by an internal contradiction [within a pattern].

The beginning of verity [in the subject under discussion] is the conviction that the human personality is not only negatively unconditional (which is a fact)—that is to say, that it does not wish and can not be satisfied with any conditional, limited content—but that human personality is able to reach the positive unconditionality as well; that is to say, that it [the human personality] is able to possess the whole content, the fullness of being is not a mere fantasy, a subjective phantom, but a real, pregnant with forces, actuality. Thus one's faith in oneself, faith in human personality, is at the same time faith in God; for Divinity belongs to man as well as to God—with this one difference, that God possesses it in eternal reality, where as man can only attain to it, to him it is granted; and that in the given state [of man], for him it is only a possibility, only an aspiration.

The human ego is unconditional in potentiality and infinitesimal in reality. This contradiction constitutes evil and suffering, in it lies the captivity, the inner slavery of man. Emancipation from this slavery may be had only in the attainment of that unconditional content, of that fullness of being which is asserted by the infinite striving of the human ego. "[Ye shall] know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Before man can reach this unconditional content in life, he must reach it in his consciousness; before he can *know* it as a reality lying *outside of himself*, he must become *aware* of it as an idea *in himself*.

A positive conviction [of the truth] of an idea is a conviction [of the certainty] of its [possible] realization; for an unrealizable idea is a phantom and deceit; and if it is madness not to believe in God, then it is still a greater madness to believe in Him only in part. *

The old traditional form of religion has issued forth from the faith in God, but it has failed to carry out this faith to the end. The modern extra-religious civilization proceeds from the faith in man, but it, too, remains inconsistent—does not carry its faith to its [logical] end. But when both of these faiths, the faith in God and the faith in man are carried out consistently and realized in full, they meet in the unique, complete, and integral truth of Godmanhood. ||

the brain in no way has anything to do with the formal contents of that representation; because the image of the temple of St. Sophia and the movements of the brain-particles are objects absolutely different, incommensurate one with another. If, for instance, at the time when you had the said representation, an outside observer could possibly see all that was going on in your brain (in the way that is pictured in the fairy tale of Bulwer's, "A Strange Story"), what would he see? He would see the structure of the brain, the vibration of the tiniest brain-particles; he would see, perhaps, phenomena of light proceeding from neural electricity ("the red and blue flame," as it was said in that story)—but all that would not at all resemble the mental picture which you had at the moment, and you may be quite ignorant of the brain movements and the electrical currents, while the outside observer sees only them; whence it follows directly that there can be no formal identity between the one and the other.

It is neither possible nor necessary to analyze here the problem of the relation of the thought to the brain, a problem the solution of which depends mainly upon the solution of the general problem as to the essence of matter; I had in mind only to explain by an example the obvious truth that the mechanism of any process whatever, and the ideal (ideological, to be more precise) content that is realized in it—in whatever relationship, in whatever material connection—represent, in any case, something [two categories] formally different and mutually incommensurate, in consequence of which any direct inference from the properties of one to the properties of the other (as, for example, the inference from the contingency of the mechanical process to the contingency of its own content) appears logically impossible.

To return to our subject: as soon as we admit that the life of the world and of humanity is not an accident without any meaning or purpose (and there is neither any theoretical ground for acknowledging it as such, nor any moral possibility of doing so) but represents a definite and integrated process, we are forced at once to give recognition to the content realized by that process—to which all material conditions of the process, all its mechanism, would refer as means to an end, as methods of expression to that which is expressed. As in our former example—that of the physical and spiritual natures in the actors— [in which we saw that] all their capacities and forces, as well as the movements derived from these forces and capacities, have significance only as methods of external expression of that poetical content which is given in the performed drama; so also the whole mechanical aspect of the life of the universe, the whole combination of the natural forces

and movements can have significance only as the material and an instrument for the external realization of the universal content, which in itself is independent of *all* those material conditions, which is, thus, *unconditional*. Such content is generally called the *idea*.

Yes, the life of man and of the world is a natural process; yes, this life is a change of phenomena, a play of natural forces; but this play presupposes the players and that which is being played—i.e., [it] presupposes unconditional personality, and unconditional content or the idea of life.

It would be childish to pose the question, and argue, which is more necessary for the actual, complete life: the idea or the material conditions of its realization. Obviously, both are equally necessary, as in arithmetics both the multiplicand and the multiplier are necessary to obtain the product, both seven and five to get thirty-five.

It must be noted that the content or the idea is distinguished not only from the external but also from the internal nature; not only the external physical forces must serve as means, instrument, or a material condition for the realization of a certain content, but the spiritual forces also: the will, the intellect, and the senses have significance solely as means for the realization of a definite content, but by themselves do not constitute this content.

Indeed, it is obvious that—once these forces, the will, the intellect, and the senses, are given—it is obvious that there must be a definite *object* of desire, perception, and feeling: it is obvious that man can not wish only for the sake of wishing, think for the sake of thinking (i.e., to think pure thought), or feel for the sake of feeling. As the mechanical process of physical movements is only a material ground for the ideal content, so likewise the mechanical process of spiritual phenomena, connected among themselves according to the psychological laws which are as general and as necessary as the physical laws, can have significance only as means of expression or realization of a definite content.

Man has to wish *something*, think *something* or about something, feel *something*; and this something, which constitutes the determining beginning, aim, and object of his spiritual forces and his spiritual life, is precisely what is sought, what arouses his interest, what furnished meaning. Because of his capacity for conscious deliberation, for reflection, man submits to judgment and appraisal all the factual data of his inner and exterior life; he can not limit himself with wishing only because he would wish something, with thinking because he happens to be thinking, or with feeling because he is in the mood for feeling—he

demands that the object of his will would have its own dignity in order that it may be desired by him or, to use school language, in order that it would be *objectively-desirable*, that it would be an *objective good*; in the same way he demands that the object and the content of his thought be *objectively true*, and the object of his feeling be *objectively-beautiful*, i.e., [true and beautiful] not for him only but for every one unconditionally.

It is true that every man has his own small specific part in life; but that does not at all imply that he can content himself only with a conditional, relative content of life. In the performance of a drama every actor has his own specific role, but would he be able to play it well if he did not know the whole content of the drama? And as one expects from an actor not only that he *act*, but that he act *well*, so man and humanity are, likewise, not only to *live*, but to live *well*. It is said: What is the need of an objective definition of the will, i.e., of the definition of its unconditional object? It is sufficient that the will be good. What, however, does define the good quality of the will if not its correspondence with that which is acknowledged to be objectively-desirable or is recognized as the good in itself? (It is clear to anyone that a good will aimed towards false goals can produce only evil. The inquisitors of the Middle Ages had the good will to defend the Kingdom of God on earth, but since they had bad conceptions of that Kingdom of God, of its objective essence or idea, they could bring only evil to mankind).

The same should be said about the object of knowledge and about the object of feeling; the more so as these objects are closely, inseparably interconnected or, rather, are different aspects of the same thing.

The simple, clear to all (one might say, trivial), distinction of the true from the false, of the beautiful from the ugly by itself presupposes the acknowledgement of the objective and unconditional principle in those spheres of spiritual life. Indeed, in this distinction man affirms that there is something *normal* in moral activity as well as in knowledge, in feeling, and in artistic creation that is born of feeling; and that this something *ought* to be because it is in itself good, true, and beautiful; in other words, that it is the unconditional goodness, truth, and beauty.

Thus the unconditional principle is required by the intellectual, normal, and esthetic interest of man. These three interests in their unity comprise the religious interest; for as the will, reason, and feeling are forces of a single spirit, so the objects corresponding to them

are but different aspects (ideas) of the single unconditional beginning which in its reality is the special object of religion.

It is quite evident that the reality of the unconditional beginning, as existing in itself, independently of us—the reality of God (as, in general, the independent reality of any other being, except ourselves) can not be deduced from pure reason, can not be proved by logic alone. The necessity of an unconditional principle for the higher interests of man—its necessity for the will and the moral activity, for reason and true knowledge, for feeling and creation—this necessity merely renders the actual existence of the divine beginning *probable*, in the highest degree; the complete and unconditional *certainty* of its existence can be given only by faith. And this refers, as it was previously noted, to the existence of any object at all, and of the whole external world in general. For, since we can know anything about the world only through our sensations, through what we experience, so that the whole content of our experience and [that] of our knowledge are our own states of consciousness and nothing more—therefore every affirmation of the external being corresponding to these states represents, from the logical viewpoint, only a more or less probable conclusion; and if we are, nevertheless, definitely and directly convinced of the existence of external beings (other men, beasts, and so forth), this conviction has no logical character (for it can not be proved logically): it is, consequently, nothing other than *faith*. Although the law of causality leads us to acknowledge external existence as the cause of our sensations and ideas, yet since that same law of causality is but a form of our own reason, the application of this law to external reality as the cause of our sensations and ideas, yet since that same law of causality is but a form of our own reason, the application of this law to external reality can have only a conditional meaning,* and, consequently, can not give the unconditional, firm conviction of the existence of an external reality: all proofs of that existence, reduced to the law of causality, appear thus to be only considerations of probability, not evidences of certainty—only faith remains to be such an evidence.

