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TYPES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

[*fleuron*]

GYLDENDALSKE BOGHANDEL · NORDISK FORLAG
COPENHAGEN · MCMXXVII

Translated from the Danish

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PREFACE

This book contains a series of lectures and essays from recent years. I have felt a need to try once more to shed light on the question of the relation between thought and faith, which has occupied me since my youth. In my "Religionsfilosofi" I have given the answer to the question that I have been able to give. There are, in my conviction, only three ways by which the religious problem can be illuminated, an epistemological, a psychological, and an ethical way, all three ways each in turn illuminated by what the history of religion can teach us. In the book that I present here I have, as the title indicates, brought forward some types of thoughts about religion, as they have emerged at different times in thinkers and poets.

As an introduction to the historical presentations I give, in the first two pieces, a brief account of my own philosophical conception, which naturally underlies both the choice of types and the characterization of them. The first piece is a lecture that I, at the invitation of the University, gave in its ceremonial hall some days after my eightieth birthday, and in which I pointed out that my philosophizing was essentially determined by the wish to find out how one should humanly take one's stand, on the one hand toward the struggle for existence, on the other toward the spiritual division of labor, which among other things seems to force science and religion onto entirely different paths. The second piece gives a survey of my work as an author, which can show in what relation my work in the philosophy of religion stands to my other works.

Next come characterizations of thinkers who have asserted the right of scientific in-
[8] quiry in the understanding of the religious life, as well as of thinkers who have held that there was a sharp, an insuperable opposition between intellectual and religious interest. The characterizations of Spinoza and Pascal constitute the most important sections of the book. It is owing to a request from a French philosophical journal that I came to draw a comparison between Pascal and Kierkegaard, the latter of whom may with a certain justice be described as the Danish Pascal. The comparative method has here proved beneficial for illuminating our great religious thinker. I had already earlier employed this method in a short essay on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (in the third volume

of my Mindre Arbejder). The essay on Sibbern and Kierkegaard, too, is an example of the application of this method. And the article on Arthur Pfungst's attempt to practice Buddhism in the midst of European cultural life can be seen from the same point of view, in that its subject forms an analogy to what Kierkegaard called "modern Christianity".

It has interested me greatly that some of our poets have sought to give an account to themselves of the inward union of poetry and religion, which will ever assert itself whenever a faith develops along life's own way.

When at the end I let Shakespeare's Prospero have the word, it is because I see in him the poetic representative of the magnanimity which in the time of the Renaissance naturally came to stand as the foremost trait of character, both in relation to the great horizons of nature and changing fates, and in relation to the people we meet in the struggle for existence. Here is a form of faith that will always stand its test.

Carlsberg, 18 April 1927.

Harald Høffding.

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PHILOSOPHICAL POINTS OF VIEW

Lecture given at the University on the occasion of my eightieth birthday.

It is a great honor that the University shows me by inviting me to give a lecture on the occasion of my eightieth birthday. In no better way could one honor and gladden me.

It is now 64 years since I first walked up the University steps. Already in my school days I heard Carsten Hauch's lectures on the folk ballads, Ewald, Oehlenschläger and Shakespeare. Then came my student years, in which the conflicting conceptions asserted by philosophers and theologians gave me plenty to think about. And 52 years ago I gave my first lecture as a Privatdocent. Since that time there has been a constant interaction between my lecturing, my personal development and my work as an author. There is a natural need to communicate what one has been occupied with in the inner chamber, and through attempts at communication thought can become clearer and more definite. I have often found true what Zeuthen once told me as his experience, that both the significance and the difficulty of a thought often first really come out for us when we try to express it. But when I think back on my work at the University, I remember first and foremost with gratitude the receptiveness that was shown toward what I could offer, within the various circles of listeners — the narrow circle of those who wished to orient themselves more thoroughly in philosophy, the larger circle of young students in
[10] their first years, and the circle, sometimes quite large, that heard my evening lectures. And then my work at the University brought me good collegial relations with other university teachers, out of which not infrequently a warm personal relationship developed. By far the greatest part of my life has been tied to the University.

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As the subject of this lecture I have chosen a look at the problems that especially set my reflection in motion, at the motives of thought that have especially been decisive for my standpoint.

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When I began my more independent philosophizing, Darwinism exerted an overwhelming influence on minds. For my part my reflection was especially set in motion by Darwin's strong emphasis that even the most splendid forms of life must "struggle for life", that is to say, do work, satisfy certain conditions in order to persist and develop. Darwin has wrongly seen in the very struggle for life a cause of the origin of new species. But that does not diminish the significance of the picture he has given us of nature. Nature no longer appears as an idyll, but as a world full of changes, clashes and struggles.

The question then had naturally to arise: how does it go with the spiritual life, which after all is to persist and develop within nature, and which is subject to its laws? How can then, under this alternation, which is determined merely by the relentless demands of life and circumstances, the spiritual goods, work in the service of truth and goodness retain their significance?

The answer I thought I found, and which I sought in a series of writings to substantiate, amounted in brief to this, that the spiritual life in the world is itself an uninterrupted struggle to persist — that it is an activity, a work, whether the work is carried on with consciousness or not. *[11]*

I found as the characteristic marks of spiritual life two traits that were precisely of significance when it came to asserting oneself against an environment. The one trait is openness, receptiveness toward the new, toward all changes. The other is that the new is brought into connection with our earlier experiences, so that there arises a constant interaction, through which now earlier experiences are corrected through the new, now the new are interpreted by means of the earlier. This calls for an inner work, a struggle to overcome the chaotic and manifold, which can scatter, as well as the habitual, which can dull and blind. As the fundamental character of spiritual life there then stands a unifying energy. Energy is the capacity to perform work; work presupposes resistance; and in the spiritual domain the resistance consists in dispersion and dullness and in the often so sharp opposition between the new and the habitual. The fuller and more comprehensive a content of observations and memories, of impulses and of inclinations that appears, the greater the energy that is required to hold it together and form it into a whole.

At this point a study of the opposition between diseased and healthy mental life became of great importance to me. Insanity expresses itself precisely as incoherence or as the one-sided preponderance of individual elements. When geniuses are not infrequently insane, it is connected with the fact that in them such a great abundance of

drives, thoughts and images wells up that a very great energy is required to order them and direct them. It is no art to be master of oneself when there is not much to be master of.

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Whereas psychology has the task of showing how the spiritual life actually unfolds
[12] as a work for persisting, it is the task of epistemology to investigate which forms of thought underlie it, when the question is asked not merely about our actual thoughts but about our valid thoughts, that is to say, the thoughts that can lead to a secure, again and again confirmed orientation in the existence outside us and in ourselves. Science too is a struggle against chaos and against the habitual, a work to get beyond the scattered and the blind. It is the task of philosophy to point out the fundamental thoughts ("categories") which assert themselves in this work, both when questions are asked and when answers are given. Often for philosophy the questions are more interesting than the answers. Such fundamental thoughts are born and die like other thoughts. The task then is, supported by the history of the sciences, to show how both their birth and their death are conditioned by the demands that the constantly continued striving after truth makes. In the life of thought, as everywhere, it is not the determinate forms that persist, but the forces that lead to the arising of the forms and can themselves continue to work under new forms.

The analogy that thus appears between science and personality, in that on both domains the matter is a struggle against chaos, has been of great importance to me. It is not alien powers to which we surrender ourselves when we dedicate our life to scientific work. Science is the common work of the race to attain orientation in existence, just as it is the task of the single personality to orient itself in its small circle. And the very work in the small circle cannot be carried on without participation in the great common work, in appropriation or in cooperation. A conclusion to this work cannot be thought of as long as existence presents new sides to us. And it might indeed also be that existence itself is not ever finished once and for all!

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Most sharply the doctrine of life as a struggle for existence had to intervene in the
[13] ethical domain. It has indeed also been said that it caused "the greatest crisis that ethics

has at any time had to pass through". Is life at all about anything other than procuring means of self-preservation? — Against such a question I have especially maintained that self-preservation is always conditioned by the stage of development at which one happens to stand. There is always a definite level that one will maintain and below which one will not sink down. That this holds in economic respects, shows daily experience. But it holds also in ethical respects. The spiritual goods to which one has access one will not be excluded from; precisely in our days many a hard struggle is fought for this reason in needy regions. The stage on which one stands will condition the way in which the struggle is conducted. Conversely, the way in which the struggle is conducted can show that one in reality did not stand on so high a stage as one thought. — But when there are very many different stages, and not only actions but also judgments about actions are conditioned by them, how then is a universally valid ethics possible? Here I saw no other possibility than to take one's stand on one of these stages and to investigate which ethical judgments must be passed from it. On bare ground one cannot philosophize, no more in ethics than in other domains. For my part I found in the feeling of humanity that developed at the close of classical antiquity, was deepened by Christianity and in the eighteenth century was freed from dogmatic barriers, a point of departure that it would be fruitful to use, in order then to compare the results one arrived at with the results one would have to arrive at from other points of view. A presuppositionless ethics there is not.

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Besides the natural-historical motive that asserted itself for me in the questions hitherto indicated, there was also a cultural-historical motive that set my reflection in motion. This was especially the case with the religious problem. The sting of the religious *[14]* problem had for me arisen from the division of labor in the domain of spiritual life. At the most primitive stages we know, religion stands as the only form of spiritual culture. It is in a similar way when a great religion stands at its first source, thus in Buddhism and Christianity in their original forms. Then religion is One and All, determines all thoughts and all tasks. Later on it is attempted perhaps — on the grandest scale by Catholicism in the thirteenth century — to unite all the culture of the age into one great whole, so that religious ideas give the final points of view and solve the last riddles. But on none of these stages do we stand now. Religion has become a single element in the life of the spirit, neither the only one nor the all-governing. Science, art and morality

stand on their own legs, and social life develops according to its own laws. Religion is no longer the pillar of fire that leads humanity's wandering through the desert; it is rather the ambulance that follows behind and picks up the weary and the suffering. It is the consoler, not the guide. This too is great. And there is no other spiritual power at hand that can take over this task. But that does not take the sting from the problem.

If anywhere, it holds here that what persists in the world, the spiritual as well as the material, is not the forms, under which life appears at a given time, but the working forces that have created the old forms and can create new ones. For my part I have thought to find as the kernel of religion at all stages a need and will to hold fast the persistence of the values of life beyond the limits within which human will can work for them. One can read off through the history of religions what men at various times have set highest. And the need that has been at work here can continue to work, even after the spiritual conditions have changed to a considerable degree.

There is, as I once stated, a standpoint at which, through life's mixture of tragedy and
[15] comedy, of victory and defeat, a fundamental mood has been won which at once has the character of seriousness — by reason of the great things that have been experienced, and the pain it has often cost — and of irony toward every attempt to express in images or concepts what in its fullness and by its oppositions bursts every form one tries to fix. The view of life or life-feeling that thus arises holds fast the conviction of a great coherence in existence, as regards values as well as other subjects and elements, and can therefore turn jestingly against the dispensations of life, because they stand powerless before the highest and the best, as well as against all attempts to utter the unutterable. — Whether one will give such a faith the name of religion or not is immaterial. We perhaps lack an apt word for what may be present here. If we have in many cases too many words, then here we have too few. As regards the old religions, their lasting value, from a standpoint like the one indicated, will essentially consist in the great poetry through which they have been able to express the oppositions of life, its high points and its depths. It is also through their cult and the art that has entered into the service of this cult that they still today have so great an influence on the minds of people.

I have here touched on some of the motives of thought that have asserted themselves in my philosophizing. Of the significance of philosophy I have never doubted. I have been in doubt about means and ways, still more often about my abilities to work in the service of philosophy and satisfy the intellectual and personal demands that philosophy

makes on its true devotees. But that there are here tasks and works that must continually be taken up, of that I have never doubted, however high it was from my standpoint up to the great figures of philosophy.

On my work desk stands a photograph of a bust of Plato, which one of our art historians has given me. When I sit down in the morning to my work in front of this *[16]* picture, I often feel unworthy to count myself in the same guild as Plato. The age of Platonism is past, and all "isms" will vanish. But the drive of thought that led Plato, all his long life through until he died 80 years old (a fitting time to die at), in ever renewed striving to seek back to the fundamental thoughts of knowledge and of life, it will not die. And it will be able to stir itself in the most modest activity, when this is joined with honesty and with intellectual probity.

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When 53 years ago I had defended my dissertation for the doctorate, I concluded, according to custom, but not merely because it was custom, by expressing the best wishes for the University. With that I will also conclude this evening. May this University, hitherto Denmark's only scientific institution of higher learning, continue to work through the ages and bear witness to our people's ability and will to contribute to the intellectual culture of mankind!

[17]

ON MY WORK AS AN AUTHOR

In my earliest youth I lived myself into two lines of thought that were later to set me the gravest problems. Already in my school years I had pictured theology as my future study. But reading Plato's Symposium in the last year of school filled me with deep admiration and brought me a testimony that on purely human ground too high and significant thoughts could arise. In the course of my years as a student I continued the study of Plato, and to this was then added the study of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel. The opposition between theology and philosophy was stressed very sharply by the philosophical professors who at that time taught at the University, Rasmus Nielsen and Brøchner, each in his own way. I then felt myself more and more divided. I wandered from the theological lecture hall to the philosophical, and back again; they lay each at its end of the long university corridor. It was a time full of torment, and I was often on the point of despair. But the author in whom I immersed myself most was Søren Kierkegaard, and with his help I at last caught sight of a new possibility. His mighty struggle against the National Church, and against modern Christianity generally, still resounded. But it was nevertheless above all his philosophical writings that captivated me. I learned from him that religious conviction was in the end a matter of personal experience and rested on personal need, and thereby the task was set me of testing whether the content of Christian faith really corresponded to my own innermost need. The answer came only after a long struggle. For a time I tried to keep my personal faith and my philosophical interest entirely apart from each other. Kierkegaard
[18] regarded all scientific knowledge as "inessential" in relation to the religious need. But this "inessential" knowledge came now ever more to have "essential" significance for me. Yet Kierkegaard also prepared my later development in a more positive way. He maintained that the formal peculiarity of the spiritual life consisted in the unity and concentration with which the content of life is held together, and that the standard of a spiritual life's value consists in the relation between the fullness of the content and the energy with which the concentration is exercised. This thought, which in the history of philosophy is represented especially by Leibniz and Kant, forms the foundation of the characterization Kierkegaard has given of the different ways of taking life, his so-called "stages". Its significance was naturally not clear to me from the first. Only through a critical study of Kant and of positivism, and especially during the preparatory work for my presentation of psychology, did its great theoretical and practical significance dawn on me. I now felt myself ever more a philosopher, and after I had taken the doctorate in 1870 with a treatise on "Den antike Opfattelse af Menneskets Villie", I began as a

Privatdocent to lecture on philosophy.

After I had lectured on various parts of the history of philosophy (especially on "post-Hegelian philosophy in Germany" and on "English philosophy in our time") I gave in the autumn of 1874 a course of lectures on "Introduction to Philosophy", in which I set out in all brevity the conception of the philosophical problems and their mutual relations that had taken firm hold in me. And then my work as an author proper began, as I set myself the task of treating each problem for itself. The short program I had given in the lectures mentioned had naturally to be changed in many ways in the working out of detail and through the new studies I undertook. There was a great deal of work to be done in the various fields. When I now look back, I can divide my work in the following 40 years into three periods. From 1875 to 1887 psychology and ethics stood in the first rank; from 1887 to 1895 I was chiefly occupied with the history of modern philosophy, *[19]* and from 1895 on I have been engaged with philosophy of religion and epistemology. Epistemology became more and more for me the central discipline in philosophy. Philosophy is for me an endeavor to comprehend the work of human thought under certain general points of view, an endeavor that is prepared within the individual sciences when these become conscious of their guiding thoughts.

My "Psykologi paa Grundlag af Erfaring" appeared in the autumn of 1882. The main thought of the book, or rather the hypothesis it seeks to ground and confirm, is that the fundamental law of mental life is the law of synthesis, of comprehensive activity. I find the grounding of this hypothesis partly in the way in which consciousness passes over into unconsciousness, and conversely awakens from it, partly in an analysis of some important mental phenomena and processes (memory, comparison, grief, doubt, decision). And the confirmation I find in an investigation of the conditions under which sensation arises, as these are illuminated by Fechner and the experimental psychology founded by him, further in an investigation of the association of ideas, imagination, and the main forms of the life of feeling and the life of will. Synthetic energy, will in the widest sense of the word, is for me the central expression of mental life. As long as mental life exists, work is done to hold together a more or less rich content. Feelings are symptoms of this willing, and cognition is from the first its servant, later perhaps its master. In the later editions an attempt has been made to carry through this point of view with greater consistency.

The basic thought of the book developed in me successively, from the Kierkegaard studies of my earliest youth through my Kant studies and through studies of the diseased mental life in comparison with the healthy. — For the French translation of the book

Pierre Janet wrote a preface, and since, as said, a comparison between diseased and
[20] healthy mental life had been of great importance for the working out of my hypothesis, it was a particular joy to me that the book could appear in a major language under the aegis of an eminent psychopathologist.

I see the shortcomings of the book very well (perhaps I do not know them all). But I believe that its main thoughts are justified and will constantly emerge anew, perhaps in forms that we cannot now imagine. The sources of psychological insight are indeed so manifold (self-observation, experiments, physiology, psychopathology, the history of literature and religion, etc.) that it is already now more difficult to use them all than it was when in the years 1876—1882 I worked out my psychology.

For my activity as a university teacher, especially after I became a professor in 1883, the psychological way of regarding things that I had practiced was of great importance. Toward the spiritual movements of the time there was here a standpoint that could meet the most diverse tendencies with intellectual sympathy, without anticipating the final epistemological and religio-philosophical thoughts. My old teacher Sibbern (whom I had heard in my first year as a student, but whom I came to understand properly only later) said that just as for the botanist there is no such thing as a weed, so for the psychologist there is no spiritual phenomenon that cannot be an object of observation and interest. Before we pass judgment on a spiritual phenomenon's intellectual or ethico-religious value, we must recognize and understand it. All too often one goes the opposite way and stamps as stupidity or sin what yet has its natural root in the connection of life and, rightly treated, perhaps can reach up into the world of truth and goodness.

The next problem that occupied me was the ethical one. Already in 1876 I had published a little work on it (Om Grundlaget for den humane Etik). But it now seemed
[21] to me that the presuppositions of an ethics had not been sufficiently critically investigated here. In my psychology I had made a sharp distinction between fact and value (validity). The ethical problem now presented itself to me in the following way. Just as logic and mathematics rest on presuppositions common to all human beings, and just as the empirical science, e.g. psychology, rests on the law of causality, which is universally recognized, so too there are universally recognized presuppositions on which ethics can build, and which are they? It cost me no little work before I came to the conviction that, when one makes sufficiently strict demands on the grounding, there is no ethics that in a rational way can be forced upon all, as is the case with logical, mathematical and natural-scientific propositions. Psychological observation and historical experience show that human actions are judged on the basis of highly different presup-

positions. Even if ethical standpoints may be in agreement in their results, they will yet often go different ways in their grounding. By logical analysis we can get back to the presuppositions peculiar to a single definite ethical standpoint, but these presuppositions themselves are connected with psychological and historical conditions that are not present in quite the same way at other standpoints. I found certain main types by which the presuppositions of ethical judgments can be determined — from the standpoint of the moment, the standpoint of individuality, the standpoint of family, class and nationality to the universal standpoint of humanity. It was impossible for me to derive these different standpoints from "the Idea of Man" and to ascribe to any of them a unique necessity.

The position of ethics can to a certain degree be compared with the position of astronomy before Newton. Then too different systems were possible in astronomy. I do not know whether ethics will get its Newton; so far in any case he has not come. Every attempt at an ethics must therefore be clear about its psychological and historical presuppositions. As for myself, I found a significant foundation for an ethics in the universal sympathy, the general humanity feeling that developed in the Greco-Roman *[22]* world, especially after the time of Alexander, and then, deepened and widened by Christian love of one's neighbor, emerged again in the ideas of the 18th century. My task was now to analyze and deepen this foundation and from it to draw conclusions with regard to the value of human modes of action and institutions. What could be grounded from this standpoint had then to be compared with the conclusions that could be drawn from other standpoints (the self-preservation of the individual, family, nation, etc.). "The Idea of Man" expresses itself for us, as it happens, in different types, some simultaneous, some appearing successively. Here we have what Fichte from his idealistic point of view has called a projectio irrationalis. The special evaluations are determined in the end by a fundamental motive, a fundamental value. One can set up a civil or social morality without asking about the motives, but the ethical concerns, as it happens, not only action but also disposition. And as regards the motives, a distinction must be made between the motive of evaluation (fundamental value) and the motive of action. They do not always coincide. Thus humanity as a motive of evaluation can give rise to special motives of action such as sense of justice, courage, helpfulness, etc. The motive of evaluation grounds in the end the value that is attributed to the different motives of action. What in one ethical system is a motive of action is perhaps in another system a motive of evaluation, and conversely.

The special working out of my Ethics was undertaken on the basis of a psychological,

historical and economic material that I had collected in the course of the years. As far as possible I went into the special fields of human life.

In my conviction neither a supernatural nor a metaphysical sanction of ethics is needed. Human nature, as we know it from experience, offers sufficient motives of evaluation and of action. My Ethics, which appeared in 1887, was attacked partly from the theological side, partly from certain antitheological sides. There are antitheologians
[23] who meet in brotherly union with the theologians in the assertion that an ethics without supernatural sanction and without metaphysical foundation is impossible. Against both parties I maintain that even when one has given up the old faith, serious and positive work for ethical conviction and conduct of life is not only possible but necessary. — It is now 35[1)] years since my Ethics appeared, and its most essential thoughts I still hold fast. The book also continues to find readers both abroad and at home. — Only on a few points have I made changes and additions in later editions.

After the completion of my psychology and my ethics I set myself the task of giving a presentation of the history of modern philosophy. This task had a natural connection with the plan of undertaking an investigation of the main philosophical problems in their mutual relations, which I had already conceived in 1874, and which occupied me greatly.

As I stated above, Greek thinking and view of life played a large role in my personal development. By it I had won a deep conviction of the independent significance of science and of the human life. And in my Ethics I had maintained that our ethics is the Greek ethics, deepened and widened by the spiritual life of the following ages. Greek thinking lies, in general, at the root of all European philosophy, and every study that goes deeper must again and again go back to it. I have conducted laboratory exercises on Plato's "State" and on Aristotle's "Ethics". But I had to limit myself, and for the posing of the problems in our time the philosophy of the last three centuries was naturally of the greatest significance.

In my treatment of the history of modern philosophy I laid greater weight on the problems than on the systems, and I sought rather to characterize than to report. Through characterization one passes in a natural way into criticism. Characterization includes also an investigation of the relation between the philosopher's personality and his doc-
[24] trine, and several of the small biographies in my book I have quite written con amore. Moreover I have laid weight on philosophy's relation to other sciences, and therefore in my presentation men such as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Robert Mayer

[1)] In 1927 it is 40 years since,

occupy a prominent place, in that their researches occasion significant changes in the philosophical formulations of problems. — The book appeared in 1894—1895. On a few points I had earlier done monographic preparatory work (on Kant's philosophical course of development and on Kierkegaard); other points I have later taken up for monographic treatment (Rousseau, Spinoza). In comparison with most German presentations I have laid greater weight on French and English philosophy in the 19th century. I had here a preparatory work in my book "Den engelske Filosofi i vor Tid" published in 1874. — Later I have written on "Moderne Filosofer" (1903) and on "Henri Bergson's Filosofi" (1914)[1] —

After the publication of my historical work my studies concentrated on epistemology and philosophy of religion. One of the preparatory works for my epistemology lies in a treatise on "det psykologiske Grundlag for logiske Domme" (1898). But for the time being I was especially occupied with the religious problem, after it had for some time not interested me. I had not thought of undertaking a special investigation of it, beyond the hints that had been given in my psychology and in my ethics. But now the reading of biographies had become my favorite reading, and I thereby came also to occupy myself with Augustine's "Confessiones". They interested me extraordinarily, both psychologically and from the standpoint of the history of religion. And when I now immersed myself in the tenth book, where the great teacher of the church raises the question: Qvid est quod amo, quum deum amo? (What is it that I love, when I love God?) — it became clear to me that there lay an important source for the understanding of religious phenomena in the self-testimony of personalities who, while they live wholly and fully in their religion, have need and capacity to clarify to themselves, in *[25]* the form of reflection, what they experience in the times of religious rapture. I then collected a series of similar testimonies — from Indian literature, from the mysticism of the Middle Ages, from Luther and from Pascal — and analyzed them psychologically. I was naturally aware that by this route one cannot solve the historical problem of the origin of religion. Here I have often been misunderstood, especially by those who think that when they have "refuted" the religion of the Hottentots, they have "refuted" all religion. In general the question of the first origin of religions can no more be answered directly than the question of the first origin of language. But by the route I took one could perhaps discover what sustains religion, — what gives it, once it has come into being, its power and significance. And this is for the philosopher, who wishes to investigate the present state of the problem, more important than the question of the first origin of

[1] Later I have (see below) written on Plato and Spinoza.

forms of cult and of dogmas. I saw naturally also that the study of the subjective and individual side of religions had to be combined with a study of the history of religion. And here I sought especially to trace what standard historians of religion apply when they call one religion higher or lower than another. By both routes I sought to form a grounded conjecture, a hypothesis, about the foundation of religion in its different forms. And with that I thought I could also find the basis for an understanding of the position of religion in our days and for a conjecture about its future. — In a speech at a University festival in 1897 I gave a provisional characterization of my standpoint, and in a course of lectures which I in two semesters (1899—1900) gave for students of all faculties, I gave a detailed presentation of my conception. In the following year (1901) my Religionsfilosofi then appeared.