That anything exists outside of ourselves and independently of ourselves—that we can not *know*, because all that we know (actually), that is to say, all that we experience, exists within us, not outside of us (as our sensations and our thoughts); and what is not within us, but is in its own self, is *thereby* beyond the limits of our experience

*That is to say, *if* our intellect has an objective power, *if* there must exist objective knowledge and science, *then*, etc., etc.

and, consequently, outside of our actual knowledge; it can be asserted, thus, only by an act of the spirit which can reach beyond the boundaries of this reality of ours—and it is this act of the spirit that is called faith. We know that two plus two equals four, that fire burns; these are facts of our consciousness; but the existence of anything beyond the limits of our consciousness (for example, the existence of a “substantial” fire, that is to say, of an entity or entities which produce on us the effect of fire) obviously can not be given in that consciousness, can not be the fact of it or its state (that would be a direct contradiction), and, consequently, can be asserted only by faith, which is “evidence of things not seen.”

But if the *existence* of external reality is supported by faith, then the *content* of that reality (its essence, *essentia*) is given by experience: that reality *is*, we believe; but *what* it is, we experience and know. Had we not believed in the existence of external reality, then all that we experience and know would have had only a subjective value, would have represented only the data of our inner physical life. Had we not believed in the independent existence of the sun, then all the experiential material contained in the conception of the sun (namely, the sensation of light and heat, the picture of the solar disc, the periodical solar phenomena, and so forth) would have been for us [only] states of our own subjective consciousness, physically conditioned—a continuous and correct hallucination, a part of an uninterrupted dream. All that we know from experience about the sun, as experienced by ourselves, would give warrant only to our own reality, but in no way to the reality of the sun. But once we believe in the latter, once we are convinced of the objective existence of the sun, then all the experimental facts about the sun appear as the action of that objective being upon us, and thus receive an objective reality. It is true, we have the same experimental facts about the external world whether we believe in its reality or not; but in the latter case the data would have no objective value: as the same banknotes may represent either so much paper or actual wealth depending on whether they have credit [back of them] or not.

The data of experience, along with the faith in the existence of external objects corresponding to them, appear as evidence of the actually extant, and as such form the basis of objective knowledge. For the fullness of that knowledge it is necessary that these separate evidences concerning that which exist were connected among themselves, that experience be *organized* into an integrated system; and

that is attained by rational thought which gives the form to the empirical material.

All that has been said in regard to the external world is fully applicable ([and] on the same grounds) to the divine beginning as well. Its existence also can be affirmed only by an act of faith. Although the best minds of humanity were engaged in finding the so-called proofs of God's being, so far they were not successful; for all the proofs, based necessarily upon certain assumptions, have a hypothetical character and, consequently, can not give unconditional certainty. As the existence of the outside world, so also the existence of the divine beginning for reason is only a probability or a contingent truth; unconditionally it can be asserted only by faith. But the *content* of the divine beginning, as well as the content of external nature, is given by experience. That God is, we believe; but *what* He is, we experience and cognate. Certainly, the facts of inner religious experience without the faith in the reality of their object are only fantasy and hallucination, but the facts of outside experience are similarly fantasies and hallucinations if we do not believe in the proper reality of their objects. In both cases experience gives only the psychic facts, facts of consciousness; the objective meaning of these facts is determined by the creative act of faith. With this faith, the inner data of religious experience are cognated as the actions upon us of the divine beginning, as its *revelation* in us, while it itself appears, thus, as the actual object of our consciousness.

But the data of religious experience, even with the faith in their objective value, appear by themselves only as partial information concerning the divine matters, not as complete knowledge about them. Such knowledge is attained by the *organization* of religious experience into an integrated, logically connected system. Thus, besides religious faith and religious experience, we must also have religious thought, the result of which is the philosophy of religion.

It is often said: Why philosophize about the divine matters; is it not enough to believe in them and feel them? Certainly, it is enough . . . in the absence of intellectual interest on the part of him who believes and feels. It is equivalent to saying: Is it not enough to believe that the sun exists, and to delight in its light and warmth? Why should we have any physical and astronomical theories about the sun and the solar system? They are not, of course, necessary for those who have no scientific interest. But on what grounds should the limitations of some people be made a law for all? If man has faith in the divine matters, and if at the same time he has the capacity as well as the need

for thinking, then of necessity he must think about the object of his faith; and it is certainly desirable that he think about such matters correctly and systematically—that is to say, that his thinking be a philosophy of religion. More than that; since it is only a philosophy of religion, as a connected system and a complete synthesis of religious truths, which can give us an adequate knowledge about the divine beginning, as the unconditional or all-embracing—for without such a synthesis separate religious data are but disjunct parts of an unknown whole—then philosophy of religion is equally necessary for all thinking men, both those who believe and those who do not; for if the first ought to know what they believe, the second should certainly know what they deny (not to speak of the fact that in many instances the denial itself depends upon ignorance, and that those who believe “not according to knowledge,” who wish to turn the religious truth into a matter of blind faith and vague feeling, act obviously only in favor of the denial). The combination of religious experience and religious thought constitutes the content of religious consciousness. On the objective side, this content is *revelation* of the divine beginning as the actual object of religious consciousness. Since the human spirit in general, and consequently, the religious consciousness also, is not anything final, completed, but something that arises and occurs (develops), something that is in the state of process, the revelation of the divine beginning in that consciousness is necessarily gradual. As the external nature is only gradually revealed to the mind of man and humanity, in consequence of which we must speak of the development of experimentation and natural sciences; so the divine beginning also is revealed to human consciousness gradually, and we must speak of the development of religious experience and religious thought.

Since the divine beginning is the actual object of religious consciousness, i.e., one which acts upon that consciousness and which reveals in it its content, religious development is a positive and objective process, an actual interaction between God and man—a divine-human process.

It is clear that, as a result of the objective and positive character of religious development, not a single stage of it, not a single momentum of the religious process can in itself be false or erroneous. A “false religion” is a *contradictio in adjecto*. The religious process can not consist of a substitution of pure truth for pure falsehood, for in that case the former would appear suddenly and wholly without any transition, without progress—and then a question would arise: Why did this sudden appearance of truth take place at the given moment,

and not at some other instant? And if it be retorted, Truth could appear only after the exhaustion of falsehood, then it would mean that the realization of falsehood is *necessary* for the realization of truth; that is to say, that falsehood *had to be*; but in that case it would not be falsehood, for we understand by the term falsehood (as well as by the terms evil and ugliness) precisely that which *ought not to be*.

The difference in the stages of religious revelation does not at all imply untruths in the lower stages. The reality of the physical sun reveals itself in different measures to the blind, to one who does see, to one who is armed with a telescope, and finally, to the learned astronomer who possesses all the scientific means and aptitudes. Does it follow therefore, that the sensations of the warmth of the sun, which represent the whole experience of the blind man about the sun, are less real and true than the experience of the man who can see, or the knowledge of the astronomer? But if the blind man would insist that his is the only true experience, and that the experience of the one who can see and the knowledge of the astronomer are false, then it would be only in that statement that falsehood and error would appear, not in the experience to which the statement refers. In the same way, in the development of religion falsehood and error obtain not in the content of any one stage of that development, but in the exclusive affirmation of one of them and in the negation of all others, for the sake and in the name of that one stage. In other words, falsehood and error appear in the impotent efforts to retard or to stop the religious process.

Furthermore, like the fact that the blind man's experience of the sun (the sensation of warmth) is not destroyed by the experience of one who can see, but on the contrary, is preserved in it, enters into it, and at the same time is enriched with a new experience (the sensation of light), which appears thus as *a part* of a more complete experience, whereas, before (for the blind man) this was *the whole* experience—so also in religious development, in their positive content the lower stages are not abolished by the higher, but only lose their significance of the whole, becoming a part of a more complete revelation.

It is evident from what has been said that the highest grade of religious development, the highest form of the divine revelation must, in the first place, command the fullest freedom from any exclusiveness and one-sidedness, must represent the greatest generality; and, secondly, must have the largest wealth of positive content, must represent the greatest fullness and *integrality* (concreteness). Both of these conditions are united in the idea of the *positive universality*, which is

directly opposite to the negative, formally logical universality, which consists in the absence of all definite properties, of all peculiarities.

Religion has to be universal and one. But for the realization of that it is not sufficient, as many think, to take away from the extant religions all their distinguishing, particular features, to deprive each of them of its positive individuality, and to reduce all religion to that simple and indifferent datum which is to be found equally in all actual and possible religions, such as, for example, the acknowledgment of God as the unconditional beginning of all that exists, without any further determination of Him. Such a generalization and unification of religions, such a reduction of all religions to one common denominator, obviously possesses, in the result, a minimum of religious content. In that case, why not go a step further and reduce religion to the ultimate minimum, i.e. to zero? And, in fact, this abstract religion reached by the way of logical negation—whether we call it the rational, natural religion, pure Deism, or something else—always does serve for consistent minds as a mere transition to complete atheism; only superficial minds, the weak and insincere characters hold to it [to the abstract religion]. If anyone replied in answer to the question, What is the sun? that the sun is an external object, and with that statement would wish to limit all our knowledge about the sun, who would regard such a man seriously? But then why seriously consider those who want to limit our knowledge about the divine beginning with similarly general and empty concepts, as for example, the supreme being, the infinite reason, the first cause, and so on. Undoubtedly all these general definitions are correct, but one can not really base religion upon such a foundation, any more than one can base astronomy on a similarly true proposition, that the sun is an external object.

It is obvious that from the religious point of view, the aim is not the minimum but the maximum of positive content—the religious form is the higher, the richer it is, the more alive and concrete it is. The perfect religion is not that which is equally contained in all (the indifferent foundation of religion), but that which *contains all of them in itself* and possesses all (the complete religious synthesis). The perfect religion [by logical necessity] must be free from all limitation and exclusiveness, yet not because it is deprived of every positive peculiarity and individuality—such a negative freedom is the freedom of emptiness, the freedom of the beggar—but because it contains in its bosom all peculiarities and, consequently, is not attached to any one of them exclusively, possesses all of them, and, consequently, is free from them all. To the true conception of religion are equally repugnant

the dark fanaticism which holds onto a single partial revelation, a single positive form, and denies all others; and the abstract rationalism which resolves the whole essence of religion into the fog of indefinite concepts and merges all religious forms into one empty, impotent, and colorless generality. The religious truth, coming from one root, has developed among mankind into many and varied branches. To cut down all these branches, to leave a naked, dry, and fruitless trunk which can be easily sacrificed to complete atheism—that is the goal of the rationalistic purification of religion. The positive religious synthesis, on the other hand, the true philosophy of religion, must embrace the whole content of religious development without excluding a single positive element, and to seek the unity of religion in [their] fullness, not in indifference.

Taking up the logical developments of the religious truth in its idea (idea-1) content (not touching, at the moment, upon the actual means of its revelation, for this would require different psychological and epistemological analyses, which would be out of place here), we shall follow the order in which the religious truth has been historically developed in mankind; for the historical and the logical order, in their content, that is to say, in their internal connection (and this is the one that we have in mind) evidently coincide (if it be acknowledged that history is a development, and not nonsense).

Originally we have three basic elements: these are, first, *nature*, that is to say, the given, present reality, the material life and consciousness; second *the divine beginning*, as the sought aim and content, which is gradually revealing itself; and, third, *human personality*, as the subject of life and consciousness, as that which passes from the given to the sought and, by adopting [assimilating] the divine beginning, reunites with it nature also, transforming the latter from the accidental into that which ought to be.

The very idea of revelation (and the religious development, as something objective, is necessarily a revelation) assumes that the unfolding divine being was originally hidden, that is to say, was not given as such; but even then it must have existed for men, for otherwise its subsequent revelation would have been quite unintelligible: consequently, it existed and acted, but not in its own definiteness, not in itself, but in its antipode [in its "other" manifestation, in that which is *not* it], that is to say, in [the created] nature; which is possible and natural insofar as the divine beginning, as the unconditional and therefore the all-embracing, embraces nature also (but is not embraced by it, since the larger covers the smaller, and not vice versa). This

first stage of religious development, in which the divine beginning is hidden behind the world of natural phenomena and the direct object of religious consciousness consists only of subservient beings and forces, which act directly in nature and most directly determine the material life and fate of man—this first main stage is represented by polytheism in the broad sense of that word, that is to say, by all that mythological or the so-called *nature-religions*. I call this stage the *natural* or *immediate revelation*. In the next stage of religious development the divine beginning is revealed in its distinction from, and contrast with, nature, as its negation, or the nought, (the absence) of natural being, the negative freedom from it. I call this stage, which is marked essentially with the pessimistic and ascetic character, the *negative revelation*; its purest type is represented by Buddhism. Finally, in the third stage the divine beginning is gradually revealed in its own content, in that which it is in itself and for itself (whereas previously it was revealed only in what it is not, that is to say, in its antipode, or in the simple negation of that antipode, [and] consequently still in relation to it, but not as [it is in] itself); this third stage, which I call generally the *positive revelation*, itself represents several clearly discernable phases which are subject to a separate analysis. Now let us return to the first, the natural religion.

Since the divine beginning is known here *only* in the creatures and forces of the natural world, nature itself, as such, receives a divine significance, is considered to be something unconditionally self-existent. This represents the general meaning of the naturalistic consciousness; here also man is not content with the present reality, here also he seeks for another unconditional, but seeks for it and thinks that he can find it in the same sphere of the natural material existence—and therefore falls under the dominion of the forces and principles which act in nature, falls into slavery to the “beggary elements” of the world of nature. But since human personality distinguishes itself from nature, places the latter before itself as an object, and therefore comes to be not only a natural being but also something different and greater than nature, the dominion of natural elements over human personality can not be unconditional—for that power is given to them by human personality itself: nature dominates over us in an external manner only because and only inasmuch as we submit to it internally; and we submit to it internally, we give it the power over ourselves only because we think it to possess that unconditional content which could give fullness of our life and consciousness, could answer our infinite striving. As soon as we, i.e., a separate man as well as the whole of

humanity, are convinced by experience that nature, as the external mechanism and the material of life, is by itself void of content and, consequently, is unable to fulfill our demand, nature necessarily loses its power over us, ceases to be divine [for us]; we become inwardly liberated from it, and the full inner emancipation is necessarily followed by external deliverance also.

The inner emancipation from nature in the self-consciousness of pure personality was first clearly expressed in the Indian philosophy. There is, for example in the Sankhya-Karika, a work described to the seer Kapila, the founder of the philosophical school of Sankhya and, in all probability, the nearest predecessor of Buddhism.

"The true and perfect knowledge through which one reaches emancipation from all evil consists in the resolute and complete differentiation of the material principles of the natural world from the sensing and comprehending element, that is to say, from the ego.

"The spirit (*purusha*) is the observer, the witness, the guest—it is lone and suffering.

"Nature (*prakriti*) is a means for the spirit—it prepares the spirit for deliverance.

"The union of spirit with Nature is similar to the union of the lame with the blind. Blind, but rich with its acting forces, Nature carries upon its shoulders the inactive but seeing (conscious) spirit. Through this all creation is effected.

"The spirit experiences the sufferings of life and death until it finally renounces its union with Nature.

"In the same way as a dancing maiden, having shown herself to a gathered crowd of spectators, finishes her dance and departs; so creative Nature steps aside after it has shown itself to the spirit in all its brilliancy. The dancing maiden goes away because she has been seen, and the spectators leave because they have satisfied their sight: in the same manner breaks up the union of spirit with Nature through full knowledge. I saw her, have seen more than enough of her, says the spirit. I was seen, says Nature—and they turn away from each other, and there is no more reason for their union, or for the creation resulting from that union."*

*See the translation of Sankhya-Karika, attached to the well known book of Colbroog on Indian philosophy in the French translation by Potie.

Nature by itself is but a series of indifferent processes—a quiet and indifferent existence; but when it is endowed with the unconditional, divine value, when it is held to contain [in itself] the aim of life and the content of human personality, then nature necessarily receives a negative significance for man, appears as *evil* and *suffering*.

Indeed, the life of nature is all based on struggle, on the exclusive self-assertion of every being, on the inner and outer negation by the latter of all other [beings]. The law of nature is the struggle for existence, and the more highly and perfectly a being is organized, the greater development that law perceives in its application, the more complicated and the deeper is the evil. In man it reaches its fullness. Although, as the poet says,

*Es wächst hienieden Brod genung
Füt alle Menschenkinder
Auch Myrten und Rosen Schönheit und Lust,
Und Zuckererbsen nicht minder,*

but even if it were so in reality, ([which it is not,] the above is but a *pium desiderium*), the struggle for existence has a deeper sense and is of a wider volume that a mere struggle for bread, for myrtles and roses. Heine forgot about the struggle for laurels and the still more frightful fight for power and authority. He who impartially observed human nature will not doubt that if all men were well fed and their lower passions satisfied, [nevertheless,] remaining on natural grounds, on the ground of natural egoism, they would surely destroy each other in competition for mental and moral supremacy.

Further, nature by itself, as a combination of natural processes only, is a constant movement, a constant transition from one form to another, a constant attainment. But if there is nothing else outside of nature, independent of it, then that movement is a movement without aim, a transition without end—an attainment by which nothing is attained.

The processes and states of natural being can appear to the imagination as aims only until they are realized. The realization of a natural tendency or instinct, which consists of such a natural process, appears as the necessary content, as something satisfying and fulfilling [only] until the time when that realization has been accomplished, until the natural good has been reached. The attainment of it demonstrates however, that in reality it is not what it appears to be—that the imagination posited, gave definite forms and definite content, established as an object and purpose, that which in reality is but an indifferent process, void of content, that which itself needs a content and a pur-

pose. Thus the natural life, when it is set up as the aim, proves to be not only evil, but also a deceit, an illusion: the whole content which man in his striving ties up with certain objects and phenomena, all that content, all the images and colors belong to him alone, to his imagination. It is not man who receives from nature something that he does not have, which could satisfy and fulfill his existence—on the contrary, he himself adds to nature all that she does not possess, that which he draws out of himself. Divested of that rich garment, which was given her by the will and imagination of man, nature appears only as a blind, external, alien force, a force of evil and deceit.