Every ecclesiastical theology has a sum total of religious conceptions to which it ascribes literal validity. Within one and the same religion there can yet be different
[26] opinions as to where the boundary is to be drawn between the figurative and the literal. But philosophy must subject this question to a principled investigation, in that it compares religious conceptions with the conceptions that are formed on a scientific basis and by scientific method. The first investigation within the philosophy of religion will therefore be epistemological. An analysis of the main concepts with which religion operates led me to the result that these concepts are formed by analogy, and an analogy that cannot — like the analogies that in science serve as working directions — find confirmation by close observation. The language of religion is a pictorial language that stems from a time when no distinction was made between image and thought. Such a distinction can be made only when a strictly testing science has developed. It is not so much the results of science as the scientific method, the scientific way of posing questions and forming concepts, that is of significance here. The questions of religion can neither be posed nor answered by science, and the answers of religion are not answers to the questions of science.

These are thus different interests that appear in religion and science. What, then, is the interest we call the religious? This question the psychological part of the philosophy of religion tries to answer. My endeavor is to regard religion as a psychological phenomenon. The task is to find out in which region of mental life religion has its roots, — what need it can satisfy, — and then to investigate the conditions for the continued existence of this need. It is not enough here to establish that the same dogmas are taught and the same cult practiced. One must investigate how these dogmas and this cult work on the different individualities, and especially on what it rests that human beings again

and again return to them. It then turns out that both dogmas and forms of cult are connected very closely with what for human beings at the given stage is the supremely valuable, the object of their wish and of their striving. Here the concept of fundamental value presents itself again, and my hypothesis in the philosophy of religion is then that *[27]* the essence of religion has its ground in a need for or a wish to see the persistence of fundamental value assured, also beyond the limits within which human work can act for this persistence. When it now comes to the point that the religious conceptions cannot be held fast in their literal meaning, then the need to hold fast the persistence of what is valuable must seek expression in symbols, in poetry of life, i.e. in a poetry growing out of life itself. The ideal would be that each individual produced his own symbols. But it will also, from the standpoint of the individual, be justified, by involuntary interpretation, to find again in the traditional religious conceptions the thoughts to which his experience of life has led him. Far more than those who are clearly conscious of it have made the transition from faith in dogma to poetry of life. One takes from the religious tradition what one needs and lets the rest lie. This is done by every church and every religious party. By that route modern Christianity has become another religion than primitive Christianity, in that it has in fact let fall essential presuppositions that decisively determine the ethics of the earliest Christians, in order to accommodate itself to the new historical conditions.

It is for me ever more a purely psychological interest that leads me to occupy myself with the religious problem. I find there, where one can gain an insight into the inner life of deeply religious personalities, a richness in mood, a grandeur in imagination, a passion in will, that is not only an attractive and captivating object for the psychologist as such, but also leads him to ask whether forces like these can disappear from the spiritual life of human beings without new mental forces forming a real replacement for them. The idea of psychic equivalents, which already appears in Plato, leads to the search for new sources of enthusiasm and inner rapture. And this search is actually itself religious, since it is motivated by a need to see the values conserved.

Sometimes I have put the religious problem in the following way. Is religion an organ or is it a tumor? If it is an organ, then it may be perilous to life to operate it away, even if it should belong to the 107 superfluous organs which according to Metchnikoff we still possess. The question can only be whether it can continue to get nourishment, and whether its functions can be preserved through exercise, or whether it dies away from lack of both. If it is a tumor, an attempt to operate it away may occasion such a loss of blood that life is in danger; it would be safer to ligate it, so that it can die from lack

of nourishment. — In both cases it is future experience that must bring the decision.

This last consideration leads over to the ethical part of the philosophy of religion, which partly investigates the possibility of a conflict between ethics and religion (namely if faith in the persistence of values keeps one from working to produce and conserve values), partly discusses the question to what extent faith in the persistence of value can yield strength and power for ethical work. —

There are no other points of view in the philosophy of religion than the three indicated, the epistemological, the psychological and the ethical. A special method of the philosophy of religion there is not. —

In a treatise that I have called "Forord og Efterskrift til min Religionsfilosofi", and which is found in the second volume of my "Mindre Arbejder", I have tried to illuminate my position toward the religious problem as philosopher and as human being. Also in "den store Humor", which will be discussed later, this position is illuminated. As a philosopher I have only to do with the general principles of science and of life; as a human being I have to do with the special nuancing and application of these principles to which my life's work and my personal experiences have led me. I believe that the philosopher and the human being in me have drawn nearer to each other in the course of life, and that neither of them has been harmed thereby. — I refer especially to the section "Tragik og Humor" in the book on humor, as the clearest and deepest expression I have
[29] been able to give for the region where my philosophy and my personal experience of life meet each other.

The problem of knowledge had made itself felt indirectly in all my writings. In the Psychology I had marked very sharply the difference between the psychological and the epistemological point of view. In the Ethics the strict demand for scientific grounding had led me to doubt about a rational ethics. In the philosophy of religion epistemological points of view lay at the base of the denial of the intellectual significance of religion. In the introduction to "Den nyere Filosofis Historie" I had set up the problem of knowledge as the central problem over against the psychological, the ethico-religious and the cosmological (metaphysical) problem. In a university program (1902) I gave a preliminary investigation of the main philosophical problems in their mutual relations. After these and other preparatory works there appeared in 1910 "Den menneskelige Tanke, dens Former og dens Opgaver".

The book first seeks out the life of thought in its involuntary forms. Already in the involuntary work of thought can be traced the forms of thought that in scientific thinking are developed further, specialized and carried through with greater exactness

and consistency. After the investigations of the involuntary functions of thought have shown the possibility of knowledge, the point is to find the definite forms by which real science can be gained. The realm of possibility is greater than that of actuality. Here Wallenstein's words hold: "Eng ist die Welt, und das Gehirn ist weit". It is the history of the sciences that shows us the forms of thought in which true knowledge can be gained. These forms, the so-called categories, are not the same at all times. It was Kant's fateful error that he believed he could set up once for all a system of categories. The categories arise sporadically, but can afterwards be collected and ordered, e.g. in such a way that one proceeds from the most comprehensive to the more special. I begin my theory of categories with the concept of synthesis and the correlate concept of relation; these two *[30]* concepts open the series of the fundamental categories, which show themselves in all thinking, the pre-scientific as well as the scientific. From there one passes to the formal categories (identity; ground and consequence, and others), which underlie logic and mathematics, and from there to the real categories (cause, totality, development), which underlie all empirical science, and from there again to the ideal categories (the concepts of value), which show themselves in aesthetics, ethics and philosophy of religion. The transition from the real categories to the ideal I find in this, that every evaluation presupposes a relation to a totality (whether this consists of a single moment or a whole life of personality, of a single individual or a larger or smaller society). — Just as the categories arise, they can also die; thus I regard e.g. "substance" as a dying category.

The theory of categories can be called a descriptive epistemology and stands as such between psychology and the history of science on the one side, the discussion of the philosophical problems on the other side. The problems arise through the relation of the categories to the factually given subject matters, which are not mere products of certain intellectual functions. This shows itself most clearly in the problem of knowledge. Can our forms of knowledge be derived from the given subject matters, or have they, however much they are conditioned and specialized by the subject matters, their ultimate ground in the structure of the human spirit (which yet need not be unchangeable)? Here criticism as founded by Kant will, as I try to show, always maintain a first place in the epistemological discussion, because it can apply the analytic or regressive method for finding out the forms and principles of knowledge. Such an investigation underlies dogmatism, empiricism, pragmatism and the theory of postulates alike. Only analysis of our knowledge and its conditions can teach us what is to be set up as dogma, as experience, as economy or as postulate.

[31] In one of his letters William James refers to me as "good pragmatist and pluralist".

That rests on a misunderstanding. A pragmatic ("economic") view of science has for me only historical interest, namely as an illumination of the motives that have led to science, not as a grounding of the validity of science. And among these motives I give the purely intellectual interest the first place, whereas most pragmatists do not express themselves distinctly enough on this point. And pluralism is for me a resistance that is to be overcome; it sets a task; but is no solution and makes (as in our literature Herbert Iversen clearly saw) all solution, even all striving for solution, impossible. — James, whom from my stay in America I remember with cordial friendship, has inferred too much from the agreement with which we both stood against the metaphysics of the Absolute. Yet in America I had on two occasions the opportunity to develop my philosophical points of view in James' presence. The two lectures were worked together, at James' suggestion, into a treatise in an American philosophical journal. They are printed in Danish in the third volume of my "Mindre Arbejder" under the title "En filosofisk Bekendelse". —

The cosmological (metaphysical) problem arises when the question is raised whether a scientific world-view can be won. The difficulty here is that the whole of existence is never given as a subject matter for our thinking. It is always a single part or side of existence that we take as basis; "the whole of existence" is then conceived by analogy with the "primal phenomenon" thus taken as basis. The history of world-views is thus the history of primal phenomena. Within our experience analogy can be a good means of knowledge, in that by its help we illuminate one field of experience by means of another. But existence as a whole does not lie completed before us, and even if this could be imagined, we still could not characterize it through comparison with other subject matters. In the choice of the primal phenomenon, of the part or side of existence from
[32] which one infers to the whole, and in the way in which the analogy is laid out and carried through, the individual personality of the thinker involuntarily makes itself known, and every attempt at a world-view will therefore lie on the border between science and art. The cosmological problem is accordingly conceived more and more as a border problem, and its treatment will have philosophical value only when it is prepared by thorough epistemological work. But there will probably always be spirits whose intellectual urge to expand can be satisfied neither by religious images nor by scientific concepts.

In the section on the problem of evaluation "Den menneskelige Tanke" gives partly a purely principled, partly a more detailed presentation of the points of view that underlie my Ethics and my philosophy of religion. —

When I am to state in all brevity my place in relation to the philosophical tendencies, I must first lay weight on the fact that the problem of knowledge has more and more

become the central problem for me. Actually, in my treatment of other problems I pursue in the end this problem in its different ramifications. Kant's great question about the possibility of knowledge, in particular of experience, has also been decisive for me. I have learned much from positivism, both in its French and in its English form, and my conception could be called a critical positivism, because I lay great weight on the content of experience, while I see a problem in the very concept of experience. And I have learned much from Spinoza, but my doctrine of unity, my assertion of the unity and lawfulness of the world is not dogmatic like Spinoza's; it is a critical monism. — But all such -isms have very little to say.

I have tried to philosophize in such a way that I held fast philosophy as an independent scientific field. It works for clarity and self-reflection in the spiritual world, with an open sense for all sides of life, in the conviction that only clear thinking can let the fullness of life come to its due, although this thinking itself cannot take the place of *[33]* the fullness of life within which it seeks to orient itself. I have an inward conviction of the significance of philosophy as an indispensable and continually active element in the spiritual life.

In my 72nd year I took my leave from the University and could now devote myself entirely to the working out of various ideas and sketches that had not yet assumed definite forms. Shortly before, the Academy of Sciences had chosen me as occupant of an "honorary residence" that the founder of the Carlsberg Foundation had placed at the Academy's disposal. In a beautiful residence with a large garden I found a good place to work. In the years I have lived here, three kinds of works have claimed me: psychological, epistemological and philosophico-historical.

It had long been my wish to carry out a work in the field of descriptive and analyzing psychology, where according to my conception there was still much to do. Experimental psychology had by its nature chiefly occupied itself with the elementary phenomena of mental life. But it is of great importance for the spiritual life that also within the higher, more complicated and totalized mental states, in which precisely the innermost tendencies of our mental life appear, a clear and definite connection should be demonstrated. And it is not only a matter of finding connection. It is also important to characterize the differences and oppositions that can assert themselves here. I had for a particularly long time occupied myself with the concept of humor. In my Psychology I had quite briefly described humor as a special form of the feeling of the ludicrous, and I had presented scorn and humor as the great opposites in this field. Most phenomena of laughter lie between these two opposites. Now I wished to investigate humor more closely, and I

came to regard it as one of the feelings in which life can as it were sum itself up for the individual, — as a kind of higher life-feeling, which is determined by the relation
[34] between a serious foundation (which can be of differing nature) and the manifold ills, trifles and absurdities of life. In everyday speech one understands by humor all kinds of more or less witty jesting; that is what I call "den lille Humor". But I wished to describe "den store Humor", which presupposes a deep foundation of experience in the life of feeling, while the foreground finds expression in laughter, or at least in a smile. It was likewise my task to determine the relation between humor as life-feeling and the religious feeling. Here Kierkegaard, in his eager striving to maintain sharp differences, had placed humor in an all too low position. The section in which I treat this point, namely the chapter on "Tragik og Humor", I regard myself as the most important in the book and at the same time as the classic expression of my own total feeling toward life. — The method in this book is, as in my philosophy of religion, psychological-historical. I found among other things here a welcome opportunity to express my admiration for two of the greatest figures I know, the one belonging to the world of thought, the other to the world of poetry: Socrates and Shakespeare. — In the book's last section ("Humor og Filosofi") I think I have drawn attention to an important matter, namely the relation between a researcher's state of mind while he is engaged in intellectual work and while he moves in the circumstances of daily life. One cannot without more infer from a researcher's scientific character to his state of mind under the small and great events of daily life.

Another psychological work I published in 1918 under the title of "Oplevelse og Tydning". My friend Théodore Flournoy in Geneva had some years before published some very interesting notes by a lady who had consulted him about her mental condition. There made itself known in her inner life a sharp opposition between experiences of the most exalted and ideal kind and other experiences of the most sensual-passionate
[35] kind. Often those first experiences took on the character of ecstasies. In her sound moments the psychologically understanding lady stood freely and clearly over against these highly different experiences. In particular she did not have the inclination, frequent among mystics, especially in earlier times, to regard ecstatic experiences as revelations of the divine figures of the Bible and the ecclesiastical tradition, nor did such conceptions weave themselves into the visions themselves. In this respect she formed an interesting contrast to the Spanish nun Sta Teresa (16th cent.), with whom I had occupied myself in the preparatory work for my philosophy of religion, and in whose writings I now immersed myself anew. My treatise seeks to show how differently ex-

periences that are purely psychologically of the same kind are interpreted under different historical presuppositions and by different personalities. I found here an example illustrating the basic thought of my philosophy of religion. And at the same time I found here an analogy of epistemological interest. For science too is an interpretation of given qualitative experiences, and here too experience and observation must not be confounded with interpretation, or conversely. — The book contains besides various treatises, especially in the philosophy of religion, to which the title fits more or less.

My epistemological works of the later years consisted in more special investigations of various concepts set up in "Den menneskelige Tanke". First I treated the concept of totality (1917). This concept plays a role in all reflection. Either reflection starts from a given totality, whose elements it seeks to disentangle, or else it seeks to form from a given manifold a new totality. Where totalities present themselves of themselves, we dissolve them; but when a chaos is given, we strive to transform it into a totality. My motto was an epigram of Goethe, in which he calls life "einen wahren Schein" and "ein ernstes Spiel". Totality (atom, organism, personality, society) is a semblance and leads to a mere play of thought when one sees in it something completed once for all, or *[36]* when one sees in it not a task but an explanation. But there is truth in the semblance, and earnestness in the play, when we seek the laws by which manifold elements work together into a whole.

This line of thought was continued in a treatise on the concept of relation (1921). It is in the two treatises the two first and most fundamental categories, synthesis and relation, that I treat. Both when we analyze totalities, and when we seek to form a totality out of a manifold, the point is to demonstrate definite relations — within the given totality or between the manifold elements. A totality is understood through the relation between its parts, and a chaos is overcome by demonstrating definite relations between the apparently isolated elements. We think in relations. Our thought is like a pair of compasses, one leg of which stands fast, while a place is sought for the other leg, and our knowledge corresponds to the relation between the two positions. If we cannot find any position for the other leg, we end in a problem, perhaps in an insoluble problem. In the treatise this is demonstrated more closely for the different groups of categories and for the different main problems. Occasionally it is said that if Einstein's hypothesis is correct, there lies in it a new example of the significance of the concept of relation, a continuation of certain thoughts called forth by Copernicanism. Quite particularly, finally, the significance of the concept of relation for ethics[1)] is developed.

[1)]Later I have (in Videnskabernes Selskabs filosofiske Meddelelser) treated yet another concept that played a role in "Den menneskelige Tanke", but required further elaboration, "Begrebet Analogi". (1922).

In my works in the history of philosophy of the later years I have been able to make use of notes and collections that stemmed from the preparation for my laboratory exercises. I had often gone through Spinoza's chief work with older students. I could say with Lessing that if I were to call myself after anyone, I would call myself after Spinoza. Naturally not in the sense that I should be an adherent of his system. But to
[37] several of his basic thoughts I have come by my own way, and the deep philosophical disposition that animates his thinking makes him a great model for all thinkers. I now wished to facilitate the understanding of his chief work by giving a coherent analysis of its content and thereby a characterization of his philosophizing. "Spinoza's Ethica. Analyse og Karakteristik" appeared in 1918, like the two epistemological treatises, in Videnskabernes Selskabs Publikationer. —

Of other works in the history of philosophy from these years I mention "Bemærkninger om den platoniske Dialog Parmenides" (Videnskabernes Selskabs filosofiske Meddelelser. 1920). My result from an investigation of this remarkable dialogue is that the criticism given in the first part of the Platonic doctrine of Ideas strikes not only it, but all systematic metaphysics, and that the second part contains so much that is unfinished and unclear that perhaps here a posthumous draft has been published by uncomprehending disciples. What interested me here was the different position that the concept of "the sudden" occupies in the doctrine of Ideas, where the leap from one Idea to another stands as incomprehensible, and in the doctrine of Eros in the "Symposium" (Plato's most important contribution to psychology). Logically considered, there exists in Plato a sharp difference between the different Ideas, but for Plato as psychologist a lawfully determined course of development from sensuous longing to the highest stage of spiritual life stood as possible, and "suddenness" expresses only the opposition of consummation to preparation. Plato as psychologist has corrected himself as epistemologist.[1)]

A third historical work was called forth by the invitation to write a book on "Ledende Tanker i det 19. Aarhundrede" for the collection of works on the culture of the 19th century that Gyldendal's publishing house and a Swedish publisher are issuing in Danish
[38] and Swedish. I set up here the hypothesis that the 19th century was the age of confirmation by experience, of specialization and of technical application. The great theoretical and practical ideas of the 17th and 18th centuries were subjected to the test of experience, of experiment and of life. The moral character of the 19th century is its fidelity to the great thoughts of the past. True fidelity consists not in reveling in the ideal world that opens before us, but in translating it with perseverance into reality and working it

[1)] Later I have published in the same place a treatise on "Platons Bøger om Staten".

through in detail. As a motto one could use the exhortation to the sons of the gods in "Faust":

> Und was in schwankender Erscheinung schwebt,
> befestiget mit dauernden Gedanken!

I sought to show that Kant's philosophy lies at the base of the century's two main tendencies, Romanticism and positivism, and that the criticism of these two main tendencies in the century's last part led to a resumption of the problem of knowledge as the central philosophical problem, — that the natural sciences' greatest achievements (the demonstration of the persistence of energy and of the natural development of organic life) were the carrying through of thoughts that had already been expressed in the 17th and 18th century, — and that the century's greatest social phenomena, the great labor organizations, were a carrying through of the 18th century's urge for freedom, since freedom consistently must also be freedom of association. In the religious field an analogous trait appeared in the demand that religious conceptions, in whatever direction they may go, shall be an expression of personal experience and of the single individuals' honest refuge.

By an eminent Danish natural scientist it has been objected against my conception that it underestimates the significance of natural science. On this occasion I must point out that my task is to speak of the leading thoughts, and these point decidedly back to the preceding centuries. The last three centuries form a magnificent whole whose periods supplement one another. Whether the future will be a continuation of the spiritual work under the guidance of the same basic thoughts, or whether wholly new principles for *[39]* theory and practice will emerge, only the future itself can teach. The work of thought can be equally great in the period of carrying through as in that of founding.

It has been the great good fortune of my life that I have been able to devote myself to philosophical studies. What, then, has philosophy been for me? — Against the doubt and the fog that plagued me in my earliest youth I have won clarity as to the direction in which the great tasks for thinking and acting lie, and how work must be done on their solution (whether this is possible or not). In the work of thought itself I have found the best help against despondency and a heavy heart. Like Spinoza I have experienced that difficulties and cares vanished when I could only immerse myself in reflection (modo possem penitus deliberare!). But philosophy has not been merely a household remedy for me. It cannot be a household remedy, as it happens, when it is merely a household remedy. I have won reverence for the world of thought, wherever it reveals itself amid the struggle and unrest of the times and points toward the great tasks for our striving.

I believe more in ideals than in ideas. If we do not get beyond continual striving, this might perhaps find its explanation in that existence itself is not finished. Of that part of the world that stirs in human life and in human thought it holds in any case.

I have the faith that philosophy will also in the future stand as a necessary element in spiritual culture. It conditions a spiritual horizon that no special training, no special subject can give, but to which every subject can give its contribution. And one thing there is that must particularly be stressed, and which I can confirm from a long experience of life. Philosophical reflection has a liberating influence over against habits, prejudices and traditions. It makes room for a personal relation to life, a first-hand relation. It is a basic thought in my philosophy of religion that a genuine faith in life grows only out
[40] of one's own experience. But a work of thought can be the necessary presupposition for our really getting to build on the very ground of life. A faith in life presupposes not that all riddles are solved. Just as our courage and our will must again and again be summoned to battle against fog and chaos in us and around us, so again and again the courage of thought will be necessary for work on the great riddles of existence, which always appear in new forms[1)].

What persists in the world of thought as in that of life is not the forms in which thought and life appear at a given time, but the forces by which these forms have come into being, and which for a time have come to rest in them. To these forces one must go back in order to fix one's hope for the future. But even if one has the faith that spiritual values will arise again and again, one has yet no right to believe that we should be able to know beforehand what these values will be.

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[1)] In the treatise "Erkendelsesteori og Livsopfattelse" (Vid. Selskabs filosofiske Meddelelser 1926) I have, as in a philosophical testament, expressed my conception of the relation between research and faith in life.

PLATO'S CONCEPTION OF ART AND RELIGION AS IT APPEARS IN THE BOOKS ON THE STATE[1)]

Plato appears in his writings as thinker, as lawgiver, and as prophet. The different interests that thus stir in him not seldom come into conflict with one another. Not only do the books on the State for this reason stand in a certain opposition to other works of his, but within the books on the State itself different points of view are adopted, especially as regards the conception of art and religion. As lawgiver he speaks chiefly in the third and fourth books, and as poet he appears in the artistic shaping of the work's individual parts. The philosophical foundation that he believed he had found has made it possible for him to work into a whole drafts that were evidently composed at different times and at different stages of his development, and thereby to create the work, so significant in the history of the spirit, that is called Plato's "State". — We shall, as said, confine ourselves here to his conception of art and religion.