The subjection to this external and blind force is the fundamental source of suffering for man; but the realization that nature is evil, deceit, and suffering, is at the same time the realization of his personal superiority, of the superiority of human personality over nature.

If I acknowledge nature to be evil, it is only because within myself there is a force of the good, in relation to which nature appears as evil. If I recognize that nature is a deceit and phantom, it is only because I can find in myself a force of the truth, in comparison with which nature is deceit. And, finally, [if] nature causes suffering—not this or that partial, accidental suffering, but the general burden of natural existence, [as it were]—[it is] only because there is [in us] a striving and capacity for the beatitude and for the fullness of being which nature can not give.

If, thus, human personality is something greater than nature, and nature's power over it depends on the personality itself; i.e. [if it is] man's own will, when turned towards nature, [that] ties man with the latter and leads towards evil, deceit, and suffering: then the emancipation or redemption from the power and domination of nature is in the emancipation from one's own natural will—in the renunciation of it.

The human will in all its acts is a striving for natural existence, the assertion of oneself as a natural being—and the abnegation of that will is the abnegation of natural existence. But since nature in the beginning is given as his *all*, since outside of it nothing exists for man in the given state of his consciousness: the abnegation of natural existence is the abnegation of any existence. The striving for liberation from nature is [thus] a striving for self-annihilation; if nature is all, then that which is not nature—is nought.

Of course, the recognition of nature as evil, deceit, and suffering, itself takes away from nature the value of the unconditional principle; but since outside of it [of nature] there is no other content for the consciousness of the natural man, then the unconditional principle,

It is noteworthy that, as the religious attitude towards nature (the subjection to it of the life and consciousness of man, and its deification) finally led to a religious negation of nature and of all being, [i.e.,] to a religious nihilism; so also the philosophical deification of nature in contemporary consciousness, the philosophical naturalism, has led towards the philosophical negation of all being, towards the philosophical nihilism, which, as is well known, has been developed in our days in the systems of Schopenhauer and Hartman.

It can be seen even from these facts that this nihilism, in its religious as well as in its philosophical form, is not anything accidental, is not a product of temporary historical conditions; that it has deeper significance for human consciousness and, indeed, this negative world view is a logically necessary step in the development of religious consciousness.

If man begins by confusing the unconditional beginning with the beggarly, powerless elements of the world (and as a finite natural being he has to begin with such a confusion); then, in order that he would realize and understand that unconditional beginning in its own reality, it is necessary that he should first separate it from, and oppose it to, those feeble and beggarly elements of the world: in order to understand what the unconditional beginning is, one must first reject with his will and thought that which it is not. This unconditional rejection of all finite, limited attributes is already a negative definition of the unconditional beginning itself; for the consciousness which does not as yet possess that beginning itself, such a negative definition is necessarily the first step towards the positive knowledge of it. For the contemporary consciousness, which has transferred the center of gravity from the unconditional beginning to conditional nature, it is necessary to go through a complete and resolute rejection of that nature in order to be able, once more, to realize the supernatural, unconditional reality.

Ancient as well as modern Buddhism can be termed a negative religion, and this negative religion must necessarily precede the positive one as an unavoidable stage [of transition towards it], in the same way as in the ancient times those who wanted to be initiated had to go through the small mysteries before they could reach the great ones.

If the divine beginning is to be "all" for us, then all that is not it [not the divine beginning] must be acknowledged by us as nothing. But if, as Christ said, we lose our soul in order to receive it back again—then we lose the world also in order that we may receive it back again; because, as we shall see, if the natural world, regarded outside of the

divine beginning, in severance from it, in itself, is evil, deceit, and suffering: then in the positive relation to that unconditional beginning, or viewed *from within* that beginning, the natural world becomes a necessary tool or material for the complete actualization, for the final realization of the divine beginning itself.

LECTURE FOUR

THE negative religion—the universally-historical expression of which is represented by Buddhism—understands the unconditional beginning as nothing. It is indeed *nothing*, for it is not *something*, it is not any definite, limited being, or a creature among other creatures—for it is above any definition, because it is *free from all*. The freedom from all being (the positive nothingness), however, is not the deprivation [loss] of all being (the negative nothingness). The actual, positive freedom of an entity presupposes its dominion, a positive force or power, over that from which the entity is free. Thus, for instance, one can not say about a child that he is free from passions or that he is above passions—he simply does not have them (and in this respect he is below them); only he can be considered to be free from passions who has them but holds them in his control, who dominates, but is not dominated by, them.

Thus the divine beginning, free from all being, from everything, is at the same time and thereby the positive force and power of all being, possesses all, all is its own content; and in that sense the divine beginning itself is "all." This is indicated in that the most general and necessary name which we have to give to the divine beginning—the name of *the absolute*; for the word *absolutum* means, first, *that which is absolved*, i.e., [divested] of all particular definitions; and, second, *that which is fulfilled*, accomplished, completed i.e. that which possesses all and contains all in itself. At the same time it is evident that both of these meanings are closely interconnected, so that only in possessing all can one abnegate all.

What is, then, that *all* which forms the positive content of the divine beginning? It can not be merely the aggregate of natural phenomena, for each of the phenomena, and consequently all of them together, represent only a constant transition, a process, which bears only an appearance of being but [is] not the true, essential, and abiding being. If, thus, our natural universe, because of its purely relative character, can not be the true content of the divine beginning; then that content, that is to say, *the positive all* (the all-integrity or the fullness of being) can be found solely in the supernatural domain which,

Taking the point of view of the [now] dominant philosophies [based on] natural science, we must admit that if there were no creatures endowed with senses, the world would have changed its character radically. In fact, from this point of view, sound, for instance, all by itself, that is to say independently of the sense of hearing and of the organs of hearing—is only an undulating vibration of the air, but evidently the vibration of the air by itself is not what we call sound; in order that this vibration of the air might become a sound, an ear is necessary upon which that vibration might act and stimulate certain reactions in the nervous apparatus of hearing, appearing in the being to whom that apparatus belongs as the sensation of sound.

In the same manner, for the scientific point of view, light is but a vibratory movement of the waves of ether. The movement of the ether-waves by itself, however, is not what we call light; it [the movement] is but a mechanical movement and nothing more. In order to become light and color it is necessary that it would act upon the organ of sight and, producing in it corresponding changes, in some way stimulate in the creature [endowed with sensorium] these sensations which are, properly, what we call light.

If I became blind, light would not come, of course, cease to exist—but only because there would [still] be other creatures capable of seeing, having light sensations. If, however, there were no seeing creatures, then, obviously, there would be no light *as light*: there would be only the mechanical movements of ether, corresponding to light.

Thus the world we know in every case is only phenomena in us and for us, our representation [perception]; and if we place it wholly outside of ourselves, as something unconditionally self-determined and independent of ourselves, then it is [only because we misapprehend] a natural illusion.

The world is [human] representation. Since, however, this representation is not arbitrary, because we can not at will create or destroy material objects—because the material universe with all its phenomena is, so to speak, imposed upon us; and although its sensible qualities are defined by our senses, and in this regard depend upon us, yet its very reality, its existence, does not depend upon us, but is given to us: therefore, although in its sensory forms the world is our representation, it must, nevertheless, have a certain cause or essence independent of us.

If what we see is only our representation, it does not follow that this representation did not have causes independent of us, which we do not see. The involuntary character of this representation makes the

admission of these causes necessary. Thus, at the base of dependent phenomena is assumed an independent essence or an essential cause which gives us a certain relative reality. As, however, the relative reality of these objects and phenomena, which are multiple and multiform, presupposes the interrelation and interaction of many causes, therefore that essence which generates them must also constitute a certain plurality, for otherwise it could not contain sufficient basis or cause of the given phenomena.

Therefore the general foundation [of the phenomenal world] appears necessarily as the aggregate of a great many elementary substances or causes of an eternal and immutable nature, which constitute the ultimate bases of all reality, out of which are composed all objects, all phenomena, all real being, and into which this real being can be decomposed. These elements, being eternal and immutable, can not themselves be decomposed or divided. It is these fundamental substances which we call atoms, that is to say, the indivisible.

Thus, in reality, independently exist only the indivisible elementary essences which, through different combinations and multiform interactions, comprise what we call the real world. This real world is actually real only in its elemental foundations or causes—in the atoms—but in its concrete aspect it is only a phenomenon, only a representation that is conditioned by multiform interactions, only an appearance.

But what are we to think about these fundamental essences, about the atoms themselves? Vulgar materialism understands by atoms some infinitely small particles of matter; but that is obviously a gross error. Under the term matter we understand something that extends in space, something hard and solid, that is to say, impermeable—in a word, something corporal; but, as we have seen, all bodily matter is reduced to our sensations and is only our representation. Extension is the combination of visual and muscular sensations, hardness is a sensation of touch; consequently, matter, as something extended and hard, imperious, is only a representation; and therefore atoms, as elementary essences, as the foundations of [external] reality i.e., as that which is not representation, can not possibly be particles of matter. When I touch any material object, then its hardness and impermeability are merely my sensations and a combination of these sensations which form [my representation of] a whole object, [i.e., are] only my sense-perception, are within me.

But the cause which produces this [sense-perception] in me, i.e., that because of which I get the sensation of impermeability—that which

I encounter—evidently is not in me, is independent of me, is a self-extant cause of my sensations.

In the sensation of impermeability I encounter a certain resistance, which is what produces the sensation; consequently, I must suppose a certain *opposing force*, and it is only to that force that the reality independent of myself belongs. Consequently the atoms, as the fundamental or ultimate elements of this reality, are nothing other than elementary forces.

Thus, the atoms are acting or active forces, an all that exists is the result of their interaction.

This interaction, however, not only presupposes the faculty of acting, but also the faculty of receiving the actions of others. Each force acts upon another and at the same time experiences the action of this other or of these other [forces]. In order to act outside of itself upon others, the force must have a centrifugal or extravertive *striving*. In order to receive the action of another force, the given force must give it room, so to speak, must attract that force, or present it before itself. Thus every fundamental force is necessarily expressed in *striving and in representation*.

In striving it receives actuality for the others, or acts upon the others; while in representation, other [forces] have actuality for it, it is acted upon by the others.

Thus, the foundations of reality are forces—the striving [extraverted, active] forces, and those receiving [action, i.e., acted upon], or the representing ones.

By experiencing the action of another force upon itself, by giving it place, the first force is limited by the other one, is distinguished from it and at the same time turns, so to speak, unto itself, burrows into its own reality, becomes defined [within itself and therefore] for itself. Thus, for example, when we touch or strike a material object, we first sense this object, this "other one," this external force; it becomes real for us; but in this sensation of ours we also become aware of our own selves, because it is *our* sensation; by this sensation, we witness, as it were our own reality, as [the reality] of those who feel; we come to be something [objective] for ourselves. Thus, we have forces which, first, act outside of themselves [and thus beget external] reality for others; and, second, those which receive the action of that [which in relation to them is their] "other one," for which that "other one" possesses [external] reality, or is represented by them; and, finally, [forces] which [themselves] beget reality for themselves—that [reflection of forces upon themselves, or their awareness of them-

selves] which we call consciousness in the broad meaning of that word. Such forces are more than forces—they are *beings*.

Thus we must assume that atoms, that is to say, the fundamental elements of every reality, [besides being mechanical forces] are elementary living beings; or, what since the time of Leibnitz, has received the name of monads.

Thus the content of *all* consists of living and acting beings, eternal and abiding, which by their interaction form all reality, all that exists.

The interaction of the basic beings or monads presupposes a qualitative distinction among them; if the action of one monad upon another is defined by its striving towards that other one, and of that striving properly speaking consists, then the basis [origin] of that striving will be found in the fact that other basic beings, other monads, represent something qualitatively different from the first one, something that would give to the first being a new content which it itself does not possess, which would complete its being; for otherwise, if these two fundamental beings were fully identical, if the second [monad] was exactly alike with the first one, then there would not be any sufficient ground, any reason, for the first [monad] to strive towards the second one. (In order to elucidate this problem one can point to the law of polarity, which obtains in the physical world: only the opposite or diversely named poles attract each other, because they complete one another, are mutually necessary.)

The interaction of basic beings requires that each one of them have its own specific quality which makes it different from all others, because of which it becomes the object of the striving and action of all the others, and it itself is able, in turn, to act upon the others in a certain manner.

The beings not merely act upon each other, but act in a certain specific way, and in no other.

If all the external qualitative differences known to us belong to the realm of phenomena, if they are conditional, unstable and transitory, then the qualitative differences among the fundamental beings, which are eternal and immutable, must also be eternal and immutable, that is to say, unconditional.

This unconditional quality of a fundamental being, which allows it to be the content of all the others, and in consequence of which all the others can be the content of it—this unconditional quality which determines all the acts of a being as well as all its [receptory] reactions (because the being not only acts according to what it is, but also receives the actions of the others according to what it is [itself])—

this unconditional quality, I say, represents the being's proper inner, immutable character which makes it what it is, or constitutes its *idea*.

Thus the fundamental beings, which comprise the content of the unconditional beginning, in the first place, are not only indivisible units or atoms; secondly, they are not only living, acting forces, or monads: they are, [in addition,] beings defined by the unconditional quality of being, or ideas.

In order that *all* could be the content of the unconditional beginning, it is necessary that this *all* should itself represent a definite content i.e., it is necessary that every unit which composes this whole, that each member of that whole, be something specific, that it could not be replaced or confused with something else; it is necessary that it be an eternal, abiding idea.

The doctrine of ideas, as of the eternal and immutable essences which lie at the basis of all the transitory existences and phenomena, and constitute the real content of the unconditional beginning, or the eternal, immutable *all*—that doctrine, first developed, as is known, by the Greek philosophy in the person of Plato, constituted in the revelation of the divine beginning the next step after Buddhism. Buddhism says: "The given universe, the natural being, all that exists, is not the true being, is a phantom; if so, if what is, is not the truth then the truth must be that which is not, or nothing." Platonic idealism states the opposite: "If that which, for us, exists immediately, [namely,] the natural being or the world of phenomena, is not the truth, is not the really-extant"—and at this point Platonism agrees with Buddhism—"then this being this reality can be acknowledged as untrue only because there is another reality, which does possess the character and truth and essentiality." The given reality is untrue or not genuine only in relation to another, the true and genuine, reality; or, in other words, the natural reality has its truth, its real essence in another reality, and this "other" reality is the idea; and at the same time, since the true, genuine reality can not be poorer, cannot include in itself less than the phantom reality contains, then we must necessarily assume that to everything that is found in the latter (i.e., in the visible or phantom reality), corresponds something in the true and genuine reality—in other words, [we must assume] that every being of this natural world has its own idea or its true and genuine essence. Thus this true reality, this genuine essence is defined not simply as an idea, but as the ideal *all* or as the world of ideas, the kingdom of ideas.

A clear understanding of what the idea is may be gained in a reference to the inner character of human personality.

Every human personality is first of all a natural phenomenon, subjected to external conditions and determined by them in its acts and perceptions. Insofar as the manifestations of this personality are determined by the outside conditions, insofar as they are subjected to the laws of external or mechanical causality, in that measure the properties of the acts or manifestations of this personality—properties which form what is called the empirical character of this personality—are but natural conditional properties.

Together with this, however, every human personality has in itself something absolutely unique which defies all external determination, which does not fit any formula, and yet imposes a certain individual stamp upon all the acts and perceptions of this personality. This peculiarity is not only something undefinable, but also something unchanging: it is completely independent of the external direction of the will and action of this person; it remains unchanging under all circumstances and in all the conditions in which this personality may be placed. Under all these circumstances and conditions the personality will manifest that indefinable and elusive peculiarity, that its individual character, will put its imprint upon every one of its actions and perceptions.

Thus the internal individual character of the personality appears to be something unconditional, and it is that [unconditional element] what comprises its own essence, the particular personal content or the specific personal idea of the given being, the idea by which is determined the essential value of the being in everything, the part which it plays and forever will play in the universal drama.

The qualitative distinctions of the fundamental beings are necessarily expressed in the diversity of their relations: if all the fundamental beings were unconditionally identical, then they would be related one to the other in unconditionally similar ways; but if they are not identical, if every one among them represents its own specific character or idea, every one of them must be related to all others in its own particular manner, must occupy in all [in the pattern of totality] its own definite place: and it is that relation of each being to *all* what constitutes its *objective* idea—which represents the full manifestation or realization of its inner peculiarity, or its *subjective* idea.

But how, in general, is the relation between fundamental beings possible when they are qualitatively different and separate? Obviously, it is possible only when they come together or are equated in something that is common to them, although they differ from each other immediately; and in case of the *essential* relation between ideas, it is necessary that that common [element] itself should be essential, i.e.,

that it be a specific idea or a fundamental being. Thus the essential relation between ideas is similar to the formally-logical relation among different concepts—here, as well as there, we have a relation of a greater or lesser commonness and breadth. If the ideas of several beings relate to the idea of a single being as the concepts denoting species are related to genus-concept, then this latter being covers all those others, contains them in itself: different among themselves, they are equal in relation to it [to the genus-being] and it appears as their common center, equally fulfilling them with its [own] idea. Thus appears [comes into being] the complex organism of beings; several such organisms find the center in another being with a still more general or broad idea and then become parts or organs of a new organism of a higher order, which responds to, or covers with itself, all the lower organisms related to it. Thus, gradually ascending, we reach the widest and most general idea which must internally cover with itself all the others. This is the idea of the unconditional goodness, or more exactly, the idea of the unconditional grace [benevolence], or Love. In reality, every idea is a good—[good] for the bearer of it—his good and his love. Every being is what it loves. If, however, every specific idea is a certain specific good and specific love, then the general universal, or absolute idea is the unconditional good and the unconditional love, i.e., such love which equally contains in itself all [i.e., the ideas of all entities], which corresponds to all. The unconditional love is precisely that ideal whole, that universal integrity, which comprises the proper content of the divine beginning. For the plenitude of ideas may not be conceived as their mechanical aggregate, but is [instead] their inner unity, which is love.