1. The books on the State deal with the concept of justice, and Plato holds that it is easiest to illuminate this concept by investigating how justice must appear in a perfect state. In the description he attempts to give of such a state, there is one question that engages his whole interest, how the rulers in such a state ought to be educated. For the time being he stands here at the old Greek stage, where there is required — besides *[42]* gymnastic training — a spiritual development through absorption in the national poetry, in which the people's belief in the gods has found a full expression. An evaluation of the poetry necessarily becomes an evaluation of the religious conceptions that appear in it, and Plato then sets up, under sharp criticism of Homer and Hesiod, certain theological norms or models. One cannot, he holds, give the poets free rein, because the young would so easily get false conceptions of the gods, which the lawgiver cannot permit. Plato does not say outright whence he knows which are the right conceptions of the gods, but it is evident enough from his discussion that the theological norms or models are determined by his own philosophy. There are three main norms.

a. The Deity is good and cannot be the cause of anything evil. The poets must therefore not ascribe evil deeds to the gods. The gods must not be represented as causes of misfortunes and sufferings, except insofar as these may become means of purification and improvement. But now there is — Plato teaches both here and in other writings — more evil than good in the world, and the Deity can therefore be the cause only of very

[1)] A lecture based on my treatise, published in Videnskabernes Selskabs filosofiske Meddelelser (1924): *Platon's Bøger om Staten.* Analyse og Karakteristik.

little. The real evil in the world must have another cause than the Deity. — By pursuing this line of thought Plato came in his work of old age, the "Laws", to the assumption of an evil world-soul, an assumption that has been connected with a certain influence of the doctrine of Zarathustra, which is said to be traceable in Plato in his last years. — A particular application of this first norm is the prohibition against teaching that the gods are at strife with one another. That would harm the concord that ought to prevail among the rulers of the state! Not even allegorically may such mythological conceptions be used, since young people cannot distinguish between allegory and literal truth.

b. The Deity ought to be represented as unchangeable. Could a god change, change
[43] would be one with degradation, abasement. A god must therefore not be represented in human form. And a god will hate lying, never conceal the truth; truthfulness is a kind of unchangeableness. And by lying must then be understood not merely the outer lie, that which expresses itself in words, but the inner lie, which springs from ignorance, and which only self-deception prevents us from discovering. It is only a crippled soul that is more ashamed of voluntary than of involuntary untruth.

c. The third norm is that the gods must not be represented as subject to strong emotions, such as fear of death, laughter, grief, erotic desire. What is to be portrayed as the highest is an equanimity, a self-command, that does not make itself dependent on outer circumstances but is the right courage in the face of whatever life may bring. — And the rulers of the state are to imitate what is thus asserted as the right conception of the nature of the gods. The rulers have the one great task of providing for the freedom and security of the state. Neither in their imagination nor in their personal conduct may they imitate tragic or comic poets, or in general appear in any character other than their own. Plato denies here what he had stated in the "Symposium", that it is the business of the same man to write tragedy and comedy. It is the necessity of the division of labor that has gained power over him and now receives an ethical application. Among the poets the epic poets are preferred to the dramatists, because the former do not, like the latter, gradually make themselves one with different characters and thereby split themselves. — It will not be possible to bring agreement between Plato's statements on the point here discussed. He himself, and not only as a poet, had an eye for the composite character of life. In a later dialogue (Philebus) he speaks of the tragedy and comedy of life. But he kept having misgivings at the thought that a single individual in his art, as poet or actor, should express this composite nature of life in his imagination or in his performance.

2. Already from this ethical-pedagogical discussion of art in the third and fourth

books one sees what strict demands Plato makes of the ruling class in society, although for the time being he merely wishes to reform the old Greek education. But in his further *[44]* development of the rulers' task he comes to sharpen the demands, so that he not only goes beyond the traditional pedagogy but comes to make quite new demands, in that he requires a strict scientific discipline of those who are to govern the state. The rulers can, he holds, provide for the freedom and security of the state only if, through all changes and temptations, they preserve the thought of the state's true nature in opposition to claims and tasks that might lead to falsifying the right constitution. The guardians must therefore have the capacity to defend and hold fast the thought of something that stands firm and preserves its unity with itself through all changes. But this capacity is trained only (Plato maintains at the end of the fifth book) through scientific, especially mathematical and philosophical, study, and in the sixth and seventh books he then goes more closely into the arrangement of this study. When people have often found a great opposition between the third, fourth, and fifth books on the one hand, and the sixth and seventh books on the other, it is because they have overlooked that there is a kinship between practical judgment (e.g. of a constitution's persisting in unity with itself) and the strict carrying through of the concept of identity, which is the characteristic of all science. When Plato sharpens the demands on the rulers by requiring scientific insight of them, it is the natural transition from mere likeness to complete identity that he makes. Here lies the bond of unity that ties together the various parts of the marvelous work, even though they were composed at different times.

When Plato then, after having thus sharpened the demands on the highest culture within society, again (in the tenth book) returns to discussing the significance of art, he stresses more strongly than before two points of view that already made themselves felt in his first discussion of art, namely the relation of art to truth and reality and the nature of art as imitation. And he takes into account not only poetry but also the pictorial arts.

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Whereas in his first discussion of art he placed it in relation to theology and morality, it is now its relation to science that stands in the first line. And he then places art far below science, because it does indeed give a picture of something real, but an imperfect picture, which falls as far short of the real thing or action as these in turn stand below the general concept or the general law under which they belong. A poem about a heroic deed stands far below the heroic deed itself. One should not write poems about exploits. In this connection Plato again comes back to the danger of imitating emotions and passions. He holds that when the artist is fond of that kind of subject, it is because it is easier to represent highly passionate natures than energetic and harmonious natures.

He whose thought can move in the eternal world of the Ideas will in any case not have an inclination to dwell on the feelings that human relations can produce, since they lose all significance in the face of pure truth.

In his first discussion of art (in the third and fourth books) Plato speaks as lawgiver; in the new discussion that the tenth book brings, he speaks essentially as philosopher, and the transition has, as said, taken place through the discussion of science in the sixth and seventh books. In contrast to the truth that scientific inquiry can bring, art sinks down to being an imitation of sensible things. It is Plato's idealism that makes him a realist or impressionist in his artistic conception. He thereby comes to fail to recognize art's capacity to shape individual figures, to form wholes, where reality gives only fragments or beginnings. By this capacity to shape given elements into a whole of individual character, art gives more than science, which must keep to general concepts, can give, and to that extent art must be said to stand above science. Art overcomes chaos better than science is able to do. — No one has understood this better than Plato
[46] himself, who in his dialogues has given us so many splendid portrayals of personalities, of scenes, and of conversations, portrayals that appear with the stamp of plastic wholes. In speaking against art Plato is then really speaking against himself. He also declares at the end that he would be glad if anyone could refute him, since from his own experience he knows the enchanting power of art.

When Aristotle found the significance of tragedy to lie in its arousing feelings such as fear and pity in such a way that we are freed from the torment and bondage that these feelings bring when it is the real circumstances of life that call them forth, then people have (Finsler: Platon und die aristotelische Poetik) perhaps rightly seen in this a direct objection to Plato's conception of tragedy. Aristotle has theoretically more sense for the individual than Plato and has therefore been able to maintain the significance of entering imaginatively into poetic figures. Such an imaginative entering had for him a "purifying" effect on the mind.

3. The first time Plato in the "State" speaks of religion, it is, as we have seen, on the occasion of poetry, which in Athens played so great a role in education, since the young through it received their conceptions of the gods determined. The criticism of poetry became a criticism of theology. The weight that he later lays on scientific knowledge leads to judging from a new side the received religious conceptions. It is characteristic that the question of cult, which the history of religion shows to be so decisive an element in all popular religion, is not discussed further. He leaves it to "the interpreter whom we have received from our fathers, and who, enthroned at the center of the earth, gives

answer to all men." It is thus Apollo who is to rule over cult, and if the lawgivers are wise, they see that they do not understand how to order cult, but do best to leave everything pertaining to it to the ancestral god. The main question becomes how, on the basis of his philosophy, he must take his stand toward the religious conceptions. He himself makes use of the conceptions of gods as personal beings, but there can hardly be any question that his conception of the gods is conditioned by his doctrine of the "Ideas", i.e. of the *[47]* highest thoughts, which make the things in the world intelligible to us. The decisive passage is found not in the "State" but in the somewhat later dialogue "Phaedrus", where it is said that whereas we human beings can only in single moments raise ourselves up to the world of the Ideas, God lives constantly in this world — and it is on this that his divinity rests. The concept "divine" thus conditions for Plato the concept of God. And he knows what the divine is — it is those thoughts that in the end make the world intelligible, and that thereby at the same time raise above everything sensible and perishable. The Neoplatonist Plotinus alludes to this statement of Plato and adds that what makes God divine must be the highest God. In more recent times this would be expressed by saying that the concept "divine" is a concept of value, and that human beings naturally transfer to their gods the most valuable qualities they know. We then come to confirm Goethe's words:

> Daher der Völker löblicher Gebrauch,
> dass jeglicher das Beste was er kennt,
> er Gott, ja seinen Gott benennt.

If Plato has a theology, then it is in any case dependent on his philosophy.

But in a certain independence of his conceptions of the gods stands his belief in immortality. On the great journey to North Africa and southern Italy that he undertook after the death of Socrates, and which had so great an influence on his spiritual life, he learned not only to know the significance of science (especially of mathematics), but he also entered imaginatively into the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Not only in the "State", but both in earlier dialogues ("Gorgias", "Meno", "Phaedo") and in later ones ("Phaedrus") this doctrine comes forth. It has formed the religious background of his life of thought. By comparing what he says in different dialogues on this question, people have even found that there stood here before Plato's spirit a great imaginative picture, an ancient Comedia Divina. Plato here appears decidedly as *[48]* a prophet. At the end of the "State" he tells of a man who fell in battle and came to the realm of souls, where he became a witness to how the souls, after their judgment and the reward or punishment that followed, were again sent down to earth, it then

depending on their own choice into what conditions of life they were placed. The man himself came back to earth as "herald of the beyond" — just as Orpheus in an old poem came to the underworld, not, as in the later myth, to fetch Eurydice, but to proclaim to men their fate beyond.

The conception of the transmigration of souls and of the souls' return occurs among some of the most primitive peoples. Plato could in this respect say, like Myers, the most considerable representative of modern spiritism, that he acknowledges his kinship with "the poor thinkers of the Stone Age".[1)] But in the most primitive forms in which it appears, the conception of the transmigration of souls has really no ethical significance. Such significance it acquired only in India and in Greece, when hard fates had broken the original courage to live.[2)] In Plato the doctrine of transmigration serves partly to justify the assumption that the number of souls is limited (so that the same souls must return if human life is not to cease), partly to justify the importance of leading life here in the world in the right way, so that one may be prepared to make a good choice when one is to begin life again. This choice is determined, namely, by the experience of the earlier life, — and it turned out that the souls that had fresh memories of their earthly life made the best choice, whereas those who had been rewarded with a stay in heaven often chose wrongly! Heaven is thus no good school. — Plato's mythology thus has an ethical core. What matters is to lead life in truth and harmony and with a manly
[49] mind. Plato really does not get beyond Socrates' undaunted faith that no harm can befall a good man. Just as little as Plato's theology brings anything new in relation to his philosophy, since gods as well as men must subordinate themselves to the supremacy of the Ideas, just as little does the doctrine of transmigration give him wholly new ethical motives. He stands here much as Spinoza and Kant later, whose ethics was independent of their religious conceptions. Plato's position was that justice can be maintained under outer opposition and without support from gods and men, but that there is no reason to believe that under ordinary conditions it would not find support from both gods and men. Plato approaches what the Stoics later thought, that the ethical character in its essence is independent of outer help and of outer opposition.

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[1)] Cf. my characterization of Myers in *Oplevelser og Tydning*. p. 25—33.
[2)] Cf. my Religionsfilosofi.[3] p. 97—100.

GIORDANO BRUNO

The period in Europe's cultural history that is usually called that of the Renaissance, the time of rebirth, comprises the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. It is opened by the three great poets, Dante, Boccacio, and Petrarch; after them come the learned humanists and then in turn the pioneering natural scientists and philosophers: Pomponazzo and Machiavelli, Leonardo and Telesio, Bruno, and later Galilei and Campanella. Here was prepared the world-view and view of life that, in its main features, can be said to be peculiar to modern times. Two northern astronomers, Copernicus (about whose descent Germans and Poles quarrel) and the Dane Tycho Brahe, gave the foundation, and both were also hailed with enthusiasm by the man with whom we are to concern ourselves here, Bruno, the typical representative of the Renaissance in philosophy, in whom all the threads of that remarkable age are woven together. Bruno saw in the new astronomy the possibility of a new world-view, which he presented with enthusiasm, and whose most important consequences he saw. Supported by one of science's great turning points, his thought burst the narrow bounds of what had been handed down from the past, and pointed to new problems, whose solution was to become the task of the future. It belongs to Bruno's greatness that he is clear that the work of winning truth can never be completed.

Bruno was born in 1548 in Nola in southern Italy. His baptismal name was Filippo, but when at the age of 15 he entered a Dominican monastery in Naples, he received the name Giordano (after Dominic's nearest successor). It was a fateful step he took here, determining the whole course of his life. Probably it was predominantly a desire to study *[51]* in peace that led him to the monastery, but it was the provisional result of these studies that, when he was 28 years old, made him flee from the monastery. A charge of no fewer than 130 heresies hung over his head. Doubt about the dogma of the Trinity was the most incriminating; but he was also reproached for wanting no images of saints in his cell, only a crucifix. He fled up to northern Italy, and here he lived for some years as a tutor of boys and as a teacher of astronomy to young noblemen. It was probably in these years that his world-view was founded through a repeated study of Copernicus' famous work (which had appeared in 1543), whose ideas he had not been able to accept at first reading. In his later writings he praises him highly: "You magnanimous Copernicus, whose work already made an impression on me in my very young years, although I thought it conflicted with both sensation and reason!"

Let us pause here a little. Why did Copernicus' doctrine conflict of the motion of the earth "against sensation and reason"?

Well, the senses show us, after all, that it is the sun and the stars that move, while the earth we live on stands still! — Copernicus' answer to this was that we have no right to regard our standpoint and point of view, the earthly one, as the only possible one, and he shows by mathematical means that for an observer on the sun the earth would move, like all the planets, while the sun would stand still. And at the same time he shows that this point of view leads to the simplest conception, free of all the auxiliary hypotheses that in the course of time had had to be devised in order to carry through the earthly standpoint as the only right one. We then stand — as the German philosopher Cusanus had already said before Copernicus — to the stars as seafarers who sail past coasts. Copernicus already builds on the great law of relativity, which right up to the very newest time plays so great a role in science. — This Copernican conception Bruno has
[52] not only made his own, but he has, with boldness, gone great strides further, especially on two points. Copernicus regarded the heaven of fixed stars (the "eighth sphere") as immovable and held that all fixed stars were fastened in it, all thus at an equal distance from the earth. And he still assumed the old doctrine that the planets sat each in its own rotating crystal sphere, at different distances from the earth. Bruno shows that we have no right to set limits to cosmic space and to assume that all fixed stars are equally far from us. Distant ships out at sea seem, after all, to be at the same distance from us! It is a point that needs closer investigation; but when one blindly believes in the old conception, one never comes to investigate it! — One sees that Bruno's bold thinking expressly demands that confirmation be sought through experience. — As regards the planetary spheres, his doubt found confirmation in Tycho Brahe's investigations of the motions of comets. According to these investigations the comets had to pass straight through the planetary spheres and long since have smashed these crystal heavens to pieces. Bruno therefore praises in his later writings Tycho Brahe as the foremost of the astronomers of the time (Ticho Danus, nobilissimus atqve princeps astronomorum nostri temporis).

So much for the senses. When "reason" had made difficulties, it was because the distances within the world-system were now becoming so immensely great that thought did not seem able to get a unified whole out of it. The length of the earth's diameter was to be vanishing in relation to the earth's distance from the sun! Bruno shows that reason in reality has no need of a closed picture of the world. On the contrary, when our reason is awake, one thought leads over into the next, just as in the series of numbers we can always add number to number without limit. The burden of proof rests on the one who assumes that the world is limited. Should nature be poorer than our thought? And

why should there be absolute rest anywhere? Why should the earth and the fixed stars be exceptions from the constant motion that experience everywhere shows us when we look closely? — Already as a child Bruno had learned to see that the conception depends on the standpoint. From the wine- and forest-clad mountain Cikada near Nola, *[53]* Vesuvius looked like a naked mass that lay in mist; but when he once came to Vesuvius, it was the reverse, Cicada that lay naked and misty. From this experience he understood Copernicus, indeed understood also that one could not stop where he stopped. If the earth is a planet, then we are ourselves in heaven. And when one is perplexed as to where God's abode is to be, since the firm heaven that hitherto stood as his abode is no longer there, then Bruno teaches that the Deity is the infinite force or soul that moves in All, also in man's soul, indeed even farther in, in the innermost of our soul, than we ourselves can penetrate! No thought can encompass the essence of the Deity, since on closer reflection upon it we are led out into the infinite. The significance of religion is practical, moral. The Bible does not wish to teach us astronomy and philosophy, but to work upon the minds and wills of men, and the religious conceptions have only symbolic significance. Bruno does not teach that what is true in philosophy can be false in theology; but he teaches that one and the same truth is expressed in two ways, in the thoughts of philosophy and in the images of religion. —

We left Bruno in northern Italy. For one reason or another he traveled on northward and came to Geneva. Here he laid aside the monk's habit and now appeared in doublet and with sword. He seems to have gone over to Protestantism, though he denied it later; at least he was excommunicated by the Protestant clergy and has made a public apology. From this time on he was unfavorably disposed toward Protestantism. He found there many popes instead of one, and he missed the great care for the sick and the poor that he continued to admire in Catholicism. This made him homeless. He now roams about in France, England, and Germany, without our always knowing the reasons why he changes place. The reason has often been wars and political disturbances, but just as often his own restless mind, his demanding behavior, and the remoteness of his train of thought from the scientific and ecclesiastical conceptions of the time.

[54] He lectured as a professor in Toulouse and later in Paris. A great role in his teaching was played by a theory of the art of memory, about which great expectations were then entertained, and which he used as a psychological introduction to philosophy proper. The French king Henry III had him summoned and seems to have thought that he was in possession of a secret wisdom that could solve all riddles. From both Toulouse and Paris Bruno entered into negotiations about returning to Italy in reconciliation with the

Church. He thought that the Church could content itself with his symbolic interpretation of its dogmas. But the answer given him was that he should return at once to his monastery; then one could talk about the rest.

The stay in London (from 1583 to 1585) was Bruno's happiest time. He lived in the house of the French ambassador and moved in witty and distinguished circles. His most profound and brilliant works he composed in these years. Whereas before and afterward he wrote in Latin, the six books that he composed in London are written in Italian. He defended the Copernican theory and developed the philosophical ideas that the great expansion of the picture of the world called forth in him. In a narrower circle he found interest for his ideas; Queen Elizabeth also valued conversations with him, and he praises her in lofty tones as Amphitrite, the queen of the sea, or as Diana, the royal virgin. But among the learned and in larger circles he found no understanding, and he gives drastic descriptions of the learned stupidity and self-importance he met on his way. England was on the whole too barbarous for him in manners and way of life. Already in France he felt himself in a half-barbarous country, but in England he received a stronger impression in that direction.

When the French ambassador was recalled, Bruno went with him. In Paris he held a great disputation on his theories. A single proposition among those he set up is of interest for what at the moment interests natural scientists and philosophers. He points out that when time is measured by the motions of the heavenly bodies, and when these
[55] appear different, both as regards speed and direction, from each individual globe, then each star gets its own time, different from that of the other stars.

After having roamed for several years from one German university to another, he settled for a time in Frankfurt, where he composed a whole series of writings in Latin, in which he gave a more systematic presentation of his doctrine than in the half-poetic Italian writings. In the midst of this activity he suddenly breaks off and goes to Italy (1591). People in Frankfurt seem to have been uneasy at having this heretic in their midst, and at the same time a young Venetian, Mocenigo, who was interested in his writings, had invited him to live in his house. It was longing for the fatherland, weariness of the barbarism and the unreceptiveness of the northern countries to the new thoughts, that led him back. And he had not given up the hope of reconciliation with the old Church, without needing to give up his conviction. It was to prove a great disappointment. The reaction in Italy was in full swing, and the Inquisition was vigilant.

Mocenigo was disappointed in his teacher and suspected him of keeping his most important thoughts hidden from him. When he realized that his guest was an arch-

heretic, he reported him, on the advice of his confessor, to the Inquisition, and Bruno was imprisoned by it (1592). For a year he sat imprisoned in Venice. In the interrogations he at first appeared with great boldness, told the story of his life, and developed his philosophical ideas. He held that he had attacked the doctrine of the Church only indirectly, although he admitted that he had not observed the customs, and he explained that in the doctrine of the Church he saw a symbolic expression of what he himself by another way had arrived at. But people were not satisfied with this, and his hope of an accommodation with the Church burst. Then he collapsed and declared himself willing to make a complete recantation. What the outcome of the trial in Venice would have been cannot be known. But now the Roman Inquisition stepped in, and in order to please the Pope the government of Venice handed him over to Rome (1593). An en- *[56]* tirely new trial began. His writings were studied through. It seems that it was hoped to strike a great blow by getting this great heretic to deny expressly his scientific doctrines, not only his theological heresies. Among his judges were the zealous persecutor of heretics Cardinal Sanseverino, who had celebrated St. Bartholomew's Night as a day of rejoicing, and Bellarmin, who later also helped to condemn Galilei, and who perhaps precisely at Bruno's trial had his eyes opened to the dangerous consequences of Copernicus' hitherto unnoticed doctrine. What happened in the seven years in which Bruno sat imprisoned in Rome, one does not know; the records are said to have disappeared from the Vatican archives. Only the very last proceedings are known, since a German scholar copied them out while Pius IX in 1849 was for a time driven out of Rome. When we again hear of Bruno, he stands firm, refuses to retract anything. On the 9th of February 1600 he was then degraded, excommunicated, and handed over to the secular authority (with the customary hypocritical request to avoid bloodshed). On this occasion Bruno said: "You who condemn me are more afraid than I". On the 19th of February he was burned, and his ashes thrown into the Tiber.

A German scholar who had gone over to Catholicism was present at the execution and has described it in a letter. He ends his description with the words: "Now he can go to one of the other worlds he believed in, and tell how people are treated in Rome who are like him!" — It seems to have been the possibility of other inhabited worlds than our earth that especially attracted notice, because God could become man only once. In the Middle Ages for the same reason belief in antipodes was a heresy.

After having followed Bruno on his course of life and learned to know some of his most important thoughts, we shall now try a characterization of his personality.

According to the interrogations he was a small slender man with a frail body, pale *[57]*

face, a pensive and lively, but yet melancholy expression. — From his writings, with their direct and indirect self-characterization, we get the impression of a character full of contrasts. Strong sensual passions dwelt alongside high intellectual striving; pronounced self-esteem, which could often find bombastic expression, did not exclude self-forgetting enthusiasm and absorption in the great ideas, the infinite horizons that had opened before him. This last trait he illustrates in several places in pictorial fashion. As Actaeon boldly went hunting with his hounds, but before evening himself became the hounds' prey, so it may go with the thinker when he delights in his thoughts; they can at last gain such power over him that all regard for himself vanishes. A boy in playful high spirits looses a boat on the shore, but the current can carry him out onto the great sea, and he must learn from experience that there are greater powers than those he can handle in play. Through other images the conflicting feelings are made vivid in him who strives for knowledge: at one moment he feels himself small and wretched before the high object of his knowledge, feeling the weakness of his thought; at the next he lifts his head again in heroic striving, which carries him out over all hindering barriers. The heroic soul would rather sink in the struggle, or at least feel the pain of its own imperfection, than lower its sights from the ideal goal. Bruno has on the whole a sense for states of the soul that are determined by strong contrasts. Here he stands — as in his own way Shakespeare does — as a modern psychologist who does not, like the ancient thinkers, dwell on single clear traits of character or fear that harmony of the soul could not be preserved despite strong, conflicting contrasts. It was not only the outer world that became larger in the Renaissance; the inner world too became richer and deeper.