LECTURE FIVE

THE doctrine of ideas, when it is correctly developed, indicates for us the objective essence of the divine beginning, or what constitutes the proper metaphysical realm of its being, which is independent of the natural world of phenomena, although connected with it. We have learned what is to be thought of those fundamental bases and ultimate elements of all existence, which on the one hand, are related to the visible world of phenomena as its substantial principles or generating causes, and on the other hand form the proper content or the inner fullness of the divine beginning. In order to reach it [this understanding] we have gone through three mental stages, and the answer we have gotten represents, in school language, three momenti: (1) In order to be the *bases of reality*, the essences in question must be indivisible units not subject to differentiation, [or] ultimate centers of being—the atoms* (2) In order to *produce actual* multiplicity of being, these central units must act and receive action, i.e., must be in a state of interaction among themselves; and, consequently, they must be acting or living forces—the monads. (3) Finally, in order to constitute the essential whole, or to be the content of the unconditional beginning, these individual forces must themselves comprise a certain content, i.e. be definite ideas.

Different metaphysical systems dwelt primarily upon one of these three momenti, losing sight of the other two; although logically they do not exclude one another but, on the contrary, require one another, so that the full truth of the answer to the fundamental metaphysical question is found in the synthesis of these three concepts, the atom, the living force (the monad), and the idea—in the synthesis which can be expressed by the simple word of general use, a *being*.

Indeed, the concept of a being internally unites in itself these three concepts. For a being, in order to be a being, must, first, form a separate unit, a specific center of being; because otherwise it would not

*Here we have in mind, so far, only their relations among themselves and that outside phenomenal existence in regard to which they are bases and centers. In relation to the absolute being, they can not have the significance of unconditionally real centers: in relation to it they appear to be permeable, inasmuch as they themselves are rooted in it. Therefore, in speaking of the indivisible units or atoms, we are using only a relative definition.

then, of course, there is no transition from that one to plurality at all. In the same way, if it be asserted that absolute plurality is by itself without any internal oneness, then it is evident that there is no transition from such plurality to the one. But the acceptance of exclusive oneness or of exclusive plurality as the starting point is, precisely, that arbitrary thought which can not be justified by reason; the very impossibility of reaching any satisfactory result, if that point of view be taken as the premise, indicates its insolvency. Contrariwise: since logically we can start only with the unconditional, and the unconditional, by the very conception of it, can not be anything exclusive, i.e. limited, and therefore can not be *only* single or *only plural*; we must straightly acknowledge, therefore, in agreement with logic as well as with the external and internal experience, that there is not and can not be either pure oneness or pure plurality; that all that is, is necessarily both one and many. From this point of view, the many (beings) do not have existence in their separateness or in unconditional particularization, but each of them can exist in itself and for itself only insofar as it is at the same time in a state of interaction and interpenetration with the others, as inseparable elements of a single whole; for the particular quality or character of each being in its objectivity consists precisely in the definite relation of that being to the whole, and, consequently, in its definite interaction with *all*. But this, obviously, is possible only in case those beings have among themselves an essential commonness; i.e., if they are rooted in a single general substance, which forms the *essential medium* of their interaction, embracing all of them in itself but not contained [entirely, exclusively] in any one of them separately.

Thus, the plurality of beings is not the plurality of unconditionally-separate units, but is merely the plurality of the elements of a single system, conditioned by the essential unity of their common beginning (as the life of natural organisms known to us is also conditioned by the unity of the organic soul, by which they are determined). Such an organic character of the basic beings depends, on the other hand, on the fact that those beings are ideas. Indeed, if the basic beings were only real units or only acting forces and, consequently, were related one to another purely externally, if each existed only in itself and outside of others—in such case, their unity also would be only external, mechanical, and then the very possibility of such a unity, the possibility of any kind of interaction, would be questionable. Since, however, as we had to admit already, the fundamental beings are not only units possessing force, or units of forces, but are also definite ideas; and, consequently, their connection consists not only of their external ac-

tion on each other as real forces, but is first of all determined by their ideal content which gives to each one a specific importance and a necessary place in the whole: it follows directly that there is an internal connection among all beings, by virtue of which their system appears as the *organism of ideas*.

As it was already noted in the last lecture, the general character of the ideal cosmos represents a certain correspondence with the interrelation of our intellectual conceptions—namely, the fact that particular beings or ideas are embraced by others, the more general ones, as the concepts of species are embraced by the concept of [their] genus.

On the other hand, however, there is a fundamental difference and even a contrast between the interrelationship in the domain of concepts and that of the ideas of beings. As it is known from formal logic, the volume [quantitative extent] of a concept is in inverse relation to the [qualitative] content; i.e., the broader any concept is, the larger is its scope, i.e., the larger the number of other particular concepts which come under it—the fewer are its symbols, the poorer is its [qualitative] content, the more general, more indefinite, it is. (Thus, for example, "man" as a general concept embracing all human beings, and consequently of a scope broader than for instance, the concept of a "monk," is much poorer than the latter in [its qualitative] content: for in the concept of "man" *in general*, are included only such characteristics as are common to all men without exception, while in the idea of a "monk" we can find, in addition, many other characteristics which constitute the specific character of monastic vocation; so that this latter concept, narrower than the concept of "man," is at the same time richer by its inner content, i.e., richer in positive characteristics).

Such relation, obviously, depends upon the [manner of] origin of the general rational concepts. Because they result from a purely negative abstraction, they can have no independence, no content of their own, but are only the general framework for that concrete data from which they are abstracted. And abstraction consists in the removal or negation of those specific characteristics which define the particular concepts, entering the scope of the general concept. (Thus, in the example given above, the abstract concept of "man" is formed by the removal or the negation of all those particular distinguishing characteristics which could be found in the concepts of the different sorts of men.)

With *ideas*, as positive determinants of particular beings, it is quite the reverse: *the relation of the volume [scope] to the content is necessarily direct*; that is to say, the broader the scope of the idea, the

richer it is in content. If a general generic concept, as a simple abstraction, as a passive consequence of rations activity, can be defined by its constituent concepts only negatively, by the exclusion of their positive characteristics from its content-to-be; then the idea, as an independent essence, must, on the contrary, find itself in a state of active inter-relation with those particular ideas which are covered by it, which comprise its volume; i.e., it must be defined by them positively. Indeed, since general idea is something in itself, or expresses an independent being; therefore, standing in certain relation to other particular ideas or beings, receiving their action and also reacting upon them in accordance with its own character, it (obviously) actualizes, thereby, upon them that its own character, develops its own content on different sides and in different directions, realizes itself in different relations; and, consequently, the larger the number of particular ideas with which it is in a direct relation, or the greater number of ideas in its volume—the greater the diversity and definiteness with which it realizes itself, the fuller, the richer is its own content. Thus, because of the positive character which necessarily belongs to the interaction of ideal beings, the particular ideas which comprise the volume of a general idea, comprise also its content; or, to be more precise, the content of this broader idea is directly and positively determined, in its realization or objectivity, by those narrower ideas which enter into its scope—and, consequently, the broader the scope [of the idea of a being], the richer its content.

Therefore, the well known dictum of Spinoza, "*omnis determinatio est negatio*" (every definition is a negation), in no wise may be applied to an actual being, which possesses a positive content or idea; for in that case the determination, i.e., the action of other upon this being, encounters in it [in this being] a certain positive force of its own, which is called forth by this action to manifest or to actualize its content. As a living force, a being can not react only passively to the action of others: it acts upon them itself; and, in being fulfilled with them, it fulfills them. Consequently, the determination of others is for it [for the being in question] at the same time its [own] self-determination; the result depends equally on itself and on the external forces acting upon it; and the whole relation has a positive character. Thus, for example, every human person, having his own character and representing a certain specific idea, by entering into interaction with others, in being

⁷I take this aphorism in its general meaning, of course, for the elucidation of my thought, not analyzing that particular meaning which it may have in Spinoza's system itself.

determined by others and determining them himself, discloses thereby his own character and realizes his own idea, without which his character and idea would be [remain] a pure possibility: they become an actuality of the person and in that [actuality] the person is necessarily also determined by the others. Consequently, in this case the determination is not a negation, but a realization; it would be a negation only in case the person had no characteristics, represented no specific particularity, [i.e.] if he the person were an empty space; but that, obviously, is an impossibility.

From all that has been said it is clear that by [the term] ideas we mean perfectly definite, special forms of metaphysical beings, which belongs to them [to the metaphysical beings] as such, and in no way are the result of our own abstracting reasoning. According to this view, ideas possess an objective existence in relation to our cognition and at the same time a subjective being in themselves; i.e., they themselves are subjects, or more correctly, they have their own special subjects. Ideas are equally independent of both the rationalist abstractions and the sensual reality. Indeed, if material reality, perceived by our external senses, represents by itself only conditional and transitory phenomena, but not the self-existent beings of foundations of being; then these latter, although connected in a certain way with that external reality, must, nevertheless, formally differ from it, must have their own being independent of it; and, consequently, for the cognition of them as actual we need a special mode of mental activity, which we shall call by the term already known in philosophy, that of mental contemplation or intuition (*intellektuelle Anschauung, Intuition*), and which comprises the primeval form of the true knowledge, clearly distinguished from sense-perception and experience, as well as from the rational or abstract thinking. This latter, it has been shown, can not have any positive content of its own: an abstract concept, by its very definition, can not go beyond that from which it was abstracted, it can not itself transform accidental and particular facts into necessary and universal truths or ideas. Nevertheless, abstract reasoning undoubtedly has a special, although a negative and mediatory, significance as a transition or demarcation between the sense-perception of phenomena and the mental contemplation of ideas. Indeed, every general abstract concept contains the negation of all phenomena which enter into its scope in their particular, immediate peculiarity, and at the same time, and thereby, their affirmation in some new unity and in a new content which the abstract conception, by virtue of its purely negative origin, does not give but only indicates. Every general concept is thus a

negation of a particular phenomenon, and an indication of a universal idea. Thus, in the former example, the general concept of "man" not only includes a negation of the particular peculiarities of this or that man considered separately, but also affirms a certain new, higher unity, which embraces all men, but is at the same time different from them all, and, consequently, must possess its own special objectivity, which makes it to be their generic objective norm (we directly point to such a norm when we say: "be a man," or "act in conformity with human dignity," and so forth). But this objective norm, this content of the higher unity which embraces all human actuality—and yet is free from it—we shall, obviously, never reach by way of an abstraction in which that new unity comes only as an empty place left after the negation of that which is not. Hence it is clear that abstract thought is a transitory state of mind [appearing] when it [the mind] is strong enough to liberate itself from the exclusive domination of sense-perception and to adopt a negative attitude towards it, but is not as yet capable of grasping the idea in the entirety of its actual objective being, to unite with it internally and essentially; [when the mind] can only touch upon its surface (to use a metaphor), [or] glide over its external forms. The fruit of such an attitude is not a living image or likeness of an extant idea but only its shadow, which outlines its external boundaries and configurations without, however, the plenitude of forms, forces, and colors. Thus abstract thought, deprived of its own content, must either serve as an abbreviation [summation] of sense-perception or as an anticipation of mental contemplation, insofar as the general concepts forming it can be affirmed either as schemes of phenomena or as shadows of ideas.

As far as the latter are concerned, even if the necessity for the acknowledgment of them was not based on clear logical foundations, we would still have to acknowledge them on factual grounds, which give them the authenticity of the universal human experience: the reality of ideas and of mental contemplation is indubitably proved by

⁸It is upon the confusion of ideas with concepts that the well known scholastic controversy between the nominalists and the realists was based. Both sides were really right. The nominalists, who asserted "universalia post res," originally understood under *universalia* general concepts, and in that respect justly tried to prove their dependent nature and the lack of content in them; although, in defining them solely as *nomina* or *voces*, they had evidently gone to an extreme. On the other hand, the realists, who affirmed "universalia ante res," understood by this term real ideas, and therefore justly ascribed to them independent being. Because, however, neither side had properly differentiated between these two meanings of the word *universalia*, or at any rate, had not defined the distinction with sufficient exactness, endless disputes naturally could not but arise between them.

the fact of artistic creation. Indeed, those images that are embodied by the artist in his works are neither a simple reproduction of observed phenomena in their particular and accidental reality, nor a general concept abstracted from that reality. Both, observation and abstraction, or generalization, are necessary for the working out of artistic ideas, but not for their creation—otherwise every observing and thoughtful man, every scientist and thinker could be a true artist, which is not the case. Anyone at all familiar with the process of artistic creation is well aware [of the fact] that artistic ideas and images are not complex products of observation and reflection, but appear to mental vision at once, in their inner wholeness (the artist *sees* them, as Goethe and Hoffman directly testified about themselves), and the subsequent artistic work means merely their development and embodiment in material details. Everyone knows that abstract intellectualism, *as well as servile imitation of external reality, are equally deficiencies in artistic creation*; everyone knows that the truly artistic image or type requires an inner unity of a perfect individuality with a complete generality or universality; and it is this unity which comprises the essential or the proper definition of an idea mentally contemplated, in contradistinction with the abstract concept which possesses only universality, [on one hand,] and [on the other] with the particular phenomenon which possesses only individuality. If, thus, neither a particular phenomenon, which is perceived through external experience, nor the general conception, which is developed by intellectual reflection, can be the object of artistic creation: then it is only the extant idea, which reveals itself to mental contemplation, that can constitute the object [of artistic creation].

Because of this direct connection of art with the metaphysical world of ideal beings, we find that the same national genius who first conceived the divine beginning as the ideal cosmos—the same national genius was also the real progenitor of art. Therefore, speaking of Greek idealism, we must understand by that term not only the philosophical idealism of Plato, but also all the rest of the world-view of the Greek people which was expressed in their whole culture and was their true religion. Platonism merely elevated to the level of the philosophical consciousness those ideal foundations which had lain in the artistic religion or the religious art of the Greeks. The Greeks learned from Plato only the philosophical formula of that ideal cosmos which was already known to them as a living reality in the Olympus of Homer and Phidias. If the ancient Greek cognated the divine beginning only as harmony and beauty, he certainly did not perceive its *whole* truth, for it is *more* than harmony and beauty; but, although it did not em-

brace the *whole* truth of the divine beginning, this idealism obviously represented a certain aspect, a certain side, of Divinity, contained in itself some thing divine in a positive sense. To assert the opposite, to regard that idealism as merely a pagan deception, means to assert that the truly divine has no need of harmony and beauty of form, that it can dispense with the realization of itself in the ideal cosmos. But (as it is obviously the case) if beauty and harmony form a necessary and essential element of Divinity, then we must certainly acknowledge Greek *idealism* as the first positive phase of religious revelation, [the phase] in which the divine beginning, removed from sensual nature, appeared in a new luminous kingdom populated not with poor shadows of the material world, nor with accidental creations of our imagination, but with real beings, which unite with the purity of the idea the whole force of being, and which are simultaneously objects of contemplation [for us] and subjects of existence (in themselves).

As we have seen, all ideas are inwardly interconnected, being equally partakers of the one all-embracing idea of the unconditional *love*, which, by its very nature, inwardly contains in itself all the "other," is the focused expression of the whole, or is *all as unity*. But in order that this focusing, or this unity, be real, i.e., that it be *unification of something*, a separate existence of what is united, or its existence *for itself*, is obviously necessary in actual distinction from the one; and in order that ideas be separate, they must be independent beings with specific acting forces and specific centers or foci of those forces, i.e., they must be not only ideas, but monads and atoms.

Thus, from the point of view of unity, from the point of view of the one universal idea, we come necessarily to the plurality of ideal beings, for without such plurality that is to say, in the absence of that which has to be united, the unity itself can not be actual, can not be manifest but remains potential, unrevealed existence, an empty possibility, or nothing. On the other hand, just as every idea, i.e., every positive content necessarily presupposes a definite subject or bearer [of it], [that which] possesses definite forces for the realization of the idea; so also the all-one or the unconditional idea can not be only a pure idea or a pure object: in order to become the essential unity of all and to actually connect everything through [the medium of] itself, it itself must obviously possess essentiality and reality, must exist in itself and for itself, and not only in the other one or for "the other one"—in other words, *the all-one idea must be the self-determination of the single central being*. But what are we to think of that being?

If the objective idea, or the idea as object, i.e., in contemplation or for "the other one," differs from all other ideas by its essential quality or character, [i.e.,] differs *objectively*; then, on its own part, the bearer of that idea, or its subject (to be more exact—the idea as the subject) must be distinguished from others *subjectively*, or by its existence; i.e., it must possess a separate reality of its own, be an independent center *for itself*; must, consequently possess self-consciousness and personality. For otherwise, i.e., if the ideas differed only objectively by the cognizable qualities, but were not self-differentiated in their own inner being, they would really be but representations for him who thinks, would not be real beings—which as we know, can not be admitted.

LECTURE SIX

WE HAVE seen that the essential principle of Judaism—the revelation of God in his unconditional oneness, as the pure *I*—was being set free from its exclusiveness already in the revelation of the prophets of Israel, to whom God appeared not as the pure *I* only, which in its activity has no other basis besides the exclusively-subjective principle of arbitrary will that subjects man to itself by external force, arousing fear in him (as such to the Jew appeared, at first El-Shaddai, the God of force and fear; and as such, mainly, even now, Allah appears to the Mohammedans). To the prophets, God was revealed as possessing a definite, essential, ideal definition, as the all-embracing love—in consequence of which the action of God upon the “other one,” his relation to man, became defined by the *objective* idea of the absolute good, and the law of His being appeared no longer as a purely arbitrary will (in Himself) and an external, forced necessity (for man); but as an internal necessity, or true freedom. In conformity with this broadening of the religious principle, in the prophets the Jewish national consciousness also came to be broader. If the revelation of God as the exclusive *I* was answered in the people of God also with an exclusive assertion of its own national ego among other nations, then the consciousness to which God revealed Himself as the universal idea, as the all-embracing love, necessarily had to be emancipated from national egoism, necessarily had to become pan-human.