When Bruno only in broad outline gave a sketch of the picture of the world that
[58] in the following centuries was carried through in detail, this is connected with the fact that his imagination is developed quite as strongly as his thinking. And yet he is clear that experience and experiment must step in, in order to confirm his bold thoughts. He wishes precisely to open eyes to the necessity of new investigations. He is also clear that even the boldest and most earnest research will not be able to exhaust existence.

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[59]

SPINOZA

24 NOVEMBER 1632 — 21 FEBRUARY 1677

I.

In the lectures Henrik Steffens gave at the University of Copenhagen in 1802, and which became so important for Danish spiritual life, he gave an enthusiastic description of Spinoza's life and character and then declared: "Never can I imagine this glorious man in his calm solitude, with a light in his heart that no accident could drive away, with an inward peace that no persecution could disturb, without a ray of his light awakening the fairest hope in me." — What Steffens has here declared, all will agree on, however they may stand toward Spinoza's doctrine. The inward absorption in the work of thought, — the fidelity with which the truth won is presented without regard to the opinions of the multitude and of the mighty, — the purity of mind that placed the spiritual good, which free knowledge is, above the outer goods that so easily draw many to themselves, — all this will awaken admiration everywhere where preconceived opinions do not rule in the judging of the inner life of human beings. But it is not enough to explain the enthusiasm with which so many from all sides in the world of the spirit celebrate every day of commemoration that leads thought back to him. On the 21st of February 1677 he died in his humble dwelling in The Hague, and when the memory of him is on that occasion brought forth around the whole world, it is not merely on account of his pure, ideal, and disinterested disposition. When the international society Societas Spinozana, founded some years ago, buys the house in which he lived at his death, in order to make it a memorial to him beside the statue that was erected opposite it fifty years ago, it *[60]* is because there has come forth from his solitude one of the foremost works of human thought, his "Ethica", which in brief and forceful form sets forth ideas in which the basic thoughts of the new philosophy and of the new natural science were interwoven.

Historically Spinoza stands as the completer of the thought of the Renaissance. He unites Giordano Bruno's enthusiasm for nature and great horizon with the demand for strict grounding of each particular, such as Galilei, Kepler, and Descartes had asserted. The unity in nature, which for the Renaissance became one with the Deity, had according to Spinoza its ground in the inner connection that science seeks to demonstrate among all the individual things it investigates. It is no explanation of a phenomenon or an event — Spinoza maintains — to find their cause in God, for God is assumed to

be the cause of all things, and no explanation of the individual thing can therefore be immediately derived from him. The individual thing or event must on the contrary be shown as a member in a series, within which every member presupposes the preceding members. The explanation of a particular then comes to lie in its relation to other particulars. Where such a series can be formed, a law makes itself known. And through the interconnection of the laws one arrives at the idea of a Deity that works in the interior of things through the lawfulness that conditions their essence and their existence. What with the earlier thinkers of the Renaissance was an enthusiastic vision, became for Spinoza through the study of the new natural science, which was the seventeenth century's great gift to mankind, a thought that could be laid as a foundation for scientific work. Spinoza states outright: "The more we understand the individual things, the more we understand God", — a proposition that was Goethe's, that great Spinoza-worshipper's, favorite proposition. What Spinoza states as a member of his whole system recalls, in part in the wording, propositions in Kepler and Galilei. — Kepler had (in his famous work on the planet Mars) demanded that the causes appealed to
[61] in science should themselves be demonstrated in experience, not merely be objects of faith or speculation. He thereby corrected his own earlier mystical explanations. The expression Kepler uses of a cause demonstrable in experience (vera causa) also occurs in Spinoza. It was at that time a technical expression, and is still used by Newton. It states the principle of natural causes. — Galilei maintained (in his dialogues on astronomical systems of the world) against scholastic opponents that it could not avail to appeal to God as the cause of a single particular phenomenon, whose interpretation the astronomers disagreed about, for God in his omnipotence could just as easily let the sun move around the earth as the reverse. And in analogy with this Spinoza teaches that in science one cannot appeal to a being that is assumed to lie at the ground of All, as the cause of a single particular thing. Each single thing is to be explained by its connection with another thing, this again by its connection with a third thing, and so on to infinity. (Ethica I, 28).

As regards the causal relation itself, Spinoza maintained, in agreement with Descartes, that there cannot be more in the effect than there was in the cause. If there were more, there would be something for which the cause had not been found! For Spinoza the causal relation stands as a relation of identity or equivalence between different phenomena. This conception was on the whole characteristic of the thinkers of the seventeenth century. It is developed more closely by Huyghens and Leibniz, and in the nineteenth century it became of importance for the discovery of the law of the conservation of en-

ergy. Robert Mayer, the first in the series of men who each by his own way discovered this law, is said constantly to have had the proposition causa æqvat effectum on his lips; it stood in his eyes as self-evident, and it guided him in his decisive observations and experiments. The other natural scientists too, who independently discovered the conservation of energy, started from the thought of a relation of equivalence between cause and effect as self-evident. But the self-evidence dates only from the seventeenth *[62]* century, and Spinoza is the one who has stated it most clearly.

The fusion of the mysticism of the Renaissance and the new natural science became for Spinoza the foundation of a doctrine of an eternal subsistence, an absolute substance, which he called God or Nature, which lies at the ground of All and reveals itself both in the inner force with which each individual being seeks to assert its subsistence, and in the bond that ties all beings in the world together into one great whole. Our knowledge begins, to be sure, with the collecting of single observations, but through comparison among these and through determination of their mutual connection the inner ground of All can be found, and the culminating point of all knowledge was for Spinoza a vision of the particular in its rational connection with the whole, — a concluding intuition. The particular in its isolation, without connection with the whole of nature, was for him only an abstraction. But the concluding intuition is reached only through strict work with the particulars, and Spinoza himself declares that it is only very little he has managed to understand by this way[1)].

II.

But how did Spinoza arrive at this philosophy? — This question leads to bringing forward his biography and his personal course of development.

Spinoza was born in Amsterdam on the 24th of November 1632. His parents were Portuguese Jews, belonging to the so-called Marannos, who under Spanish rule had been forced to give up their Jewish culture and their Hebrew language. His parents, like so many other Marannos, had fled to Amsterdam, where their practice of religion was at first overlooked and later tolerated. Spinoza's first name was Bento; with this Por- *[63]* tuguese name he signed himself on legal documents. As a student at the Talmud school in Amsterdam he was called Baruch, and in letters and in one of his writings he called himself Benedictus (like Bento corresponding to the Hebrew Baruch). He studied with zeal the Hebrew religious books and the Talmud, and people expected an outstanding

[1)] In *Den nyere Filosofis Historie* I have given a fuller characterization of Spinoza's philosophy, and in *Spinoza's Ethica. Analyse og Karakteristik* (Videnskabernes Selskabs Skrifter. 1918) I have gone through his principal work.

Talmud teacher of him. But gradually he aroused a painful attention among his co-religionists by his historical and philosophical criticism, and at last he was, at the age of 24, solemnly expelled from the synagogue. Only now did he truly make acquaintance with the new science and philosophy of the West, which, as we have seen, have left deep traces in his own philosophy. When the Protestant clergy too were scandalized by his criticism of the Old Testament, the authorities were induced to expel him from Amsterdam. Afterward he lived in various places in the country and supported himself by grinding optical glasses, in which he attained great skill. At last he took up residence in The Hague, and here he died of a chest disease on the 21st of February 1677. His pure and harmonious conduct of life under humble circumstances, his disinterestedness, and not least his calm death were for the theology of the time a great problem. Could a man with his views live a decent life and die in peace? There were many rumors in circulation about his dissolute life and about his death in despair. But a worthy pastor who came to live in Spinoza's lodgings and with the same landlord and landlady, set himself in a biography of the philosopher to refute these rumors. It is a quite small Dutch genre picture one gets from his description, which was based on accounts from Spinoza's landlord and landlady, who were very fond of their lodger. Spinoza often came down to them and conversed with them over a pipe of tobacco. Even on the morning of the day that was to be his last, he was down with them and conversed with them, and they were greatly astonished when they came home from church in the afternoon and found him dead. He had died in peace, in the presence of one of his friends, who was a physician. The good pastor's testimony is all the more important in that he nourished
[64] the greatest abhorrence of Spinoza's doctrine and was much scandalized that bills came to the estate that spoke of him as "the late Mr. Spinoza".

Let us return to the time right after the expulsion from the synagogue. We know very little about the years that passed from this point until his correspondence with various friends began (1656—1660). It was, however, partly the time when his philosophical ideas matured, partly a period of ferment, as regards his personal way of taking life. In both ways was prepared the wonderful harmony between doctrine and life that places him in the first rank of those who have labored for free research and ideal conduct of life.

In this period Spinoza made the transition from theology to philosophy. As a rabbinic theologian he had found in the concept of God, as the Hebrew religion conceived it, a principle of understanding. God contained for him the explanation of all things. The change that now took place in him can be expressed by saying that whereas God

had formerly been for him the principle of understanding, it was now the principle of understanding that became God for him. The transition came about through his asking what it really is to understand something. The answer was found in the new science and philosophy with which he now made acquaintance. The point was to find such causes of things as themselves made themselves known in experience. It was the principles of Kepler, Galilei, and Descartes that he took up into his philosophy. In the presuppositions of such knowledge of causes the principle of all understanding is given, and this principle essentially determined his concept of God. He certainly felt the oppositions between the two concepts of God, between which the transition took place, very sharply. But although in a special work (Tractatus theologico-politicus) he set himself to impress the difference between theology and philosophy, he nevertheless thought himself entitled to retain the same word, since he now uses the word God synonymously with the words substance and nature. He thought he had a concept of God, even if he could not have any corresponding image. His concept of God was both the principle of the subsistence *[65]* of existence and of its intelligibility. It filled his mind with the highest joy that existence was to so high a degree accessible to scientific understanding. The summit of the spiritual life was for him what he called the intellectual love of God (amor intellectualis dei), which was called forth by the thought that true knowledge was possible in this world, which has its ground in God as the one who is one with nature. To philosophize was for him a religious act.

But the same years of transition, in which these ideas matured in him, were at the same time occupied by an inner struggle of another kind than the intellectual struggles, which yet also led him to see in the work of thought the highest spiritual good. By his own confession there was a time when partly the craving for sensual pleasure, partly the craving for honor and riches stirred strongly in him. He felt himself drawn in different directions. But he experienced during these struggles that peace came to the mind when he only could collect himself in earnest reflection (modo possem penitus deliberare!). In his own personal life he has thus experienced the significance of understanding, and the joy of knowledge he has come to know both through the conflict of thoughts and through that of the drives.

It has been held that his upbringing in the religion of his people was decisive for him in his whole life, and that it was the echo of his religious childhood that later worked to give his conduct of life a stamp of purity and loftiness. But there can be no doubt that the life in the world of thought, to which he rose through inner struggles, has had a decisive influence on his life and shown its sustaining power in it. When a seafarer

comes from the southern hemisphere up across the equator, it is new stars that guide him, even if he (perhaps with piety) remembers that other stars formerly determined his course. — I cannot here help thinking of my teacher Professor Hans Brøchner (who incidentally wrote a thorough monograph on Spinoza in 1857). He too stands as a fine
[66] testimony that a noble human life can be lived in the light of the new stars that the work of thought has led to discover.

III.

Put to a test by the epistemology of our time, Spinoza's philosophy stands nearest as a presentation, given in dogmatic form, of the ideal of scientific knowledge, not as a conclusive solution of problems. But whoever wishes to immerse himself in his work will notice, beneath the firm, dogmatic formulation, a working thought. Therefore Lessing, one of the first who understood Spinoza's significance, could declare that if he were to call himself after anyone, he would call himself after Spinoza, although he himself had uttered the famous proposition that not the possession of truth, but the constant striving after truth was the highest we human beings can attain. Spinoza himself has said that many riddles remain, even if one enters into his philosophy. He thought, after all, that he had understood only very few subjects in a perfect way. And he could not imagine that the fullness of existence could be exhausted by the only two forms of existence that our experience shows us, the mental and the material, whose mutual relation presents so many difficulties. There must, he held, be countless other forms of existence, even if the knowledge we are able to win of the forms of existence accessible to us is enough for us to come into inward connection with the innermost ground of existence.

It was the life of thought that for Spinoza was the highest, that which gave value to all other sides of life. From his youth on he had, after all, experienced what significance the life of thought can acquire when it goes into depth. And he stands as a great model through his inward dedication to intellectual work. There are other sides of life that in our eyes do not come into their own in him. Thus art, poetry, and the free life of feeling, which in its deepest and most inward forms may be called religion.

[67] Nevertheless he had the capacity and the desire to observe human life, as it showed itself in him and around him. Like a whole series of the thinkers of the Renaissance he found in the urge of self-preservation, in the urge to hold fast and deepen his being, the foundation of all human mental life. In all beings there works, according to Spinoza's faith, the infinite being subsisting in itself and determined by itself, which he calls God

or Nature, and it is a ray from the fullness of this divine being that stirs in the urge of finite beings and leads to self-assertion. Pleasure and displeasure, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, love and hate are different forms of expression of the urge of self-preservation that stirs in us all. And Spinoza gives a description, masterly not only for his time, of the development of these feelings. Man can be tossed about by the passions like a ship on a stormy sea, if he does not seek a clear understanding of them and their causes. Through such self-understanding there can develop a strength of spirit, a courage (fortitudo) toward life, which appears partly as courage to live (animositas), partly as that magnanimity (generositas) that takes up the burdens of others besides its own. In these different forms true freedom expresses itself, which is not a mystical faculty but a trait of character that presupposes that man has inner conditions for subsisting and unfolding himself. When self-understanding becomes scientific knowledge, the foundation of true freedom is laid so much the more firmly.

Spinoza had an understanding, rare for his time, of religious standpoints other than his own. Through his historical study of the religion of his people he became a precursor of modern research in the history of religion. He saw the significance of the positive religions in this, that in their conception of God they held up an ideal of life (exemplar vitæ), in obedience to which a good and just life could be led. What was decisive with regard to religious conceptions for Spinoza, who in this stands as a precursor of men like Carlyle and Kierkegaard, was that the single individual with full and honest ad- *[68]*
herence (sine ulla hæsitatione, sed integro animi consensu) follows the ideal of life he acknowledges. It was, according to his biographer's statement, in this spirit that Spinoza conversed with his landlord and landlady, when he discussed with them what their pastor had said in his sermons. — In a special work (the Tractatus Theologico-politicus mentioned above) he seeks to show that when religion is conceived in this way, the state will be able without danger to grant full freedom of religion and of thought. Here as on other points he has uttered ideas that point far beyond his time.

IV.

In spite of all, Spinoza is a child of his time. His thinking comprehends in concentrated form problems that now must be treated one by one, so that afterward it can be tested whether and how the solutions of the individual problems can be brought into agreement with one another. It is the division of labor in the intellectual domain, and in the domain of spiritual life generally, that makes it necessary for us now to philosophize differently from Spinoza. But it will always lead to enrichment and consolidation

to go back to the quiet thinker of the seventeenth century, the time when modern science was founded. And it strengthens faith in the sustaining power and significance of the work of thought when one dwells on the picture of him in his simple dwelling, working on his monumental work amid misunderstanding, indifference, and fanatical persecution. The sacred fire burned in his interior and made him forget the cold and the darkness outside. The spirit that animated him must not vanish from the world of the spirit, however much both the tasks and the means of their solution change.

What persists in the world of thought as in the world of nature, is not the forms that at a given time were at disposal, but the forces that lay at the ground of the origin
[69] of these forms, and which for a time, but also only for a time, laid themselves to rest in them. To them we seek back in order to strengthen our hope for the future. Even if we nourish a firm faith that spiritual values will ever anew arise, we cannot decide in advance of what kind these values will be. But we can get an inkling of it by making ourselves familiar with the spirit in which the great ones of the past worked.

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PASCAL AND KIERKEGAARD[1)]

Two centuries apart, two thinkers met, both of whom clung to Christianity with the whole inwardness of their souls, in the manner in which they reckoned with their religion, as it had developed through the ages. Both maintained that there was an irreconcilable opposition between the spirit in which Christianity entered the world and the Christianity of more recent times. The opposition had arisen from the attempt to enter into an intimate relation with "this world", that is to say, with the culture developed on a purely human foundation. The reckoning was undertaken by both of them with such passion, and carried through with such consistency, that there would have been material enough for a great revolution in the world of the spirit. But a tragedy attaches to them both: they broke down when they had spoken their last word. The spiritual struggle — within them and with their surroundings — had consumed them. They died young, Pascal at the age of 39 (1662), Kierkegaard at the age of 42 (1855). They left behind a great riddle, more sharply formulated than ever before, but unsolved as before. Yet a heroic deed in the world of the spirit is never performed in vain. They have, with might and main, put the question whether the religious traditions of the Christian churches can still be made the basis of thought and life by sincere and honest seekers after truth.

[71] On the part of the churches no answer has been given to this question. They think they can continue their practice without taking any notice of it. They rely on what is indeed also a fact, that no other organization has so far arisen that is able to awaken larger circles to a serious conduct of life and at the same time to bring consolation and relief under the hard conditions of life. But the question is not thereby removed from the world. It is told of Scipio Africanus that when he was accused in the popular assembly of disorder in his accounts, he said: "On this day I defeated Hannibal at Zama; — let us go to the Capitol and thank the gods!" The people followed him — and forgot the rendering of accounts. The doubt still stands — and since the time of the two thinkers has been thoroughly substantiated by critical investigations — whether the churches have a right to consider themselves in continuity with the deep movement of the spirit that 1900 years ago broke forth in a corner of the great world empire, and whose guiding thought was that life must now be led in tense expectation of an imminent supernatural irruption of a new kingdom, an expectation in relation to which life in family and state, in art and science became of vanishing value, in so far as it was not a positive hindrance.

[1)] On the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of Pascal's birth (19 June 1923) the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale published a Pascal number, for which, at the request of the editors, I wrote this comparison between the two religious thinkers, which appeared at the same time in Danish (in "Tilskueren").

It is not merely for the sake of this reckoning, significant as it was, that we remember the two men. On their way to the reckoning they developed thoughts of great importance, and — as so often in the realm of thinking — the way is no less significant than the goal. On the way they have cast light on the nature and conditions of the human life of the spirit. They have made a multitude of significant psychological observations. They have contributed to what we would now call epistemology, in that they have tested the power of thought at the very limit of thought. They have shown that even where feeling and passion have the floor, it is nevertheless thoughts that, like guiding stars, determine the direction of the movement of the soul. They are knights of thought, and their struggle is of interest, whether one believes that it has led to victory or to defeat.
[72] — Their paths did not coincide. They are two different personalities that we have before us here, each with his peculiar inner and outer presuppositions, and the historical conditions under which their thoughts were brought to a point were highly different, though analogies are not lacking.

Already in their style they differ. It must here be remembered that Pascal's "Pensées", his most important work, is not a finished work, but a series of drafts, which he wrote down in the intervals between his attacks of illness, often interrupted by them. They are terse, compressed, vibrating with an emotion that now lured the thoughts forth, now was called forth by them. There is a unique force and clarity in these thoughts, and these qualities would hardly have been lost had the book been worked out. Kierkegaard's style does not have this striking force, this epigrammatic character. Authorship was for him, in his first period at any rate, a cure: as long as he wrote, melancholy had no power over him. He therefore took his time. And besides, he loved language for its own sake; he played with it and did not always think that the reader perhaps did not have as much time as he, but longed to be able to survey the course of thought and see where it leads. Episodes of a lyrical and nature-describing kind are interwoven, as well as examples from daily life. The passion that also lies behind his production is felt more as a constant trembling than as momentary emotion. Only in the very last period of his authorship does this trembling become an earthquake. —

If in this attempt at a comparison I should come to dwell comparatively much on the Danish thinker, it is because I am writing for French readers. To wish to contribute to the understanding of Pascal in a French journal would be to bring owls to Athens, so rich and thorough is French Pascal scholarship. I wish here in particular to express my admiration for Ste Beuve's "Port Royal", with which I have now, after an interval of almost 60 years, renewed my acquaintance, and which, in spite of the work that

has been done in the meantime, appears with the same freshness and thoroughness as before. I must also mention the magnificent edition of Pascal's collected works that Léon *[73]* Brunschwicg has prepared in collaboration with Pierre Boutroux and Félix Gazier, and which in its introductions and notes provides many indispensable pieces of information. In particular Brunschwicg, in the introduction to the "Pensées", gives an extraordinarily interesting account of the line of thought that Pascal may be assumed to have intended to carry through in his Apology. In what follows I cite the "Pensées" according to the arrangement of the fragments proposed by Brunschwicg. — Kierkegaard's works are at present appearing in a second collected Danish edition. They are also available in German (from Diederichs, Jena). The works comprise 14 volumes. But besides this a complete edition has been begun of Kierkegaard's journal entries and papers (by P. A. Heiberg and V. Kuhr). So far 11 volumes have appeared, and there is material for 7 volumes still. It is thus a very voluminous production that is in question here. In French there is a fine essay by Delacroix in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale (1900), and a speech by me at the University of Copenhagen on the hundredth anniversary of Kierkegaard's birth (5 May 1913) is printed in the same journal (1913). I also take the liberty of referring to my monograph on Kierkegaard as a Philosopher (1892), which has been translated into German.

Of any influence of Pascal on Kierkegaard there can hardly be any question. In the catalogue of Kierkegaard's library Pascal's works are found (in German translation). But it is only at a late stage of Kierkegaard's development that Pascal is mentioned in the journals (according to what Mr. Archivist Heiberg has kindly communicated to me). It was in the autumn and winter of 1850, and by then he had already published the writings ("Sygdommen til Døden" 1849 and "Indøvelse i Kristendom" 1850) whose content could most remind one of Pascal. He also read various works on Pascal, in particular Reuchlin's work on Port-Royal, and became aware of the difference between older editions of the "Pensées" and the edition prepared by Faugère, in which the most *[74]* revolutionary utterances were first available. (The German translations that were found in Kierkegaard's library were made from the older editions.) —

As I now attempt a comparison between the two thinkers, I dwell successively on temperament and character, on intellectual presuppositions, on the relation to Christianity, and on the question of which paths stood open when the two men had spoken their last word.

1. *Temperament and Character.*

Pascal's character is described by his two sisters (Jacqueline in her letters, Mme

Périer in her biography of her brother) in agreement. He had a fermenting or boiling temper (humeur bouillant), and his lively spirit brought with it such impatience that it was at times difficult to please him; his eldest sister marveled that in spite of his fiery temper he had been preserved from the excesses of youth. It is certainly characteristic of him when in his Pensées (fr. 139) he thinks he has discovered that all the misfortune of men comes from one single thing, that they cannot keep quiet. In the remarkable "Discours sur les passions de l'amour" (of which he is probably the author) the beauty of the passion of love is praised, precisely when it expresses itself in an overwhelming manner, and passion in general is described especially by the fact that all thoughts rush off in one single direction. There is here a presage of the passion of faith that seized him after his definitive conversion. The basic stamp of his character was preserved, however different the stages of development he passed through.

Although a double conversion was needed before he came to his last, decisive stage, he was nevertheless never irreligious. Through his upbringing a serious religious keynote prevailed in his soul; but alongside it there stirred an early awakened intellectual passion, which led him to epoch-making mathematical and physical investigations, and for
[75] a time he also took part in worldly life, a witty and literarily interested social life with gifted men of the world. In this worldly period he had the experience that seems to underlie the treatise on the passion of love. According to Strowski (Pascal et son temps. II p. 278), the object of his passion seems to have been a beautiful and distinguished lady, who loved adventurous and restless moods, but who gave him no occasion for anything he would have to repent. Yet it was later to stand before him as a great sin that his mind had been occupied at all with anything other than God. For Pascal there was here an opposition as between life and death. He belonged to those characters who could reach their final stage only through a decisive break; this followed from his "humeur bouillant". The catastrophe came on the night (23 Nov. 1654) when it dawned on him, in an ecstatic state, that the living God demands everything, so that an unconditional renunciation had to come into force. His previous life now stood before him as a life in emptiness, but he rejoiced that he had now found the source of life.