Such was, indeed the consciousness of the prophets. Jonah preached the will of Jehovah to the pagans of Nineveh; Isaiah and Jeremiah heralded the coming revelation as the banner of the nations, to which all nations shall flow. Yet the Jewish prophets were at the same time really the greatest patriots, fully permeated with the national idea of Judaism; precisely because they were completely permeated with it, they had to understand it as universal, as predestined for all men—as sufficiently great and broad to be able to unite with itself inwardly all humanity and the whole world. In this regard the example of the Jewish prophets—the greatest patriots and at the same time the greatest representatives of universalism—is in the highest degree instructive for us, for it points to the fact that if true patriotism is necessarily free from national exclusiveness and egoism, then at the same

time and thereby, the true pan-human point of view, the true universalism, in order to be something, in order to possess actual force and positive content, must necessarily be an expansion or universalization of a positive national idea, but not an empty and indifferent cosmopolitanism.

Thus, in the prophetic consciousness, the subjective, purely personal element of the Old Testament Jahve [the extant One] was united for the first time with the objective idea of the universal divine essence. But since the prophets were inspired *men of action*, were practical men in the highest sense of that word, and not contemplative thinkers, the synthetic idea of the divine being was for them more of a perception of [their] spiritual sense and the stirring of [their] moral will than an object of mental apperception. Yet, in order to fill and define with itself the whole consciousness of man, that idea had to become also an object of thought. If the truth of Divinity consists in unity of God as the extant One, or [the unity of] the unconditional Subject with His absolute essence or objective idea, this unity, this inner relation of the two elements (the personal and the essential) in Divinity, must be conceived of in a certain manner, must be defined. And if one of these divine elements (the unconditional personality of God) was preeminently revealed to the genius of the Jewish people, while the other one (the absolute idea of Divinity) was perceived particularly by the genius of Hellenism, it is very easy to understand that the synthesis of these two elements (which is necessary for the full knowledge of God) could come into being the soonest at the time and the place at which the Jewish and Greek nationalities collided.

And, in fact, the realization of this great intellectual task was commenced in Alexandria among Hellenistic Jews (i.e., those [Jews] who had received the Greek education), the outstanding representative of whom was the renowned Philo (who was born sometime before Christ and died in the apostolic era); who, as we know, developed the doctrine of the Logos (the word or reason), as "the expressor" of the divine universal essence and [as] the mediator between the one God and all that exists. In connection with this doctrine of the Logos, as its further development, also in Alexandria appeared the doctrine of the Neoplatonics concerning the three Divine hypostasies, which effect the absolute content or express in a definite manner the relation of God as the one to the whole, as the extant One to being. This doctrine was developed by the Neoplatonics independently of Christianity; the most important representative of Neoplatonism, Plotinus, lived in the second century A.D., yet knew very little about Christianity. However, it is

totally impossible to deny the connection between the doctrine of Philo and Neoplatonism on the one hand and Christianity, i.e., the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, or of the triune God, on the other. If the essence of the divine life was defined by the thinkers of Alexandria in a purely apperceptive way on the basis of the theoretical idea of Divinity, in Christianity *the same* all-one divine life appeared as a fact, as a historical reality, in the living individuality of a historical personality. Christians alone came to know the divine Logos and the Spirit, not from the point of view of logical or metaphysical categories, under which they appeared in the Alexandrian philosophy, but for the first time recognized the Logos in their crucified and resurrected Saviour, and the Spirit in the living, concretely experienced, beginning force of their own spiritual regeneration. But does it follow from this that these metaphysical and logical definitions of the Trinity were alien to Christianity *as a doctrine*, and did not represent a certain part of the [Christian] truth? Quite on the contrary: as soon as the Christians themselves felt the need of making this divine life which had been revealed to them, *an object of thought*, that is, of explaining it [on the basis of] its internal foundation in Divinity itself—[as soon as the Christians felt] the need of understanding as a universal idea that which they had experienced as a particular fact—they naturally turned toward the intellectual definitions of the Greek and Graeco-Jewish thinkers, who had already perceived the theoretical truth of those principles, the manifestations of which (they) the Christians, experienced as a living actuality. And, in fact, we see that the first writings concerning God and His inner life by the Christian teachers—Justin the Philosopher, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and especially Origen—reproduced the essential truth of the doctrine of Philo and Neoplatonism, [that truth] appearing [now in the form of] different variations of the same contemplative theme, the self-revelation of the all-One Divinity; and we know also that St. Athanasius the Great, in revealing the true dogma of the Trinity, relied upon the same Origen, who at that time enjoyed in the Church the high authority which he fully deserved.*

*As regards, in general, the formulas of this dogma, established by the Church at the Oecumenical Councils against Arius, Eunomius, and Macedonius—fully true, as we shall see, even from the speculative point of view—these formulas, naturally, are limited to the most general definitions and categories, as the “uni-extant,” equality, and so forth; the metaphysical development of these definitions and, consequently, the intellectual content of these formulas, were naturally left by the Church to the free activity of theology and philosophy, and it is undoubted that the whole essential content of the Alexandrian speculations concerning the three hypostasies is covered by these Orthodox formulae, and can be reduced to these defini-

or *this is*, necessarily raises the question, *what I am*, or *what this is*. Being *in general* connotes, obviously, only an abstract conception, while actual being necessarily demands not only a definite extant-one as the subject of which it is said that it is, but also a definite objective content, or essence, as the predicate which answers the question: *What is this subject, or what does it represent?* Thus, if in the grammatical sense the verb "to be" forms only a link between the subject and the predicate, then logically also *being* can be thought of only *as the relation of the extant one to its objective essence or content*—the relation in which it asserts, posits or manifests this (its) content, this (its) essence, in one way or another.¹³ Indeed, if we supposed a being which *in no way* asserts or established *any* objective content, which does not represent anything, which is not anything either in itself and for itself, or for anyone else, then we would have no logical right to acknowledge the existence of such a being; for in the absence of all actual content, being would become but an empty word, by which nothing would be meant, nothing would be asserted; and the only possible answer to the question: What is this being, would be *nothing*.¹⁴

If, thus, God as the extant one can not represent being *in general* only, since that would have meant that He has nothing (in the negative sense), or simply that He did not exist at all; and if, on the other hand, God as the absolute can not be *merely something*, can not be limited by any particular definite content: then the only possible answer to the question, What is God, appears to be the one already known to us, namely, that God is all; that is to say, *all* in the positive sense, or *the unity of all comprises the proper content, object, or objective essence of God*; and that being, the actual being of God is the establishment or the positing of this content, of this essence; and in it, the assertion of Him who posits, or the extant One. The logical necess-

¹³Those expressions in which the verb *to be* itself seems to take the part of the predicate, namely when the mere fact of existence of something is asserted, are not in contradiction with the above statement. The fact is, it is but a manner of expression for an abstracting thought, and it is not intended then to express the full truth of the object. Thus, for example, if I simply say: The devil exists, or There is a devil; then, although in this instance I do not say *what* the devil is, yet I do not mean to say that he is not something; also, I by no means assume here that he *only* is, or is only a being, a subject without any objective qualitative definition, without any substance or content; I simply *do not dwell* upon the problem of essence or content, but limit myself only to pointing out the existence of that subject. Such expressions, thus, represent only an *omission* of the real predicate, but in no way its denial or identification with existence as such.

¹⁴Hereof consists the deeply-correct meaning of the famous paradox of Hegel, with which starts his "Logic": namely that being, as such, that is to say, a pure, empty being, is identical with its opposite, or nothing.

ity of this proposition is evident. If the divine essence were not all-one, did not contain all, then something existant could, consequently, be outside of God; but in such a case God would be limited by this being, external to Himself: God would not be absolute, i.e., He would not be God. Thus the assertion of the all-unity of God does away with the dualism which leads to atheism. On the other hand, the same assertion, establishing in God the whole fullness or the totality of all being as His eternal essence, has neither the incentive nor the logical possibility of connecting the divine being with the particular conditional reality of the natural world; consequently, that assertion does away with the naturalistic pantheism, which understands under the [term] "all" not the eternal fullness of the divine being, but only the aggregate of natural phenomena, the unity of which it calls God. Finally, as we shall presently see, our assertion of God as the all-one does away with the idealistic pantheism [also], which identifies God as the extant One with His objective idea.

Indeed, if *all* represents the content or essence of God, then God as the subject or the extant One, i.e., as the one who possesses this content or essence, is necessarily distinguished from it; as we have to distinguish in every being it itself as a subject from that which forms its content, which is asserted or expressed by it or in it—we have to distinguish "the expressor" from the expressed, or *Himself* [the subject] from *His own* [the subject's attribute]. And a distinction is a *relation*. Thus God, as the existant One, is in a certain relation towards His content or essence; He manifests or asserts it. In order to assert it as *His own*, He must possess it substantially, i.e., [He] must be the whole or the unity of the whole in an eternal inner act. As the unconditional beginning, God must include or contain all in Himself in uninterrupted and immediate substantial unity. In this *first status*, all is contained in God, i.e., in the divine subject or the extant One, as in its common root; all is engulfed or immersed in Him as in its common source; consequently, here, all as *totality* is not distinguished *actually*, but exists only as a possibility, potentially. In other words, in that first status only, as the extant One, is God actual; whereas His content—*all* or the universal essence—exists only in a latent state, potentially; although [it is] also present here, for without it, as we have seen, the extant One Himself would be nothing, i.e., would not exist. In order that it be actual, God not only must contain it in Himself, but must assert it for Himself, i.e., He must assert it as the "other one" [His antipode], must manifest and actualize it as something distinct from Himself.

Total 196/65 593