Against the background of what he had thus experienced, the attempts of Jesuit confessors to moderate the demands of the great ideals according to the needs of worldly people had to offend him in the highest degree. It was impossible to join God and the world (joindre dieu au monde) (fr. 935). The world is quite willing to have religion, but it must be a gentle and mild religion (fr. 956). In his "Lettres écrites à un provincial" and in the last "Thoughts" that he wrote down, he speaks in ever stronger terms of the

pernicious path on which the Church has set out. The Church is no longer Church if it does not have God with it when it looses or binds. (Si elle absout ou si elle lie sans dieu, ce n'est plus l'Église. fr. 870.)

During the struggle into which Pascal thus entered, and while he was in full swing with the publication of the "Provincial Letters", a young relative of his was cured of an eye disease that the physicians had declared incurable, by the diseased eye being touched by a thorn from Jesus' crown of thorns, which belonged to the relics in the church of Port Royal. This miracle confirmed him in his conviction of being on the *[76]* right side. The age of miracles is by no means over, as his opponents thought. And when the ecclesiastical authorities deny the truth, God must intervene directly (fr. 832; 839). Confidently, therefore, Pascal appeals from Rome, which condemns his writings, to the tribunal of Jesus Christ (fr. 920).

In his own life Pascal carried through the absolute renunciation. True, he did not enter a monastery, but he lived his last years in the strictest asceticism, occupied solely with works of charity, but at the same time anxiously guarding against anyone of those closest to him attaching their love to his person and thereby robbing God of the full devotion that was due to Him. His long illness he felt as a relief, although it prevented him from completing the apology for Christianity of which the "Pensées" contain drafts. Spiritual sickness is indeed the natural condition of Christians, and it is easier to remain in it when one is also physically ill!

It is a somewhat different portrait of character that presents itself to us in Kierkegaard. There is greater continuity in his development, though it exhibits decisive transitions. He cannot be counted among "the twice born". Neither ecstasy nor miracle plays a role in his life.

Like Pascal he had been brought up in a serious Christianity. But in his youthful years he was absorbed in poetry and philosophy. It was the age of Romanticism, and the idea of a harmony between art, science and religion dominated minds. Romantic thought had recently been systematized by Hegel, and Kierkegaard was for a time absorbed in his ideas. If it was the case that all oppositions finally meet in harmony, one could for the time being let moods and fantasies freely unfold; they too belong to the rich, manifold world that at last could find its explanation in the basic Christian ideas. Kierkegaard noticed early, however, that a duality was present here. In his journals from this time he used Goethe's lines about Gretchen as a kind of motto: "Halb Kinder- *[77]* spiel, halb Gott im Herzen!" And there was even a time when he was drawn into a wild life, which left behind remorseful memories, memories that had to feed the melancholy

that lay deep in his nature, and which could sometimes overwhelm him so that he felt himself on the verge of insanity.

He now saw it as his task to form a harmonious whole out of the oppositions that stirred in him — play and seriousness, frivolity and melancholy. He discovered here by way of his own personal experience that in practice it was not so easy to reach a "higher unity" as it was in Hegel's system. This inner work made him lonely. He felt isolated. His melancholy made it (he thought) impossible for him to enter into relations of life that rested on open and glad devotion. He broke off his engagement to a young, joyous woman, and he felt himself unable to take on an official position. There was for him a glaring opposition between other people's easy way of taking life and his own struggle with dark powers. Had he been able to live in the Middle Ages, he would, he thought, have gone into a monastery. The inner work of working out his personal life he has beautifully described in the following manner: "I sit and listen to the tones in my inner being, the glad beckoning of music and the deep seriousness of the organ. To work them together, that is a task, not for an organist, but for a human being who, in the absence of greater demands on life, restricts himself to the simple one, of wanting to understand himself." — Now "Gott" and "Kinderspiel" no longer dwell peacefully side by side in the heart. The opposition between them sets a task that can lay claim to all the energy of life. What appears here is repeated throughout Kierkegaard's whole life. He did not move from one extreme to another. The oppositions were always there, but they sharpen as his development proceeds, and the work of overcoming them therefore becomes greater and greater. From his own experience he could take the standard for the height of the personal life.

[78] When it came to checking melancholy and relieving the inner tension, there was a means at his service. He needed only to follow his urge to literary production. It was a liberation to him to devote himself to poetic and philosophical production. Like the princess in "Tusind og én Nat", I saved, he says, my life by telling stories, that is to say, by writing. In the first period of his work as an author (1843—1846) some of his most widely read writings came into being, for example "Enten — Eller" and "Stadier paa Livets Vej". They concerned what the struggle in his inner being was about, — to become a personality, to win a firm center around which all the elements of life could be ordered. And thereby these writings could at the same time serve to influence the slack age, which was the epigonic age of Romanticism and of speculative philosophy and was inclined to volatilize the oppositions of life and thereby lower the level of the spiritual life. Kierkegaard did not dare to say that this influence had been the original intention

of his work as an author. He was honest enough to admit to himself that it had been a tension in his inner being that needed a diversion. Whereas Pascal in his "Lettres à un provincial" set himself with full awareness the task of fighting against a lowering of the ethical level, Kierkegaard came more involuntarily upon work in this direction. But neither was he yet, like Pascal, at the height of his religious development.

A new period in Kierkegaard's work as an author (1847 —1855) was called forth precisely by his inner life taking on a more and more pronounced religious character. "I feel now," he writes in his journal (1847), "a need to come to myself in a deeper sense by coming nearer to God… Something stirs in me that points to a metamorphosis… I shall therefore keep still." One sees here the opposition to Pascal's ecstasy: a half-unconscious unfolding of a new direction of life, toward which he stands waiting. The year after he writes: "Now I am at faith in the deepest sense". Christianity now acquired a significance of reality for him that it had not hitherto had. After concluding the first *[79]* period of his work as an author he believed for a while that his literary activity was now concluded, and he thought of withdrawing to a solitary region in the country. But the more strongly awakened religious consciousness then awakened a sharper criticism of existing Christendom. In his first period as an author he had aimed at the slackness in the individual way of taking life; now he found in the Church a compromise, a softening of Christianity according to worldly inclinations, while the original ideals were at most given a place in the background. Christianity was in his eyes in fact abolished by being made the religion of mildness and consolation. "And now there lives in the existing Christendom a spoiled, proud and yet cowardly, defiant and yet soft race, which on occasion hears these mild grounds of consolation set forth, but hardly knows whether it will make use of them, even when life smiles most beautifully, and which in the hour of need, when it is seen that they are after all not really so mild, takes offense." This utterance is found in "Indøvelse i Kristendom", which together with "Sygdommen til Døden" is characteristic of the second period of Kierkegaard's authorship.

On the part of the official Church no notice was taken of the assertion of the sharp opposition between the strict demand of original Christianity to be wholly absorbed in the one thing needful and the idyll of modern Christianity built under the shelter of the dogma of reconciliation. Then Kierkegaard began his passionate struggle against the existing Church, the most violent spiritual struggle that has been waged within Danish intellectual life. His last word was: "The Christianity of the New Testament does not exist." In the midst of the strife he fell ill and died.

2. *Intellectual Presuppositions.*

Pascal cultivated mathematics and physics and has a fine name within these sci-
[80] ences. From these studies he drew his conception of what scientific cognition is. A systematics like Descartes', with its attempt to trace knowledge of nature back to certain simple propositions and thus to reach a rational foundation for the work of human reason, he considered impossible. He has aptly been called an experimental positivist. Already in his "worldly" period he realized that strictly mathematical thinking (esprit de géométrie) cannot, through its deductions, lead to a full understanding of what goes on in the human mental life. The mental phenomena are too manifold, too composite and too changing for that. In the domain of mental life the point must be to trace the manifold phenomena back to certain types, to enter into each of these by itself, to put oneself into their motives and interests. Mathematical thinking is not suited to this. A fine sense of types and nuances (esprit de finesse) alone makes it possible to find the essential elements and to follow them in their connections. Mme Périer precisely praises her brother for his ability to put himself into the presuppositions of those he addressed. He knew, she thinks, "all the springs of the human heart". This sense had been developed in him in his intercourse with men of the world, and it served him later, when the point was to win souls for the true religion. Speculative proofs do not lead to the goal, he realizes; whether they are tenable or not, their effect is limited to those moments of our life when we are purely intellectually interested; afterward they are easily forgotten. What matters is to take men where they stand, and then lead them to get further by their own ability; one is, after all, best convinced by reasons one finds oneself. One must lead them to see what strange mixture of greatness and wretchedness their nature contains. Thought can lead them up into higher regions, but drives and passions draw them down again into the mire. Man must be led to see what an incomprehensible monster (monstre incompréhensible) he is. In the true religion man will find an explanation of the riddles of his nature and at the same time means and ways to remove the discord
[81] in his inner being. A consideration on which Pascal lays special weight is that man must feel lonely in the infinite world, from whose depths no voice is heard that could give understanding and awaken hope. Pascal himself, through unrest, wonder and anguish before the great riddles, was driven to seize as the only way out the one that Christianity opens. Christianity admittedly contains mysteries alongside the revelations it brings. But a complete unveiling of the secrets of existence would exclude the spiritual work, the struggle and the courage to venture, to stake everything on one card, which is after all the condition for being worthy of the highest.

According to Pascal there are two main types, as regards the natural human beings'

relation to the great riddles. The one type holds to thought and duty, to the great and firm in man, and regards everything else as indifferent. The classical representative of this type is the Stoic Epictetus. The other type takes the swell of life as it comes, enjoys the single moments and otherwise adheres to custom and usage, having once and for all become clear about the transience of all things. It finds a secure repose in the insight that one basically knows nothing. Montaigne is the classical representative of this type.

The study of these two types was for Pascal a preliminary exercise for the vigorous grip with which in his "Pensées" he seizes and shakes the unbeliever in order to bring him to the decisive point where only one single way out of despair shows itself, — the one he himself had personally found. It was for him a disappointment that there was so little interest in the study of human nature, its types and their practical significance. "When I began the study of man," he says, "I realized that the abstract sciences were not suited to man, and that I removed myself more from my true position in the world by immersing myself in them than other men by being ignorant of them." He had then expected to find many companions in this new study, but discovered that in this domain there was even greater indifference among people than toward geometry (fr. 144). *[82]* He himself now threw himself with passion into this study, while his earlier scientific interests more and more vanished. In a letter to the famous mathematician Fermat he writes, toward the end of his life (10 August 1660), that he still regards geometry as the highest domain in which spiritual powers can be exercised, but that he now considers it quite useless, especially as he has entered upon quite different studies, which are so different from his earlier studies that he has hardly any memory left of them.

Yet he constantly maintains that the greatness and nobility of man rest on thought, and that it is this that we must hold to. We do not fill space like the great masses around us, and our force is vanishing in comparison with theirs. We are like reeds, but we are thinking reeds, and though the external masses may crush us, they do not reach the dignity that thought gives. (fr. 346—348). But the thoughts to which Pascal attributes such great significance were more and more only those thoughts that serve religious self-understanding. Just as in his "worldly" period he had described the passion of love as a concentration, a rushing (précipitation) of all thoughts in one single direction, so religion had now become his passion, and only those thoughts that led in this direction would he now acknowledge.

Kierkegaard comes with entirely different intellectual presuppositions than Pascal. Brought up among the epigones of Romanticism, he regarded for a time Hegel's philosophy as the highest form of thinking, whereas for Pascal geometry was the ideal. In a

system of thought within which each member of necessity led over to another, every subject was to find its place. Poetry, religion and science stood as different forms or stages of one and the same divine truth. That was his youthful dream. In association with his teacher, Professor Poul Møller (the most Danish of Danish authors), he worked
[83] his way out of this dream. His significance as a philosopher rests on his having been one of the first to criticize speculative philosophy from an epistemological standpoint. (Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift. 1846). He shows that even if an "absolute" knowledge could be given, the single individual would still always have to begin the line of thought that was to lead him up to this high stage from a definite point within experience, and why more from one point than from another? And can this factual starting point itself be derived from the "absolute" knowledge that is to be the result? Will there not moreover always be certain presuppositions on which even the "absolute" knowledge rests, and will one ever be able to be sure that one has got back to the ultimate presuppositions? — Kierkegaard came to see that the problem of knowledge is the most central of the philosophical problems. He lays special weight on our living in time. We live forward, but we understand backward. A conclusion can therefore not be reached, and Kierkegaard declares himself in agreement with Lessing in the proposition that beyond the constant striving for truth human beings do not get.

Like Pascal, Kierkegaard maintains that personal life needs thoughts, but that these thoughts concern what is our abode in the course of life. The thought of God is an expedient in need, not a subject for purely intellectual interest. He distinguishes sharply between "essential" and "inessential" knowledge, and to the inessential he reckons natural science, philology, history and pure philosophy, — all thoughts that are without significance for how we take our stand toward the great questions of life and death. There is no purely intellectual way of taking life, unless one wishes to make oneself into an abstraction. As regards the different ways of taking life he employs a procedure similar to Pascal's, in that he tries to characterize certain types. We can here keep to those he has presented in his most popular writings ("Enten—Eller" and "Stadier paa Livets Vej"). The aesthetic type makes the enjoyment of the moment the highest. The art here is to preserve a certain elasticity, so that one can seize each new moment. The
[84] point is to break off in good time so as not to be held fast in a lasting relation of life. Therefore a certain rotation of crops is to be recommended. The aesthete is like a tangent to the circle of life (or rather: circles). Only at a single point does a momentary contact take place; afterward another point of contact is sought. Hence: fleeting love, but not marriage; comradeship, but not friendship; fleeting occupation, but not citizen-

ship; intellectual enjoyment, but not science! Whereas the aesthete is a tangent, the ethicist describes a circle about a center and is determined by the relation to this. It is the type of fidelity. Ethically, life is lived in fixed relations of living together and in constant work. Above both types rises the religious life, whose striving and whole direction is determined by a goal that lies beyond all moments and beyond all time, incommensurable with all other human ends, indeed even at its pinnacle, in Christianity, in the sharpest opposition to whatever can be conceived in purely human terms as an end or task. The more pronounced a character the religious life takes on, the less does man live in his natural element, but becomes like a fish on dry land. And finally eternity does not stand (as in Plato and Spinoza) as the great, ever-present background for time in life, but breaks in in the midst of time, as the Godhead itself steps forth as a human being at a definite point of time and in a definite place in space. Then this revelation, and the relation to it, becomes decisive for all evaluation of life and its relations.

It is a comparative philosophy of life that Kierkegaard here has given. It may recall Pascal's characterization of Montaigne and Epictetus and of the Christian type of life in contrast to them both. And as Pascal declared sickness to be the natural condition of Christians, so Kierkegaard comes to the result that the highest type of life, the Christian, entails tension and suffering, because the oppositions between which life is to be led stand in the most cutting contradiction to one another. And this type of life is precisely for that reason the highest, because it makes the greatest demands on the synthetic energy that all personal life requires.

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According to Kierkegaard it is by a leap that one passes from one type of life to the other, and the greatest leap is that which leads a soul placed in despair over to the Christian type, But not even at the most decisive point does the leap in Kierkegaard take on the character of ecstasy. And a certain continuity he does not exclude, since the standard (the energy of the personal synthesis) is to be common to the whole series of types. Basically Pascal has indeed the same standard, that which is taken from the relation between the fullness of life that is at one's disposal and the force and concentration with which the full content is ordered. It is now also the only standard that can be applied to the personal and historical differences in men's ways of taking life, and it must be applied also by those who find the high points of life elsewhere than the two thinkers we stand before here. — An objection we must already make here to Pascal's and Kierkegaard's application of the standard. They lay exclusive weight on the inner, subjective resistance that is to be overcome, thus on the inner work by which unity and concentration are reached in the single individual's mind. But one must also ask about

the significance of this inner work for larger circles of human life, for the society in which they live, perhaps for all humanity. This neither Pascal nor Kierkegaard would enter into. On the contrary they maintain that there is a yawning abyss between the type of life that in their eyes is highest and human cultural work.

3. *The Problem of Christianity.*

Pascal appears within Catholicism, Kierkegaard within Protestantism. This must of course in many ways influence their course of development as well as their definitive standpoint. But it is of great interest for the history of religion to see that at the end of their striving to penetrate to the core of their religion they come to stand before one
[86] and the same problem, a problem that can be formulated thus: Can the conception of life and the conduct of life of primitive Christianity be maintained together with the appropriation of, and work for, the spiritual and material culture that Christianity has not produced, but which — before and after the rise of Christianity — has developed according to its own laws? It is, after all, also a problem that is common to Catholicism and Protestantism. Before we go further, let us see briefly how it arose.

The first Christian generations lived in expectation of the near return of Christ, which was to bring the conclusion of the whole course of the world through a judgment of the world. In this expectation consisted the original Christian faith, and both conduct of life and conception of life were determined through and through by it. In view of the prospect of the near catastrophe, which meant the breakthrough of a new heaven and a new earth, all purely human and social tasks had to lose their significance. Therefore the New Testament has no talk of art, science and political life, and even family life is acknowledged only with a certain reservation. The ethics of the New Testament had to become what Albert Schweitzer has aptly called an "interim ethics". The point was to gather all attention toward one single point in the near future. The coming of the Kingdom of God, for which prayer is made in the "Our Father", meant for the first generations something quite definite, not merely a vague prayer for spiritual goods. And among the believers the expectation was joined with an enthusiasm that often rose to ecstasy, and for which every sacrifice became easy. Everything in ordinary human life became small in face of the great thing that was awaited.

In contrast to a standpoint such as the primitive Christian one, both Catholicism and Protestantism appear as organizations for the long run, built on the prospect of a long course of development for the religious life as for human life in general. One became less and less prepared for a swift departure. Even if one sought to hold fast

to the original expectation, its fulfillment was nevertheless relegated to an ever more distant future, and the expectation gradually lost its practical, all-determining power. *[87]* And both the culture handed down from classical antiquity and the new culture that developed independently of Christianity, one sought (after due resistance, often of a bitter kind) gradually to appropriate. But in spite of everything both churches maintain that they are in continuity with primitive Christianity and seek, each in its own way, to justify the claim to hold fast to the old ideals in the new times.

The most grandiose solution is that of Catholicism. It rests on a distinction between degrees of perfection. The monk and the nun give up participation in the life of the world in order wholly and undividedly to live for the Beyond and in the one thing needful. Through them the connection with the primeval age of Christianity is maintained. The laity then carry human life further under the guidance of the confessors, through whom the Church exercises a controlling influence on the single individuals. In the prelates of the Church Augustine (De civitate dei XX, 9) already saw a partial fulfillment of the Apocalypse's prophetic description of those who sit on the seat of judgment in the millennial kingdom.

Pascal was clear that at all times in the Church there had to prevail a practical acknowledgment of the primitive Christian remoteness from all cultural life. He lived in his last period as a monk, even though he did not enter a monastery. The time until Jesus' return had to be a time of tension and suffering. The scene in Gethsemane was in his eyes the expression of the constant situation of true Christians. One must live in contemporaneity with the suffering Savior. The only time Jesus in his anguish sought help and consolation from human beings was in Gethsemane. Then the apostles failed him. But Christians still have the duty that was then neglected. Jesus' mortal agony lasts to the end of the world, and the faithful must keep awake until then. (Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde; il ne faut pas dormir pendant ce temps-là. fr. 583). It is thus not, as most often in the Church, the victorious, but the suffering Jesus to whom the gaze is to be directed. The Garden of Gethsemane is the counterpart of the Garden *[88]* of Eden. Fallen man has to dwell in Gethsemane and can only thereby have prospect that Eden will be opened to him.

In the practice of Jesuit confessors Pascal now saw a criminal adaptation of Christian life to the life of the world, and he directed a sharp protest against it in his "Lettres à un provincial". Despite errors in detail he is right from a strictly Christian standpoint. It is a different ethics that is proclaimed in the New Testament and in Jesuit casuistry, and even from a purely human standpoint there could be misgivings about the results

of this casuistry. But besides the struggle that Pascal in the Provincial Letters waged against the mild religion that had gradually replaced the Gethsemane mood, he has in a special treatise made a comparison between the Christianity of the first times and that of our time. When the distance here is so great, he finds the cause of it in this, that now baptism precedes instruction in what Christianity is, whereas originally no one went over to Christianity without being thoroughly informed about its doctrine and without having renounced the world. At that time one could tell the difference between the world and the Church, but now the Church, through infant baptism, has made it possible for worldly life to spread within it. It was with a good intention, Pascal adds, that the Church introduced infant baptism, namely out of fear of excluding the children who died before baptism from the Savior. But what has here been done out of care for the children has become corruption for the grown-ups! —

It was, as we have already seen above, not only on this point that Pascal's break with the Church took place. He was led to reject the authority of the Church, both as regards doctrines and as regards the establishment of facts. Together with his Jansenist friends he maintained that the propositions that the Pope had found in Jansenius' work "Augustinus" and condemned as heretical were not to be found at all in the said book, and he denied the Pope the right to establish something as a fact that everyone could and
[89] must convince himself of. Already earlier he had (in a treatise on the vacuum) decisively rejected the intrusion of faith in authority into the problems of empirical science. And in the 18th Provincial Letter he states that if Galileo's doctrine of the motion of the earth is false, it is not the Pope's decree that establishes this, and that if proof can really be given that the earth moves, then it goes round both with him who denies the motion and with him who assumes it. Pascal was not a Copernican, but he touched here on a point very dangerous for a Catholic at that time, the very one that had brought Bruno to the stake and forced Galileo to perjury. A spirit rebellious against ecclesiastical authority forms a subterranean connection between Pascal as natural scientist and as religious thinker. He even states that the Pope hates and fears the scholars who have not sworn an oath to him (as monks or priests) (fr. 873). This utterance comes about on the occasion of the Pope's condemning the doctrine of the omnipotence of divine grace and of the complete dependence of the human will on God's will, this Augustinian doctrine that Jansenius had renewed in sharp opposition to scholastic and Jesuit theology. So the Pope himself is thus not orthodox, and he can no more in matters of faith than concerning facts be an infallible authority. But the Pope has so much else to attend to that he has no time to acquaint himself with matters of faith (fr. 882)! And when he condemns the truth, one

must cry out all the louder, and appeal must be made from Rome to Heaven! We must obey God more than men (fr. 920).

This last utterance Pascal's Jansenist friends found it best to suppress when they published his "Pensées". It would have been a deep sorrow to Pascal to notice that they here did not give honor to the truth. Only death had prevented him from publishing his last thoughts himself. — On his deathbed he received the sacrament from the hand of his parish priest. His opponents saw in this a recantation; but it meant only that he did not consider his relation to the true Church broken. —

[90] Kierkegaard had developed within the Protestant Church, from the first with great reverence for its leaders, the living as the earlier ones. But in the years 1847— 50 his eye sharpened for the opposition between original and modern Christianity, and in two of his most profound writings ("Sygdommen til Døden" 1849 and "Indøvelse i Kristendom" 1850) a great reckoning with the Church is prepared. The main idea in the said writings was that, especially in Protestantism, one had forgotten the pattern of the Reconciler. One took the reconciliation as a given fact and settled cozily in the world as it is. Kierkegaard now appeals to the representatives of the Church to make the concession that there was a great distance between modern Christianity and the Christianity of the New Testament, and that there had occurred a falling away in relation to the heroic age of Christianity. But when on the part of the official Church one was silent about this and even on given occasion expressly proclaimed the claim to be in continuity with "the days of the Apostles", he issued a violent protest against this, especially in his agitational pamphlet "Øjeblikket" (1855). In the midst of the strife he collapsed and died. He died without the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as he did not wish to take it from a pastor's hand. He is here a step further out than Pascal; but he has not rejected the sacrament altogether, and here he still, for his part, hangs together with the old Church.

"Sygdommen til Døden" consists in the despair that inevitably is called forth by the high task being set for man in Christianity, to live a life of the spirit in the sharpest opposition to the life that natural feelings and drives would lead to. Where this task has not come to consciousness, perhaps a life of childlike joy in life is led. But anxiety will again and again announce itself and put an end to security. Man can then, in weakness, in reserve or in defiance, try to subdue the anxiety and withdraw from listening to the great demand; but despair will always be present, hidden. Only by despair breaking out openly and unfolding is there possibility of getting beyond it. Only then *[91]* is the condition present for grace to come into force. But within Christendom one has, now in thoughtlessness, now in romantic enthusiasm, now in hypocrisy, let up on the

great opposition between the spiritual and the animal, and sought to level it instead of working to overcome it.

"Indøvelse i Kristendom" impresses that as long as Jesus has not come in his glory, the Christian has to take the humiliated Jesus as his pattern. The point is to look away from what one believes oneself to have learned through dogmatics about Jesus' being God. One must make oneself contemporary with Jesus of Nazareth, the man who said he was the Son of God and therefore was mocked and executed. Instead, like schoolboys, one has sneaked to a result and cheated oneself out of doing the sum on one's own. — The parallel with the Gethsemane mood demanded by Pascal lies close at hand.

It became more and more Kierkegaard's conviction that men had committed a great betrayal of Christianity. One took the mildness and grace and forgot the necessary presuppositions. And he maintains that, especially in Protestantism, this betrayal lies plainly in the open. Catholicism would never be able to sink so deep into spiritlessness as Protestantism. And yet Catholicism has already compromised. The meaning of Christianity collapsed when it was regarded as something extraordinary to follow Jesus in earnest by withdrawing from the life of the world. It is a senselessness that there should be two kinds of Christians. But what had thus begun was continued when Luther broke out of the monastery and got busy making a new Church, which in a comfortable way leveled the opposition between Christianity and the world. "Luther, Luther, Luther, you have a great responsibility!" And yet Luther had gone through the school of despair. But later generations then trust in the achievements of their forefathers and have no need to perform achievements themselves. Protestantism is a plebeian tendency. It levels the
[92] difference between the high and the low in the world of the spirit. And family life is largely to blame for this. Through infant baptism all in the so-called Christian countries were made Christians. "And that" — exclaims Kierkegaard (Øjeblikket VII) — "one dares to offer to God under the name of Christian baptism! Baptism — it was by this holy act that the Savior of the world was consecrated to the work of his life, and after him the disciples, men who had long since come to years of discretion, and who now, dead to this life, promised to live as sacrificed ones in this world of lies and wickedness."

Kierkegaard's polemic culminated in the setting up of one single thesis (in contrast to Luther's 95): "the Christianity of the New Testament does not exist." And to this was added a warning against "those who walk in long robes" and against participation in the public worship of God, in which God was made a fool of!

The appearance of Pascal and Kierkegaard has great interest for the history of religion. From a pronounced sociological standpoint it has been maintained that religion is

essentially a social phenomenon. And in fact the history of religion is interested chiefly in such religious phenomena as rest on traditional cult. How, then, can individual personalities whose striving and thinking lead them to a break with their religious community (without their entering another community) acquire significance for the history of religion? One could answer the question by assigning each of them to his "sect", Pascal to Jansenism, Kierkegaard perhaps (as has been done in an excellent French sociological work) to Pietism. This would, however, founder on the fact that Pascal precisely in his last, decisive turn separated himself with great pain from his earlier fellow believers, and that Kierkegaard has only satire and scorn for the Pietists and expressly separates his cause from theirs. Rather one could say that they break with the ecclesiastical tradition prevailing in their age only in order to maintain an older tradition, in their eyes alone legitimate. But with their appeal to what in their eyes was original they stood alone in their time, and it was in the name of individual conscience that they protested. *[93]* There was no social authority to which appeal could be made. Pascal found confirmation of his doctrine in a miracle, but this miracle was not ecclesiastically sanctioned. And Kierkegaard expressly declared that the religious type that was for him the only valid one no longer existed. Only in their relation to the sacrament on the deathbed is there a bond left, which nevertheless did not prove strong enough to bring about the connection with the Church again. — But it is an untenable theory that lays so great weight on tradition and cult that one forgets what goes on in the single souls who pay homage to these social powers. It must become an essential task for the study of religion to trace the development and attitude of religious personalities. And then not least such individual processes of development as lead out to the boundary of the religion in question precisely through the attempt to live through this religion in spirit and in truth. And such attempts are precisely present in the religious development of Pascal and of Kierkegaard.

4. *Possible Ways.*

What the two men would have done had they happened to continue their lives, of that nothing can be known. But it may be of interest to examine what possibilities can present themselves to such human beings as, with full conviction and assent and supported by their own experiences of life, have followed the two spiritual combatants right up to the point where they had thought their last thought.

There are three possibilities that present themselves here.

One could try to lead one's life by resuming the presuppositions of primitive Christianity, in the great expectation of the near breakthrough and with the giving up of all

participation in the work of culture and in the interests of ordinary human life. There are perhaps — who knows? — those who go this way. It was the way that in the Middle Ages Francis of Assisi in his own fashion followed.

[94] Or one could make the concession demanded by Kierkegaard about the distance between original and modern Christianity. But one would then have to go a step further and acknowledge that modern Christianity is really another religion than primitive Christianity. One then avoids the great contradiction of thinking oneself to live by ideals that one in fact denies. One must then conceive one's religion so that, however essential a factor it is for life, the conduct of life and the conception of life are partly guided by ideals that have an entirely different origin and lead in an entirely different direction from the religion one pays homage to. It may be difficult to make these different guiding stars belong to the same world-system. But the honesty that the two great religious thinkers demanded is not violated in advance.

If one cannot go either of these ways, there remains the further possibility of trying to resume the Greek striving to ground an ethical conduct of life on human nature and human experience of life, by investigating what ideals and what ends must consistently present themselves on this foundation. This is in fact the way the endeavors for a philosophical ethics in the last centuries have gone. I once (in my Etik[5] X, 3) expressed this thus: "The Platonic concept of justice as personal harmony we can adopt to express the inner connection, the higher unity of self-assertion and devotion. The ancient concept of harmony must be widened and deepened by means of the ethical experiences that lie expressed in the evaluations of character of Stoicism, Christianity, the Renaissance and modern humanity. But such a change in the content of the concept is quite possible without bursting its frame. Our ethics is Greek ethics, as the later ethical development through its manifold oscillations has been able to alter and correct it, but which will never be able to be displaced as long as there is to exist anything that can rightly be called human ethics." — On this foundation one cannot work without a belief developing at the same time that such work is always possible, — that existence thus has room
[95] for it, indeed perhaps first comes to full development through it. The closer shaping of such a belief can come about only through poetic symbolism. A great and deep poetry therefore itself belongs to the values whose persistence and unfolding must be hoped for.

In relation to the two other indicated standpoints the position is that one — instead of renouncing all natural development of human life, all independent culture, all life in family and society, in art and in science, and instead of undertaking an external mixture

of Eastern religion and Western culture — takes one's stand resolutely on the foundation of human nature and of Western culture and confidently works on, as far as one can reach. There may be problems enough here, and there may come great disappointments, so that many lose heart. There may be strife about the ways in matters of detail, and about the grounding of the thoughts that guide us; but the main lines will constantly be discernible anew. — And nourishment may very well be drawn and instruction gathered from other directions of life. The pathos with which the believer awaits the ever-near Kingdom of God can find a more or less pronounced counterpart in every striving after high ends. Without tension no great work is carried through. If we compare the significance of Christianity for European human life with the significance of Buddhism for Asian human life, the proposition can be defended that I have put forward in my Religionsfilosofi, that Buddha has made Asia mild, but Jesus has taught Europe a great Excelsior. But above all the spirit of love of humanity, which Christianity has proclaimed and (not always with full consistency) placed at the head of the virtues, will also find its place in a purely human ethics. Aristotle already stated that the highest form of justice has the stamp of love, and conversely it holds that love is a real virtue only when it unites with wisdom and thereby becomes justice. On the humane standpoint one stands in general in a similar relation to Christianity as to other spiritual tendencies; one appropriates from them what accords with constantly continued striving. The great world religions have, like culture, their origin in human nature and human circumstances of *[96]* life, and whatever of the noble, great and beautiful has developed within the religions belongs therefore in the end to the human race as a whole, not to a single sect, even if this has ever so wide a diffusion. —

Whichever of the three ways one then goes, there is one thing one can learn from the two mighty figures we have here dwelt on. They have both shifted the center of gravity in the life of the spirit from the external authorities and from the content of doctrine to personality, its experiences and its demands. Pascal motivates the claim that Christianity is the true religion by saying that only in it is the deepest need of human nature satisfied, in that it at once explains and reconciles the greatest oppositions of life. And for Kierkegaard the thought of God was an anchor of distress under the storms of life, the necessity of which he does not understand who always sails in smooth waters. It therefore depends, according to the thought of both, on the right, deep-going experiences being made in the course of life. But first and foremost the point is not to deceive oneself and others by thinking oneself to pay homage to a faith that has not come out of one's own experience of life and one's own need. "Pour les religions" —

says Pascal (fr. 590) — "il faut être sincère; vrais paiens, vrais juifs, vrais chrétiens." And in his last struggle against the existing Church Kierkegaard says: "I dare not call myself a Christian; but honesty I will, and for it I will venture."

But there is a point at which those who go the third way must be decidedly at odds with Pascal and Kierkegaard. They are both clear that life, also the religious life, cannot do without thoughts that hold fast to and guide the direction of life. But they distinguish so absolutely between thoughts of life and scientific thoughts, or, as Kierkegaard puts it, between "essential" and "inessential" knowledge. To the "inessential knowledge" all science is reckoned. And yet there are scientific thoughts that can become of the greatest importance for personal faith. The boundary cannot be drawn once for all. Quietly and
[97] imperceptibly for most, the magnificent development of science, both natural science and the sciences of spirit, in the last centuries thus exerts its influence on religious conceptions. It is in general a false conception that personality and science should stand in opposition to one another as resting on entirely different interests. Science is due to personal work and springs from personal need, and the joy of knowledge belongs to the noblest feelings of man. Even the forms in which scientific thought moves, without always being conscious of it, lead back on closer investigation to personality, in that they are conditioned by the constitution of the human spirit. On the other hand personality is developed through scientific work, gains in clarity about life and its conditions and learns to set itself tasks that lead far beyond egoistic interests. And as it goes with science, so it goes with all culture. Man is both greater and smaller than the culture given at any time: greater, because all culture must in the end justify its value by contributing to the development of personal life, — smaller, because culture sets tasks that require the subordination of individual interests to that which serves the lasting progress of humanity as a whole.

They are two solitary figures we have dwelt on. Successors they have not had, and a school they have not formed. But the analogies between the thoughts that guide each of them and between their appearance in face of the existing order that each for himself stood before contains instruction for all times. From their solitary stages they caught sight of great, decisive problems in the domain of the history and the psychology of religion, and they have staked their lives on fixing these problems so firmly that they cannot be forgotten. And oblivion will so much the less become the lot of the two men as they have set forth their problems not merely with passion, but with a wealth of thought and a fullness of mood that in and of itself lets their works belong to the most precious treasures of humanity.

[98]

SIBBERN AND KIERKEGAARD

Both of these thinkers have had a great influence on my development, and even after I believed that I had come to years of discretion in philosophical matters, I have often returned to them. And when this past winter [1925] some young students invited me to give a few lectures on Danish philosophers, it was above all these two men on whom I dwelt. It is the accounts I gave on that occasion that I am now working up into a short essay.

Kierkegaard was born in the same year in which Sibbern became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Copenhagen (1813). The difference in age between them was thus great, and the difference in character no less. And yet they stood in a personal relation to one another. Kierkegaard for a time attached himself to Poul Møller, whom he loved and admired, but after his early death he stood for a time quite close to Sibbern. This is known not merely from a letter he wrote from Berlin to Sibbern (1841). But one of Sibbern's daughters has told me in a letter that it belongs to her childhood memories that she walked with her hand in her father's, while Kierkegaard walked on the other side, eagerly talking and now and then stopping in order to get said what lay on his heart. She also remembers that Kierkegaard often visited her father and liked to sit in the sitting room in the twilight, when the fire shone from the stove. Of the content of their conversations nothing is reported, but the difference between the two men's characters and points of view must again and again have made itself felt. Sibbern knew from his own experience times of inner struggle and ferment; the description of such times
[99] is among the best things in his Psykologi. But in spite of everything he kept an open, naive view of life. As a psychologist he had understanding and sympathy for all mental phenomena, and it was a favorite saying of his that just as for the botanist there are no weeds, so there was nothing mental that the psychologist could not have an interest in studying. Not only by reason of this intellectual interest, but also by his firm faith in life, he constantly caught sight of a harmony behind all oppositions. Kierkegaard's melancholy and never-resting reflection made him walk along abysses, from which only a convulsive self-assertion saved him. His sharp eye for the oppositions of life led him to the thought of an absolute paradox, and the capacity to suffer became for him the highest form of the will. But despite the great opposition between Sibbern's open eye for everything human and Kierkegaard's passionate confinement to the narrow way, which for him led to the one thing needful, they nevertheless met as proclaimers of the principle of personality, of the thought that the truth that has value must spring from man's own experience and reflection. This principle was, remarkably enough, pronounced in

one and the same year (1846) by the older and the younger thinker. They hardly knew that the principle of personality had been proclaimed with great clarity some years earlier (1842) by the Swedish thinker Erik Gustaf Geijer. All three Nordic thinkers broke by this principle with Romanticism, with its life in the world of fantasy as well as with its dependence on what is historically handed down. It is of great importance to note that it was not merely strict scientific and historical research that led away from Romanticism and the conservatism connected with it, but also the individual personality's claim to free, independent development.

Sibbern (1785—1872) plunged in his youth into the romantic current, which was felt as a refreshment after the dryness of rationalism. But he emerged again, and his whole life was a striving after free research on life with preservation of the sense for *[100]* the greatness of the past that had distinguished Romanticism.

Sibbern was first and foremost a descriptive psychologist. I shall here dwell only on the topics that he describes best. To these belong, as already mentioned, periods of ferment. He was clear that the deeper life opens in a mind, the sooner it may come to pass through a chaotic mixing and stirring of the elements in its interior. And such ferment easily leads to a morbid preoccupation with oneself, to brooding and anxiety. He held that such irritability and nervousness were especially characteristic of "our time, in which partly the greater struggle for physical and civil subsistence has worked toward self-reflection, partly individuals no longer, as formerly, feel themselves, either in a religious or in a civil respect, borne by a firm order of things in life". This statement is from 1828; there are surely many who think that it fits the present day. In contrast to ferment and self-reflection Sibbern then sets sympathy and admiration, the joy in life as it unfolds around us, and absorption in the great and the exalted, which leads the individual out beyond himself.

Psychology was for Sibbern a part of a general theory of life, to which physiology too makes its contributions. Psychology and physiology belonged for him closely together. One and the same fundamental activity appears to us in two forms. The word soul does not mean a being subsisting by itself, but a living and working that always has a corresponding counterpart within the organic processes. Sibbern was neither a spiritualist nor a materialist. The conception of unity maintained by Spinoza and Leibniz, to which he adheres, had met him in his predecessor Treschow.

For Sibbern, according to this conception, mental life was subject to the same great laws of nature as everything else, in particular the law of development. Early it became for him a main point that all development proceeds sporadically, from different starting

points, and that the whole in all domains comes to be through the fusion of processes
[101] that for a time might seem to have nothing to do with one another. He illustrates it by examples from both the inorganic and the organic world, and in the domain of mental life he finds here an explanation of why ferment, doubt, and disharmony appear so easily; they are due to the way in which need and capacity so often first appear as different, perhaps opposed, so that it becomes the task to harmonize them. In the social domain the sporadic appears in men's different needs and conceptions and in oppositions between peoples.

Sibbern's world-view is conditioned by this conception. A great development goes on from chaos to harmony. The world, and especially human beings, has perhaps not come very far along this way. As for human beings, they are perhaps still only in the embryonic state, or at most in the age of rowdiness. And Sibbern then looks hopefully toward the continued course of development. He was, as his close friend A. S. Ørsted said of him, an incorrigible optimist. —

In his conception of the position and significance of philosophy Sibbern stood in opposition to the Hegelian philosophy, which in Denmark was essentially embraced by aestheticians such as Heiberg and theologians such as Martensen. A system completed once and for all he considered impossible. Even if it should succeed in gathering the knowledge of the age into a whole, then, while this systematic work was in progress, experience would have advanced, and there would in fact have come a new age with new content. Moreover Sibbern finds here too an application for his doctrine of sporadic development. Every cognition unfolds from a single point in existence. And thus every philosophy too stands at a definite stage and can only present how existence looks from this single point. We then understand why there are disputes between philosophers. It is a sign that our cognition is in its becoming.

Also as regards philosophy's relation to other spiritual domains Sibbern has a con-
[102] ception other than Hegel's. Art and religion are not imperfect forms of philosophy, but independent forms of spiritual life, whose significance it is the philosopher's task to clarify.

In his youth Sibbern was strongly captivated by positive Christianity. He praised it for the fullness of spirit to which it opened access, and for the rest and refreshment it could bring. Yet he maintained the independence of philosophy over against Christianity as over against all other forms of life of the spirit. Gradually he was led to distinguish sharply between the developed dogmas and the experiences of life on which they were originally built. And his idea of the sporadic in all spiritual development had to lead him

also to the conviction that one and the same faith does not correspond to all stages or to all individual experiences and forms of life. His own experience of life led him away from Christianity. Everything that has spiritual value begins from within, as subjective. That is the way of the spirit. Later formulations and organizations may take place and an apparent objectivity be reached. But when one dogmatizes, one easily removes truth from its living root and makes a mummy of it. And the circumstance that great communities unite around certain dogmas does not make these any the more objective, if by "objective" one understands the same as by "valid".

These thoughts Sibbern set forth in a university program in 1846, one of the most important documents for the history of the religious problem in Denmark. In his Utopia (written in the years 1858—1872), to which I shall presently return, he depicts the human beings of the future, as he hopes they will be minded three hundred years hence. They will no longer call themselves Christians, because the history of the church in their eyes is full of presumption and domineering. Yet they find much that is great and beautiful in Christianity and therefore distinguish between Christliness and Christendom. But they read in the great book of nature and of life, not merely in the Bible. They live out of a power that stirs in their interior, and they have the faith that their own striving forward and the divine working go together as one.

The social question, which Sibbern in the said Utopia (whose title is "Meddelelser af et Skrift fra Aar 2135") treats, had already before the Revolution of 1848 aroused his attention. The first preface to the Utopia is dated 1846. And in a university program of 1849 he urged the statesmen to familiarize themselves in good time with the idea of communism, which is the expression of a higher, distributive justice, in contrast to production and competition, which contain no guarantee that the proceeds really benefit large circles. He extols the social question in contrast to the constitutional (parliamentary) one, which mostly occupied minds. In the future society he depicts in his Utopia there is no question at all of state and church affairs, any more than of legal, commercial, and property affairs. Work is organized in such a way that all take part both in spiritual and in material activity. The proceeds are common. From public storehouses everyone takes what he needs. The conditions are depicted in detail with many naive traits. The naivete shows itself on the large scale in this, that no one asks what security there is that the ideal organization will be maintained, any more than how it has come to be. The question, difficult for all ideal depictions of the future, of how the transition from the present economic and spiritual culture to the ideal state can take place, the naive utopian avoids by letting human beings (with the exception of a small chosen band) fall

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into a long sleep, during which the old institutions collapse. On waking one is then not minded to set them up again. Nor is it asked how the drive to work and the initiative toward new directions can be preserved under the new conditions.

Sibbern's Utopia has its greatest interest in this, that whereas Romanticism had been turned toward the past, in which it found immediate revelations of the eternal, the mind of the old Romantic now shows itself, with sharp criticism of the remnants of the past, turned forward toward new possibilities. And like other utopias (Fourier's, St. Simon's,
[104] Owen's) from the same time Sibbern's bears witness to a warm feeling for those who suffer under the imperfections of present social life. —

As I have once said before, in no Danish author have psychological sense and a feeling for humanity been joined with such freedom of spirit as in Frederik Christian Sibbern.

Through Poul Møller Kierkegaard stands in connection with Sibbern. The latter brought him a greeting from Poul Møller's deathbed, and Kierkegaard attached himself, as we have seen, for a time to him. This personal relation has interest in bearing witness to the continuity in Danish philosophy.

In his Papirer (ed. by Heiberg and Kuhr. Fifth Volume p. 20) Kierkegaard says: "Danish philosophy, if there is ever to be talk of such a thing, will differ in this from the German, that it does not begin at all with Nothing, or without any presupposition, or explain everything by mediating, since on the contrary it begins with the proposition that there are many things between heaven and earth which no philosophy has explained". This proposition, he thinks, by being taken up into philosophy, will supply the proper corrective and at the same time cast a humorous-edifying emotion over the whole. — What Kierkegaard here expects of a Danish philosophy that might come fits, in my view, well the Danish philosophy as it has developed from Holberg's time on. In the whole series of Danish philosophers before Kierkegaard — Holberg, Sneedorff, Steffens, Treschow, A. S. Ørsted, Sibbern — we find[1)] as the chief peculiarity a sense for the individual and in close connection with it an emphasis on experience. For one cannot understand individuality except with the help of experience. There may have been disagreement about the extent to which the problematic appears in the world. Thus Holberg thought that with the widening of experience we should face still more
[105] problems than we have hitherto to work with, whereas the more optimistic Sneedorff thought that many of our present problems will fall away with widened experience. But on the whole the characterization given fits. And Kirkegaard himself marks a paradox-

[1)] In my book *Danske Filosofer* (1909) I have tried to show this more fully, and in *Udvalgte Stykker af dansk filosofisk Literatur* (1910) one will find testimonies of it.

ical high point of the prevailing tendency, as regards the emphasis on the individual; but this advanced position, as regards the one question, is purchased in his case by a narrowing of the broad basis of experience on which Danish thinking earlier built.

I shall here speak only of Kierkegaard as philosopher, and the chief writings here are "Filosofiske Smuler" and "Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift". This latter work, which appeared in 1846, concluded the rich production in aesthetic, religious, and philosophical direction which Kierkegaard carried out in the first half of the forties, and which he later, as can be seen from his papers of 1849, made an attempt to derive from a definite preconceived plan, an attempt which his great love of truth nevertheless led him to give up, as he became clear that it was the involuntary urge and capacity to produce that was the driving force. The satisfaction of the strong urge to produce was for him at the same time a means of mastering the deep melancholy that ruled in his innermost being. "Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift" occupies a central position in Kierkegaard's production, inasmuch as it gives a retrospect on his preceding works and supplies information for a right understanding of them. In philosophical respect it has the great significance of clarifying his position as epistemologist and as philosopher of life, the two points of view from which we shall here consider him. For a while he had thought that this work should form the conclusion of his production as a whole. But a deepening of his religious life led in the following years to a new and mighty unfolding of religious authorship, which again led to his coming to feel himself in stronger and stronger opposition to the usual conception of Christianity and to the established church. —

[106] For Kierkegaard thinking was characterized by constantly seeking and finding difficulties where plain understanding, and often the speculative systematization too, found the way smooth and passable. It is difficulties, riddles, which in their highest degree become paradoxes, that keep thought alive. And since life constantly presents new riddles and tasks, whose solution demands spiritual work, no system can be completed. Life is not finished, but unfolds ever further, and thought, which explains life, always comes afterward. We live forwards, but we understand backwards.

Sibbern had already taken up a similar position in opposition to speculative philosophy. But in Kierkegaard the line of thought is developed with greater emphasis and consistency. With enthusiastic assent he seized Lessing's words about the eternal striving after truth as the highest that human beings can attain, and he found in this saying an expression of the self-knowledge every honest human being must come to, and therefore an expression of an ethical view of life. But also in purely theoretical respect Kierkegaard takes up the question. He demands a revision of the problem of

knowledge in Kant's spirit and thereby stands as a forerunner of the great work that was done toward the end of the century within epistemology.

He asks whether the fundamental ideas of science, the so-called categories, which constantly come to light in special scientific work, can be found through abstract speculation or whether they are due to experience [Erfaring]. It was a question he wished to treat more closely. This wish he did not see fulfilled, since his philosophical production was interrupted by the turn in his spiritual life mentioned above. But basically he has given the answer to his question by maintaining that understanding always comes after experience.

I may perhaps venture to insert here that I have tried to discuss this question in my book "Den menneskelige Tanke", in which I show that the categories are found by
[107] analysis of scientific work, as it develops through the ages. I lay special weight on the fact that what is a matter of course to the inquirers of one age has not always stood so for the inquirers of earlier ages. A presentation of scientific fundamental ideas, a theory of categories, can therefore mean only a stage in the development of human thinking. Categories can arise, and they can die. — My Religionsfilosofi too builds on this conception of the relation between experience and understanding.[1)]

Since the presuppositions on which all justification rests cannot themselves be justified, one comes, according to Kierkegaard, only by a leap into scientific thinking. Here there makes itself felt what Kierkegaard calls a dialectic of beginning. I must begin my reflection at a single point, with a single assumption, which only later on, through continued experience and reflection, can come to stand as justified, and thus for the time being stands as arbitrary.

On this point Kristian Kroman has developed Kierkegaard's thought further, in that in his book "Vor Naturerkendelse" he maintained with great sharpness that the first principles of science are fixed by an arbitrary act in the forms of the postulate. About my own position on this question I shall later have occasion to speak. —

When Kierkegaard is characterized not merely as epistemologist but as philosopher of life, it means that he has brought forward points of view that are of importance for the way human beings take life, and that these points of view have sprung from deep psychological insight and from his own dearly bought experience. In our time there
[108] rages much, especially in Germany, that calls itself philosophy of life, but which is only

[1)] When Kierkegaard thought that for the philosopher "a humorous-edifying emotion" will make itself felt in the mind when he becomes conscious of the limitation of knowledge, then the experience I have had in my work of thought has, for my part, confirmed this, and I have sought, both in *Den menneskelige Tanke* and later in *Den store Humor* (see that work p. 117—123), to give expression to a mood of the said kind.

an attempt to make speculative and dogmatic assumptions valid in the twinkling of an eye, notwithstanding that they have lost their theoretical foundation. They are attempts to solve the problems without posing them in earnest. But precisely the earnestness and energy with which Kierkegaard has depicted life's relation to thought, and especially to those thoughts that life itself cannot do without, has now also abroad more and more drawn attention to him and to his points of view, which I shall now try to characterize.

As stated above, Kierkegaard forms the conclusion of the characteristic tendency in older Danish philosophy to maintain the individual and lay weight on experiences, but a conclusion that is characterized by the fact that individuality (or, as Kierkegaard expresses it, subjectivity) is stressed to the utmost, while the element of experience at the same time is limited in its significance.

As, according to Kierkegaard, it was by a leap that we came into the world of thought, so it is also by a leap that we come into the view of life in which we land. It is personal need, the feeling of spiritual distress, finally despair, that leads to seizing that sheet anchor on life's stormy sea which every view of life is. Here the Lessing proposition about the eternal striving is sharpened to the proposition that personality (subjectivity) *is* the truth. That is to say, that the truth that a human being can find on life's way has no other ground than precisely personality's own need. No science can help us here. Every view of life needs thoughts, and so far knowledge. But Kierkegaard here makes a sharp distinction between essential and inessential knowledge, a distinction determined by the opposition between the thoughts that are necessary to us in order to keep ourselves up in the struggle of life, and such thoughts as only intellectual interest leads one to immerse oneself in. To inessential knowledge he counts all objective science, theoretical philosophy, history and philology, as well as natural science. He sensed that natural *[109]* science, by its closely connected points of view and methods, could become a similar danger to his outlook as the speculative philosophy and theology he had long combated. From the view that life is something individual, not accessible to abstract theories, he detached it from any connection with science.

The question then presents itself whether every view of life is as good as every other, or whether there is any standard by which an evaluation can here be made. What is high and what is low, — what is great and what is small in this domain?

Already earlier the question of such a standard had come up in Danish spiritual life. It was in the dispute between Baggesen and Grundtvig, in the last analysis a dispute between philosophy and theology. Grundtvig agreed with his opponent in fighting the battle on purely human ground. "Here we do not ask much about confessions!" he

exclaims. But when the dispute between the two spiritually moved men petered out, it was because they could find no common human standard.[1)] Kierkegaard has tried to maintain such a standard, and his significance as philosopher of life rests not least upon this.

Kierkegaard's standard is taken from the very concept of personality. In determining this concept one will always come back to the fact that it presupposes energy to comprehend a greater or smaller manifold of impulses and experiences, so that a unified bearing toward the surrounding world can become possible. The fuller and more comprehensive the content that is to be comprehended, the greater the energy presupposed, if the inward concentration is not to fall away. It is basically the concept of synthesis, deriving from Leibniz and Kant, that lies here at the foundation, and philosophy of life will here always prove to stand in debt to theoretical philosophy.

By this standard Kierkegaard then divides the different views of life or, as he with an
[110] unfortunate word calls them, the different "stages". — Concentration may be limited to the single moment and what can fill it (the "aesthetic" stage). — One may be apparently absorbed in the single situation and yet inwardly stand free toward it. It is the jest hidden in earnest that characterizes irony. — One may in inward earnestness immerse oneself in one's duty (the ethical stage). — One may regard life's content and tasks as unable to fulfill the mind's whole striving (humor). — One may finally see life's real task as lying beyond all experience, time as vanishing in relation to eternity. That is the religious stage, which in Christianity appears in paradoxical form, because there the eternal itself appears in time and in a human shape one may meet on one's way.

As, according to Kierkegaard, one comes by a leap over from life in the world of thought to the faith or view of life by which one leads one's life, so it is also by a leap that one comes over from one view of life to the other. It is continuity under all its forms that Kierkegaard is out to destroy — remarkably enough precisely on the basis of the inner, closed coherence that for him rightly characterizes personality!

Both as epistemologist and as philosopher of life Kierkegaard's great significance is conditioned by the paradoxical sharpness in the posing of problems. It made him a strict teacher for the generation that developed under his influence. And traces of this will be noticeable even where development has led far away from his standpoint.

From my present standpoint I will remark the following.

Every leap must stand for thinking as a task, not as a last word. Why does one leap precisely at this particular place and in this particular direction? And does not the

[1)] On this dispute see *Danske Filosofer,* p. 66—72.

leap itself signify a continuity, even if it signifies a fall! — Philosophy, which has the task of investigating the relation between the different sciences, must also discuss the leaps, the abrupt transitions between them. It finds these transitions conditioned by the *[111]* adoption of new presuppositions, but then the necessity of these new presuppositions becomes something to investigate. And the same holds of the transition from thought to life, a transition which moreover always presupposes a preceding transition from life to thought. Here, then, there is a constant reciprocal action.

In the transition from thought to life one cannot, as Kierkegaard wished, distinguish once and for all between essential and inessential knowledge. Kierkegaard's standpoint here signifies a narrowing in relation to the broad foundation on which earlier Danish thinkers, especially men such as Holberg and Sibbern, built their views of life. The widening of the world-picture was for Holberg, the great development in nature from chaos to cosmos was for Sibbern, very essential elements both in their faith and in their knowledge. What significance has science, then, if it does not, perhaps by many detours, in the end gain influence on human views of life and of the world? And such influence is indeed constantly exerted, and in all quiet, even if only an eye trained in the school of the history of philosophy discovers it. —

I have now for the last time spoken of the two Danish thinkers who have meant most to me. And it is a joy to me that the invitation to occupy myself with them once more came to me from a circle of young students.

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PHILOSOPHY AND ECCLESIASTICAL RATIONALISM

Dr. Michael Neiiendam's interesting study of Christian Bartholin has clearly illuminated an ecclesiastical tendency which was for the most part derided by posterity or at any rate little understood, but which is now subjected to a purely historical illumination. The main figure's character and thought, which are so characteristic of his time, the latter half of the eighteenth century, emerge clearly and distinctly.

For philosophy ecclesiastical rationalism has in itself very little interest. It rests on a popular philosophy without clear principles, and it likes to build on crumbs that had fallen from the table of the properly philosophical inquirers. On the other hand it is of interest to see, as the study also shows, that stricter philosophical thinking contributed to the dissolution of the untenable attempt to solve the religious problem that underlies ecclesiastical rationalism. But in the gallery of personalities which the study brings forward, and which, as far as I can see, makes good contributions to the understanding of the spiritual conditions of the eighteenth century in Denmark, there appear two personalities whom I do not find thoroughly and justly treated. From a philosophical point of view there are essential objections to be made to the author's presentation.

1. I do not see that it would have been necessary for the author to mention *Lessing*. There has, as he himself says, at that time been no influence of Lessing on Danish theology, apart from the fact that his polemical writings are occasionally used. Such an influence was exerted, on the contrary, later through Kierkegaard's understanding
[113] and enthusiastic mention of Lessing, and if the author had paid attention to it, he would have expressed himself differently about Lessing than he does. He lets him cooperate with the Enlightenment and strengthen its critical sense. This is in any case not the whole truth. Lessing belongs, as from other sides do Rousseau, Hume, and Kant, to the personalities who — even while they are in many respects permeated by the spirit of their century — point beyond their contemporaries to a richer and deeper conception of the problems. What is most characteristic of Lessing is his sense for genuine and original content of spirit, wherever it is found. This sense led him in his dramatic criticism ("Hamburgische Dramaturgie") to bring forward Shakespeare's mighty poetry in contrast to French-classical tragedy; — it led him (in "Laokoon") to draw a boundary between the visual arts and poetry; — and it led him (against rationalism as against orthodoxy) to point to the inward and immediate movements of religious life in contrast to the reflection and the learning which religious documents can give occasion for. But Lessing also insisted that if one wished at all to use thoughts in one's view of life, one

ought to think them to the end. There were two different currents that stirred in him from his youth on, the one nourished by his historical sense, the other by his philosophical thinking. He did not succeed in bringing these two currents to unite. But who, basically, has succeeded? — By making them both count against the religious problem he has maintained the right of personality and of independent thinking against the unclear attempts at mediation of which not only ecclesiastical rationalism but orthodoxy itself constantly makes itself guilty, and he thereby acquires a significance that reaches far beyond his time.

The attempts at mediation that ecclesiastical rationalism undertook were more hateful to Lessing than the old orthodoxy, because they (as he wrote to his brother) "under the pretext of wishing to make us rational Christians make us irrational philosophers". *[114]* But the (then) modern representatives of orthodoxy too (such as Schumann and Goetze) had to count for him among the unclear mediators. The free religiosity he hoped for would — he thought — rather unfold when one let the old faith speak openly and honestly. He did not want the original religious content bound up with speculative ideas, as had happened early in the church. Positive religion is something concrete and historical, and on that no eternal truths can be built. Positive religion is built throughout on what is assumed to be historical truth, and can neither lead to nor be derived from general ideas. The proper proof of religion is inward appropriation of a historical content. — If Lessing had been more of a psychologist than he was, he could have spoken more clearly. Yet he expresses himself clearly enough against intellectualism in the religious domain.

It was indeed Lessing's faith that religion would have to pass through a development by which it increasingly came out beyond the purely historical and therefore more or less arbitrary foundation. But this development had to take place slowly. He advised against extinguishing one's lights before the sun had risen. And this caution had precisely its root in his sense for personal appropriation, for what one has later called personal truth. His historical sense moreover taught him that neither the so-called truths of revelation nor the so-called truths of reason were the same at all times.

Against the orthodox Hauptpastor Götze Lessing maintained that Christianity does not derive from written tradition, but from the events these accounts are about, and it was also in dealing with him that Lessing had occasion to utter the famous proposition that the constant striving after truth is to be preferred for a human being to the constant possession of truth. Later, over Jacobi's sentimental semi-theology, he had occasion to defend the great and quiet movement of thought that lies behind Spinoza's crystallized

[115] systematics. In both places his genius in conjunction with his congenial insight has brought forward significant points of view. It is characteristic of Lessing that it is two clashes that have called forth his most significant utterances. He was the great seeker, belonged to no confession or to any system. And it is in any case not right, as has been done in Dr. Neiiendam's otherwise so interesting book, to present him merely as a representative of the Enlightenment.[1)]

2. The other figure, who is distorted in the book just mentioned, is the Danish author *Johannes Boye* (1756 — 1830), whose writing ("Statens Ven") is there called "the most important source for the understanding of the domestic Enlightenment". But Boye is not given his due by being characterized as a man of the Enlightenment. He is a Renaissance nature, maintains antique clarity and strength and shows how ethical ideas develop under the struggle for existence as the only possibility of putting an end to the sole rule of physical power. Although he combats Kant's grounding of morality in pure reason, his manly conception of life, according to which spiritual development goes through strife and labor, is quite in Kant's spirit. "Nature," he says, "brings up its children strictly, but it does so in order to produce heroes." — Boye lays great weight on the historical-psychological presuppositions for the coming-to-be of a purely human morality. But Kant himself has done that at a significant stage of the development his ethical ideas underwent. Man's disposition as a rational being can according to Kant come to development only in the course of the generations, which through the strife of the passions leads to the idea of a society within which the freedom of the individual through being bound by law becomes compatible with the equal freedom of others. Without strife the human faculties would not be developed. The trees in the forest, says Kant, seek to rob one another of light and air, but precisely thereby are compelled to seek light and air
[116] in higher regions. (Cf. further on this point Den *nyere Filosofis Historie*[3]. III, p. 74—78). Neither Kant himself nor his outstanding Danish interpreter Anders Sandøe Ørsted was clear about the relation between psychological-historical investigation and ethical theory of principles — and this relation is a problem to this day. Ørsted proceeded from pure rational morality as fully finished, Boye from the constant struggle for existence. And it was by no means a defeat that Boye suffered in bringing forward this side of the problem.[1)]

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[1)]See further on Lessing *Den nyere Filosofis Historie*[3], III p. 16—25.

[1)]See further on the remarkable thinker Boye was, *Danske Filosofer,* p. 33—35. — At about the same time as my attempt at a rehabilitation of Boye (in the book mentioned) *Vilhelm Andersen* gave a very interesting characterization of him in "Typer og Tider".

A MODERN BUDDHIST

Arthur Pfungst: Gesammelte Werke. I. 1926.

Through my late colleague, the famous Pali scholar Viggo Fausbøll, I came to know the remarkable man whose collected works, which are to comprise three volumes, are now beginning to appear. Pfungst's acquaintance with Fausbøll sprang from his great interest in Buddhism, which for him not only had historical significance, but in essential respects determined his view of life and gave him expression for what he had come to by his own way. Fausbøll, as is well known, edited the Buddhist writing Dhammapada (The Words of the True Doctrine) from the manuscripts that Rask had in his time brought here from Ceylon, and later the Jataka Book from the same sources. There was a great contrast between the two men, whose friendship was built on the common interest in the ancient Indian books of wisdom. Fausbøll was a quiet scholar, absorbed in his scientific work, which gave him a fine name in the circle of Indologists and even made him known and esteemed among the Indian Buddhists, although he did not subscribe to their doctrine. He admired Buddhism, not least because under its rule there had never been committed such abominations and cruelties as under Christianity. But he was not a Buddhist, since he could not give up faith in the immortality of the soul and in a personal God. This view of his he expressed openly in a short autobiography he wrote in the year 1900 in the Buddhist paper "Journal of Maha-Bodhi Society". Pfungst admired the candor of this statement, since the paper mentioned was a propaganda paper for Buddhism, and since the doctrines Fausbøll held to were heresies from a Buddhist standpoint. That *[118]*
the paper without more ado reprinted Fausbøll's statements was indeed precisely a sign of the great tolerance that Fausbøll praised in Buddhism. Arthur Pfungst was a man of the world, rich, heir to a large factory in Frankfurt am Main, strongly absorbed in all movements within the different domains of culture, politically and religiously radical, poet and businessman at once. His business trips took him around the world, and he often came here to the North, where he never forgot to visit Fausbøll. He was lively and cheerful, and only from statements that came out occasionally did one learn that behind his cheerfulness and his sparkling wit lay the conviction that life was not worth living. Buddha's teaching was Pfungst's own religion, and he worked for it not only as poet, but also in a series of essays which he collected in 1904 in the book "Aus der indischen Kulturwelt". One might ask how such a duality, such an opposition between the inner and the outer, was possible. But from what I have known of him, I believe that one of

his closest friends, Dr. Angermann, who has written the "biographical introduction" to the first volume, is right when he states:

"For the pessimist the unpleasant side of things stands fast as the most self-evident thing in the world, so that from that side no surprises come for him, whereas from the other side good surprises may come and the eye may be sharpened for what is joyful and playful that life may bring. The rejection of this world stands fast for the pessimist, but the more he knows that within its bounds he must not make life more difficult for himself and others than it already is. In other words, the pessimist's humor is the deepest and finest; it is in its innermost essence the sage's pure and good disposition toward others and himself. Therefore in Pfungst all that was sharp and wounding was also lacking, and this was just what All who knew him praised as the most beautiful quality of his humor." —

[119] It is surely not necessary to remark that the word humor in this statement is used in another sense than the popular one, that of the capacity to make people laugh. Nor will it be necessary to recall that there are several different forms or kinds of humor besides the peculiar kind that Pfungst's friends found in him. And when we shortly shall hear more closely about Pfungst's peculiar relation to Buddhism, it will appear that his humor in reality had other elements at its foundation than pure pessimism, elements that bring it into close kinship with the humor described by Thackeray and George Eliot, which is due to a union of comic sense and sympathy (wit and love).

It was hardly the study of Buddhism in Pfungst's case that made him a pessimist. Nor has the reading of Schopenhauer been decisive in this respect. Nor has it been his own disappointments and sorrows that led him to his total feeling toward life. He has, as far as is known, not been able to say with Edgar in King Lear that he has come under the blows of fate and through his own sorrows has learned to have fellow-feeling with others. And there has hardly stirred in him, as in Schopenhauer, early an unruly sensual craving and an equally unruly hot temper, which could let his imagination apprehend existence as a tormenting fire. If one should conclude from his great epic poem "Lakaris", which I shall later discuss, that a strong lust for life in its author was subdued through disappointments and sorrow, then those nearest him have in any case known nothing of it. His biographer thinks that his view of life was founded in the so often fateful years of transition, in which there is often great receptivity to the tragic sides of life. The world-sorrow that easily arises thereby, and which for most is only a passing phase, acquired lasting significance in Pfungst, and it found early expression in his poems. He had grown up in a rich and happy home and had had a bright childhood. His

mother's tenderness and zest for life could make up for the energetic father's pessimistic tendencies. It must have gone with Arthur Pfungst in a similar way as, according to the *[120]* legend, it went with Buddha himself. Buddha lived indeed in splendor and glory, until one fine day he caught sight of the misery that may be in the world, of sickness, old age, and poverty. That glance he never forgot. Pfungst too was convinced that he had cast a glance into life and its conditions, a glance that had to be determinative of the light in which all that life brought had to stand. But this glance engendered neither bitterness nor passivity. He is said himself to have expressed his standpoint thus, that he was a pessimist in his thought, an optimist in his work. He did not withdraw from life, but waged a struggle to alleviate human suffering and in particular to counteract oppression and burden from the side of the state or the church toward free striving in the different domains. As a native of Frankfurt he felt himself in many respects in opposition to the Prussian spirit, and he spoke with great joy of how he had succeeded in warding off an attempt by the Prussian government to gain authority over a bequest that had been established for the benefit of a free-religious community. Through him I once got an article accepted in the "Frankfurter Zeitung" on the conditions in North Schleswig, and he himself reviewed in that paper my lecture on "Fichte's Reden an die deutsche Nation og de danske Nordslesvigere". In his periodical "Das freie Wort" he fought against faith in authority and clericalism as well as against political compulsion. He felt himself indeed a stranger toward human beings' natural faith that everything will turn out well and that it exists for their sake. One of his poems has for its title: "Ich bin ein Fremdling auf der Welt gewesen". But when it was a matter of fighting suffering and injustice, he did not feel himself a stranger. Even though he did not have the naive optimist's faith that victory could be won once and for all, his lust for work and for battle was not weakened thereby. The struggle was to him more beautiful than victory. One of his poems has precisely the title: "Der Kampf ist schöner als der Sieg".

As so many oriental religions, Buddhism has a passive, self-renouncing character. It preaches compassion, but it warns also and above all against attaching one's heart *[121]* to what is finite and therefore in the end without reality. It says in the Dhammapada (Tuxen's translation) (Ch. 16): "Love begets care, love begets fear, he who has freed himself from love knows neither care nor fear." And further (Ch. 26): "He who gives up all connection with human beings and all connection with gods, — he who is without all connection, — him I call a Brahman." But just as modern Christianity became possible only because the expectation of Christ's imminent return gradually gave some room to other expectations and to striving for the development of human culture, so a modern,

European Buddhist too must take up into his practical conduct of life elements that were not found in original Buddhism. Intellectual, artistic, social, and political tasks acquire positive value, a value that the yearning toward Nirvana or longing for a heaven beyond did not know. The oriental world religions arose under cultural conditions that were very different from the cultural conditions under which their modern adherents, especially the western European ones, live. When Tagore was here, he found that we here in the West have too many problems, tasks, and difficulties. Come over to us, he said; there everything becomes so simple. This oriental way of thinking was far from Arthur Pfungst's. He took up the struggle where he stood. But when he then praises the glory of the struggle, he is more of an optimist than he as a Buddhist is allowed to be. For even if he does not believe in victory for his humane endeavors, he must yet believe that there are forces to keep the struggle going, and already such a faith or such a hope brings more light into the world than there according to Buddhism can be. For Buddha nothing in the world of experience had such a reality that one could build on it hope of attaining what has true value. Hermann Oldenberg compares Buddhism's denial of every positive value in the world with the Brahma speculation's "no, no" toward every attempt to say what Brahma is.

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The modern Buddhist stands toward Nirvana as the modern Christian stands toward the expectation of Christ's imminent return, which was the foundation of the ethics of Christianity. A fulfillment of this expectation in the midst of the striving work of culture would halt it, show it in its meaninglessness. In a correspondence between two Danish pastors, which I reviewed some years ago in "Tilskueren" (later in "Oplevelse og Tydning"), the difficulty thereby grounded for modern Christianity appears in a naive manner. One dares not give up the primitive Christian expectation, but how would it go, if this expectation were suddenly fulfilled, with the progressive unfolding of national life that the two friends both hope for?

The two great world religions in more recent times subsist only through a constant taking up of new elements, and the great problem then becomes how these elements can be united with the elements that were the decisive ones in the great times of beginning. In the very organization of worship, dogmatics, and priesthood, without which these religions could not become "positive" religions, there lies testimony that there has been taken up much and many things that were not found in the original, and that would be disturbed and pushed aside if this original were suddenly put into force again. From this side Dostoevsky has in a story, whose content is set in the medieval church, depicted the consternation that Christ's sudden return would arouse in the existing church, which

has arranged itself for the long run and is not at all arranged for Christ himself to take the helm.[1)] A corresponding problem could be posed for ecclesiastical Buddhism, which now subsists in the East as one of the most venerable religious institutions in the world. As long as religion builds on authority and tradition, a problem of this kind will again and again come up. Only a view of life that builds on one's own experience of life will *[123]* be able to draw nourishment from the past's great thoughts and great figures without being entangled in any contradiction. —

But I return to Arthur Pfungst and to the present part of his works. This first part contains his poems. I consider them here from the side of their content of thought, especially with regard to whether motives for the peculiar way of taking life, which the author came to early, are indicated in them. The poems suggest that even though the poet's biography cannot report definite experiences that could have conditioned his faith, he has nevertheless gone through a strict school and reached his standpoint through self-mastery and resignation. He states in an epigram that there is a dominion in which the desire to rule can find satisfaction, even if one has no subjects, namely dominion over oneself. And in a poem whose title is "Zurück!", he confesses that he once wanted to be like other human beings, absorbed in life and its motley manifoldness, to rejoice in sunshine and in love, —

> jedoch in meinem Herzen rief es „Nein!"
> mein Genius stand vor mir und sprach „zurück!"

In the great poem "Laskaris", which takes up the greatest part of the present first part of his works, a course of life through hope, guilt, and sorrow is depicted, and as a kind of chorus it is proclaimed again and again, as an introduction to the individual cantos, that ruin and dissolution threaten all that one hopes, all that one rejoices in. Laskaris is a young Greek from Cyprus. He is initiated by the old alchemist Philaletes into the art of making gold, but to the initiation the old man attaches the word that the treasure his art can produce, and which all human beings strive after, has by no means made him himself happier. Therefore he urges Laskaris to use it only as a means of remedying human want and sorrow. But the young man feels a craving for power and *[124]* honor and pays no heed to Philaletes' wise speech. Through changing fortunes — at Augustus the Second's splendid court in Dresden and in Charles the Twelfth's camp — he shines by his art and procures honor and wealth. But he betrays his self-sacrificing

[1)] In "Oplevelse og Tydning" (p. 205), where I have already mentioned this story, I ascribed it to Thor Lange as author. But it stems from Dostoevsky's wonderful work "Brødrene Karamazov". (First Part p. 227 in the French translation).

wife for the dazzling Aurora von Königsmark, and later through his thoughtlessness he causes the death of wife and child. At last he wants to return to his native place, but perishes when the ship is wrecked on the coast of Cyprus.

It seems to have been the author's meaning to impress that only he can say No to life who has really tried it. Philaletes was from the beginning clear that his wise speech would not keep his young friend from plunging into life. Only he, he says, who *has* lived, can disheartened say that life's goods are not worth the trouble! It is a warning to young pessimists, but as it is shaped through the poem, it applies also to young optimists, who blindly trust that everything must turn out well. Beyond the opposition between the two moods, which will probably always fight against each other in the minds of human beings, points the thought that it is above all a matter of knowing life through one's own experience and one's own work. But from this follows naturally the thought, which Arthur Pfungst would not enter upon, that experience of life and work of life can never be concluded in such a way that an absolute evaluation of life in its totality should become possible. In an unfinished dramatic poem on the same subject as "Laskaris" the young Niceketas receives from the gods the right to the fulfillment of three wishes, and his third wish then becomes: "Let the world perish!" But then the gods answer: "You do not know life in its fullness, not the joy, not the love. Wait then at least a year before you demand your wish fulfilled!" Niceketas agrees to this, but declares that his wish after the course of a year will be the same as now. The drama was not completed, so it is not known what fortunes the young man was to go through, and what verdict he would afterward have pronounced. But in the Song of the Spirits, which closes the Prelude, it says:

[125] Nicht im Grimme darfst du scheiden,
Weh', dein Herz ist liebeleer!
Wer da zürnend flucht das Leben,
Bringt ja Rettung nimmermehr!
— — — — —
Lern' wie man das Leiden wehrt
Lern' das Leben wieder segnen!

When in the summer of 1909 I visited Pfungst in Frankfurt and spent an evening with him, I had the impression that there had come over him something more subdued and reserved. He was not quite the same as when on his visits up here he sparkled with wit and zest for action, with eagerness for intellectual and practical endeavors, and when his humor could express itself in so delightful a manner. Perhaps he was already then

suffering from the heart disease of which he died three years later.

Through Dr. Angermann's beautiful biography and through renewed reading of his poetry those who knew him only through a few conversations can gain a total picture they will not forget. His memory will live through his works and through a foundation he established for the promotion of intellectual and philanthropic purposes. It will live especially among those who met him on his way, and who by immersing themselves in the present work have won an understanding of him.

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"BAKKEHUS OG SOLBJERG"

Lecture to Nordic teachers at Hindsgavl
30 July 1923.

I.

Although I am not a historian of literature, I have nonetheless had to promise to speak here about my late friend Troels Lund's "Bakkehus og Solbjerg," and I was told that this was precisely what was wanted, because the author was my friend. I do not believe that the book needs to resort to a friend's contribution in order to be seen in its significance. And besides, one may very well be good friends and yet see many things very differently. Nor shall I conceal what objections I have to make, both as regards its presentation and as regards the points of view that underlie his judgments.

"Bakkehus og Solbjerg" deals with the history of Danish poetry in the first half of the last century. It is not a learned work of literary history. Sharp criticism of it will surely be made by professional literary critics, and the work will pass through a purgatory similar to that through which his great work of cultural history, "Dagligt Liv i Norden," had in its day to pass at the hands of critical historians. But his work of cultural history did win recognition in the end. Our foremost critical historical scholar said of him that "his lively power of imagination, his psychological acuteness has served him as a researcher," and that "he has found much in the sources that was there, but that others only saw when he brought it forth," and further that "the work bears witness to his deep
[127] love for people and fatherland, marked by having been written by a man who was a fine expression of something of the best in the Danish national spirit."

A similar characterization can, I believe, be given of his work of literary history, on which he labored right up to his death and which he had to leave unfinished. It is the attempt of a man deeply gripped by the history and spiritual life of his fatherland to express what he owes to the rich and great poetry that unfolded here in Denmark in the first half of the last century. And he does not conceal that there was an inner need in him which sought and found satisfaction precisely in this poetry. He was a harmonious nature. What life brought him of resistance or sorrow he did not shut out, but let it fade away through continued hope and striving, and he always saw light ahead. He declares himself, too, in the present work to be a "seer of light." But he wishes only to give a contribution to the great debate on the value of life from his point of view. "I really

know only how what was seen has been mirrored in my bright mind. But, good Lord, let others then teach darkly. I can only teach from myself what life has taught me."

The period of Denmark's history with whose daily life his work of cultural history dealt (the sixteenth century) was a period of ascent, and his bright outlook found confirmation in many respects by occupying himself with it. But he saw it too brightly. It must nonetheless have borne within it the seeds of the unhappy time that in the seventeenth century broke in over the country and brought it close to ruin. Something similar holds, in my view, of his work of literary history as well: He has caught sight of a stream of light and follows it, but does not ask whether the stream's sources are sufficient to feed its future course. In one of his most remarkable writings, which he called "Livsbelysning," he has given an account of his general conception of how men's view of life has developed. This is conditioned by the great oppositions that experience presents between light and darkness, pleasure and pain, good and evil, life and death. In the expressions light and darkness he sums up all these oppositions, and for him the greatest *[128]* advance in the great development of mankind is therefore that the bold conclusion was drawn: not darkness, but light is the victor! It is in the religions of Western Asia and Greece that this great step is taken. One begins by taking the luminous heavenly bodies for gods. But from there thought is raised to the view that they are only the dwellings of the gods of light, and at last the faith in a single invisible God of light emerges. And for a long time in vain the belief in the Devil, a remnant of the faith in dark powers resting on fear, forms a check upon the faith in light. This check too, which was so strong in the Christian Middle Ages, is overcome. And as regards Danish spiritual life, this breakthrough takes place, in the author's opinion, precisely in the great poetry that unfolded in the first half of the nineteenth century. In "Bakkehus og Solbjerg" he has wished to demonstrate how the great world-historical movement from darkness to light passed through one of its phases within the narrow frame of Danish spiritual life.

The genesis of the book is characteristic of its author. When he had completed his great work of cultural history, he felt a need to live in the world of his own memories and thought of writing his autobiography. This plan occupied him for several years, and he often spoke of it. But the more he immersed himself in his memories of childhood and youth, the more he came to dwell on the summers that he spent with his family out at "Bakkehuset" on Valby Hill, and on the memories that were thereby awakened of a period in Danish poetry in which this region played no small part. A series of poetic figures thronged forth before his imagination, who had either lived at Bakkehuset or had had their spiritual haunt there. He grew tired of occupying himself with himself

and chose to immerse himself in these figures, whose works had meant so much for his spiritual development. He does himself an injustice, however, when he says that in the
[129] face of the rich pictures that his memory and imagination called up in him he felt like the wooden stick on which the cake-women string the cherries they sell to children. From his youth there was an inner life of thought in him that sought expression. I recall with pleasure the time in my young days when we came together in my garret on Gammeltorv (diagonally across from his father's house) and studied Plato together. Troels Lund was much interested in this study, which in his case led to a spirited doctoral dissertation on Socrates. But he was more taken with the artist in Plato than with the thinker Plato. It was above all Plato's capacity to let a thought take shape in a picture and be animated by mood that appealed to him. Thinking and research filled his life from his youth onward, but received their value for him above all as a foundation for the unfolding of mood and imagination. And on this rested the value that cultural-historical and literary-historical subjects acquired for him throughout his life. Often, it cannot be denied, and this holds also of his work of literary history, the poet in him got the upper hand over the researcher. But in this work, which he prepared in his old age, his mind found rest in immersion in what stood before him as the most important thing in the spiritual life into which he had been initiated from his childhood on, — the great, by his people sprung world of poetry. It stood before him as a world of light, which had not only been able to guide and nourish his own personal life, but also, while the World War and its consequences cowed the countries, could portend that the powers of light could not be overcome in the inner life of souls.

Before I go into the special content of the book, I must explain its name, which is due to a symbolism characteristic of Troels Lund. Denmark has no mountains, but we are all the gladder for the hills, which make possible wide views over our flat country, where light and shadow, because of the great deal of wind, often change very quickly. Just outside Copenhagen we have Valby Hill. Valby has long since been a suburb of
[130] Copenhagen, and villas, tall houses and factories cover the formerly so idyllic place, to which so many memories from the literature of the last century attach. Oehlenschläger lived as a young man at Frederiksberg Castle, where his father was castle steward. In the parish clerk's house by the church he wrote "Helge," one of his very finest works, and in the nearby Bakkehus, at the Rahbeks', he had made the acquaintance of his bride, Kamma's sister. In his old age he had a summer residence at Fasangaarden in Frederiksberg Gardens. In Bakkehuset on the eastern slope of the hill lived the Rahbeks, whose home for a long time was a center of Danish spiritual life. Almost all renowned poets

frequented it, and after the couple's death both Heiberg and Grundtvig had summer residences there. That Troels Lund's parents lived there for a number of years in summer brought the place and its history so vividly before his imagination, when he immersed himself in the memories of his life, that instead of an autobiography he came to give an atmospheric survey of the history of Danish poetry in the nineteenth century.

Solbjerg was the name of a village that in olden days lay on the hill, but had to yield its place when Frederiksberg Castle was built. For Troels Lund Solbjerg means a mountain or a hill where the sun was worshiped. And both Bakkehus and Solbjerg became symbolic expressions for him. Bakkehus means a home on the way up toward the worship of light that extends through the history of mankind, and that, according to him, worked its way forward in a peculiar manner in Danish poetry in the nineteenth century, a small example of the striving toward the light that is the innermost essence of the human spirit. Troels Lund has kept to this example because it was the one he knew best. Other peoples he knew, he says, too little to be able to write about their homes of light-worship. Not only here in the North are there many Solbjergs and many Bakkehuses, but every place receptive to the light is a little Solbjerg.

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II.

According to Troels Lund's conception, it lay in the nature of the circumstances here in Denmark at the beginning of the nineteenth century that poetry had to become "the boldest and most knowing guide" in the spiritual domain. "It went ahead and often uttered the captivating and liberating word, while science still hesitated and the church anathematized." "Through poetry the spiritual development in Denmark has proceeded most easily, while science, theology and philosophy followed behind."

In these words the basic idea of the work is given. And it lies in the quoted words that the darkness which the light is to defeat is not only that which is due to misfortune, pain and sorrow, but also that which is caused by the power of dogmatic traditions to bar access to the light that the human spirit has in itself the strength to reach. The work then gives a gallery of the country's poetic figures, in part with brilliant characterization and with a multitude of individual traits. Troels Lund had, both as a historian of literature and as a historian of culture, a great gift for entering into the figures of the past and letting imagination furnish them with a wealth of traits. As regards the details one asks — in this one must grant his often so severe critics that they are right — often where he actually has them from, — and often asks in vain. But what is the main thing for us here is the series of seers of light whom he wished to present to us. It is impossible to reproduce the presentation in detail; we must content ourselves with a few examples.

First the Danish poet king, Adam Oehlenschläger, is to be mentioned. In him a new view of life already announces itself in the youthful poem "Jesu Liv i den aarlige Natur." Whereas in the church one has often illustrated its doctrine by pictures from external nature, the poet here uses, conversely, the church doctrine's ideas as symbolic events in nature. He appeals to the readers' religious childhood learning in order to render the life of nature intuitive and vivid to them. This marks a turning point. Nature begins to
[132] come into its own. One follows its direction, and the ecclesiastical ideas are used only as supports for the imagination.

Special attention is given to Kamma Rahbek, who was called by Ingemann the mother of the Danish poets. Not only did she accompany young poets on their way with heartfelt understanding, but she carried poetry through in her life, was an evangelist of nature, in constant development and striving. In her loving mind and in the hope that builds on love she found the solution of the riddles of life. She was a religious nature, but did not go along with the sharpening of orthodoxy that came in the wake of Romanticism.

This very orthodoxy, with its strong emphasis on the doctrine of the Devil and of hell, was overcome through the great seers of light. Just as Denmark's greatest jurist, A. S. Ørsted, in keeping with his general view of how the legal provisions of the past should be applied to the conditions of new times, maintained that confessional writings of the church, which themselves owed their origin to a particular age, must be interpreted according to the need and experience of the new times, so even Grundtvig, the new orthodoxy's crassest prophet, gradually became, above all under the influence of his heartfelt participation in the awakening national life here at home, a great seer of light, for whom the doctrine of the Devil did stand as a historical presupposition for the teaching of the New Testament, but was not a tenet valid for all times. Thereby he became a great spiritual liberator and leader for so many among the people, a mighty champion of true enlightenment.

But the high point of free view of life is reached, according to Troels Lund, in Ingemann, Hauch and Paludan-Müller.

As regards Ingemann, "Holgers Sang til Livet" is above all to be mentioned. It is "a hymn to life, as full and inward as had not yet been heard in Denmark." In it Troels Lund found the best expression of his own bright view of life, culminating in the last verse:

> But when under the sun the soul does not get what it wants,
> then there are other suns and other stars.

And if all suns and stars are someday extinguished,
yet the spring of life flows, where eternally it flowed.

Troels Lund rightly emphasizes the great infinite horizon in Ingemann's poems of *[133]* life. While the Middle Ages' limited picture of the world still governed Grundtvig's ideas, there can be traced in Ingemann, as later in Hauch and Paludan-Müller, the great expansion of the picture of the world that had become the consequence of Copernicanism. Holberg had already — with much caution — expressed himself about the influence that Copernicanism must have on the whole conception of the world. But I believe that Troels Lund is right that only in Ingemann, Hauch and Paludan-Müller is this influence traced in Danish poetry and in the religiosity that found its expression in Danish poetry.

In Hauch similar thoughts appear in a more inward manner and in harmony with his lively sense of nature. He is the poet of fidelity and of strict honor. Paludan-Müller's faith is a religion of hope. For him hope is not merely the eye of the soul, but the kernel of life in us. The poem "Nattevagt" (1837) contains his great faith in light and life, despite all illusions and limitations that meet us on the way. Later he described in "Adam Homo" man's weakness, self-deception and wretchedness, but also the power of love to raise even the most wretched soul upward toward the light: Alma, who herself has access to the kingdom of blessedness, nonetheless follows Adam faithfully through purgatory.

Troels Lund's beautiful work remained a torso. It was broken off in the middle of the third part by his death, the death he went to meet with cheerful courage, as befits a seer of light. This third part was to deal with Søren Kierkegaard, but got only as far as relating his youth. The continuation would have set Troels Lund a great problem, for Kierkegaard declared not only the poetry of Romanticism to be a mere dream, but maintained also that the idyllic conception of Christianity, on which the Romantics built, was a deception. I do not know how Troels Lund in the face of this mighty figure and this powerful protest would have been able to maintain and carry through his doctrine of the victory of the bright view of life in Danish literature. The sharpening of the problems of life that Kierkegaard brought about demanded in any case a serious trial. *[134]* Perhaps one can from a hint at the end of the second volume suppose that Troels Lund essentially saw Kierkegaard's significance in his overthrow of the visible church. Then there could be more room for poetry's free flight; but it would indeed then also have to take place on other terms than before.

III.

Only a few words must I add, from my own standpoint, to the characterization I

have tried to give of my late friend's work. It is a great task he had set himself, to show how a lofty poetry of life developed among the poets of the Danish Golden Age. And with great gratitude I too recognize how much we owe in this respect to these poets. But it was the age of Romanticism. One took the realities, in both nature and history, lightly, and poetry hovered high above the waters of actuality. It cannot be said that Romantic poetry was the precursor of science and church doctrine. In many respects it gave a reinterpretation of the ecclesiastical ideas, and its boldest flight was due to the Renaissance's expanded picture of the world, which only now was properly brought forth outside the domain of the special sciences. And poetry cannot at all be a precursor of science in the sense that it should be able to explain to us something that science cannot yet explain. It cannot fill in the gaps of science when it is a matter of understanding or explanation of reality, just as little as science can ever reach up to the height of poetry when it is a matter of expressing the mood, the emotion that the great oppositions and collisions of life can arouse.

The poetry of life that we need, and that every age needs in its own way, must not, like Romanticism, hover over reality, but have its root in free and deep personal expe-
[135] riences, spring from minds that have been tried in the struggle of life and of thought. It must not suppose that it can solve problems at which thought has come to a halt, nor must it be merely a conversion into poetic form of received ideas, but in a bold upsurge it is to give great symbols of that struggle of life, that clash of light and darkness, which will endure as long as life lasts. Light can be victorious, but the victory must always be won anew. That was probably really also Troels Lund's opinion, though he often seems to revel in the pure light, where all oppositions have faded away. He has said that it is precisely in the dark times that faith in the light is to show itself.

For my part I agree with him that there are in any case two wonderful examples of poetry of life that we can take with us from the Danish Golden Age, — Ingemann's "Sang til Livet" and Paludan-Müller's "Nattevagt." The manliness that the first poem expresses, and the deep feeling of unity for which the second finds words, are important elements in every strong and inward feeling for life. If we have found in life, as we know it, and as we have pondered it with the thoughts at our disposal, something that was worth working and fighting for, and have put our best powers into this, then we need no external supports for our hope. We can then say with a poet from a somewhat later time than that from which Troels Lund took his examples:

> Fight for all that you hold dear,
> die, if it comes to that!

Then life is not so hard,
nor is death either!

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[136]

THE BOOK OF THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE

This is a book about growing up. It therefore begins naturally with childhood. And the way in which the children's life in the little village is depicted will perhaps for many readers be the best in the book, that to which they most like to turn back. Not because the children's life is depicted as sheer joy and harmony. There too we find both coarseness and gentleness, and even the gentlest mind can be seized by the savagery of a beast of prey when coarseness has outraged it. But in childhood the difficulties are resolved relatively easily. The horizon is limited, the tasks fit the abilities fairly well, and the multiplicity is not greater than that a receptive mind can think it sees it as a unified whole. Those who are not receptive in this way do not for that reason lose the coherence of their minds. They meet every wave that life sends toward them, and swim on upon its back. They do not ask "Why?" Their motto is "Why not?" — if they have any. They follow the tradition into which they have been led, and their trust in it is not shaken, precisely because they take things as they come, and have no need to cast a glance out over life as a whole. Thus the book depicts a young couple, Ellen Nielsen and Hans Olsen. One day in a writing lesson at school they happened to look up at each other and thereby smiled, and since that day the one of them has only laughed or wept when the other did. One fine day, after they had grown up, they happened to talk together about this and agreed that it would always go so with them. Then they wandered hand in hand through life, in common happiness and in common work. They
[137] believe what they have learned; why should they not? And they are even sure that, even if they had not learned it, they would nonetheless have believed it: "it comes over them of itself." For others it does not go so easily. There is the mild and helpful Holger Enke, who, in exasperation that the young woman whose purity and innocence he admires is seduced by a libertine who takes flight, himself rapes and murders her, and then after a failed suicide willingly goes to the penitentiary. When he is pardoned on account of good conduct, he returns to the village, takes people's fear and contempt as a part of his punishment, finally wins new esteem, and in the close of the book proclaims the wisdom of life he has reached. To him we shall return later.

It is the clerk's son and the pastor's son on whom we must for the time being dwell. The clerk's son, Jens Dahl, through his personality and his thoughts poses the book's real problem. Already as a child he learned from his own experience the great difference between what he called "the Open" and "the Closed." For him who is "open," differences of time and place do not hold. Everything is near. His little brother, who is dead, is constantly present. It is not possible to express "openness" in words; the one would

after all have to follow upon the other, which is an imperfection just as great as that one must take step after step in order to get from one place to another. In "the language of heaven" we say everything, without a single word. Here all riddles are solved — because they have not arisen at all. But when one is "closed," one must think things over and go step by step. And then all the difficulties come and the laborious work. The seventeen-year-old boy felt himself, by virtue of his "openness," to be a genius, sure that everything that was "closed" could be seen through and overcome from out of the "Open." And it did not warn him that he fell for the first temptation he met. But when he later came back to the village, he had had experiences that let him look at his old comrades partly with melancholy, partly with envy, on account of the naive, involuntary way of taking life that they had retained. They went from step to step on the ladder of life, and the one step followed of itself upon the other. In their decency and unconsciousness they were *[138]* not far from the world of the "language of heaven." — Before we follow him further, we must tell of his friend, the pastor's son.

Christian Barnes had early lost "openness." The insight that he had gained as a schoolboy in the market town into what can hide behind the "closedness" of the grown-ups had made a strong impression on him. And an even stronger effect was had by a secret vice into which he had fallen. His need to analyze himself and others led him away from the "language of heaven." But although he had left his childhood faith, he nonetheless had the conviction that there was a natural religious feeling that does not stand and fall with any particular form of religion. And he gives a long lecture on the philosophy of religion about this to his friend Jens Dahl, when this one too has come to Copenhagen as a student. (There are surely too many lectures in the book. But I leave it to the literary critics to complain of that, if it is to be complained of.) What Christian Barnes seeks (all the while he is preparing for the master's examination in English) is to become healthy, to get the sound view of life that leads to free religious feeling. He also succeeds in this under the influence of an energetic English clairvoyant, who sends him to America in order that as a cowboy he may find out what physical fatigue is, and thereafter acquire a surplus of vital energy that can be used for sound thinking. At the same time he learns from her to collect his mind in stillness and devotion. On the other hand he does not find in America the philosophers' stone, indeed he even thinks that it is not worth having, after it had been provided with high wisdom that it was well hidden. When he has come home from America, he meets again the woman who as a little girl talked with him over the garden fence, when on Thursdays he had an hour between classes. She had not forgotten him.

Before he went to America, he had given his friend Jens Dahl the fateful advice to study mysticism and theosophy. He said to him: "You who want to enter the Open and
[139] live in the world of the language of heaven, which is hidden from ordinary mortals, are you not, quite like these [mystics and theosophists], one who hopes to find the philosophers' stone?" — Jens Dahl was prepared for this study through his childlike attempts to understand "the Closed" — i.e. the manifold, the surprising experiences, the hard and difficult in life — by "the Open" — i.e. the involuntarily emerging picture of the whole that can form in a childlike mind. Now he gave up all other studies in order to immerse himself in the old mystics. And he soon felt at home in their world. It was as if he here met his own again, — as if he were called back to the days of childhood.

It is perhaps not unnecessary to explain what the philosophers' stone historically means. The expression stems from the alchemists, who sought a substance that could be transformed into all other substances, above all into the most precious, silver and gold. And this wonderful substance, it was then believed, could also cure disease and prolong life. All material goods could be obtained by it. The alchemists were also often mystics, and conversely. But the mystics who are in question in the present book sought not a substance, but a thought, the thought of what lies at the ground of everything and holds the world together, — of something that the popular religions have sought to express in their figurative language, but that one grasps properly only through energetic spiritual concentration, especially when one can become one with it and see everything in the light of it.

Jens Dahl thought, as said, that he here found again what he had experienced in the "open" hours of his childhood. Yet the experiences the mystics spoke of were of a higher and more difficult kind, and only when he had received instructions for daily spiritual exercises in the direction of concentration and self-absorption, did ecstasy come
[140] over him one day. After a severe self-examination that let him see through his whole wretchedness, he finally saw his personality, as he had hitherto known it, sink away into nothing, but felt himself in return as borne by a loving power, the same that bore the whole world, and not only borne by it, but one with it, without any thought, any word being able to express the light that streamed through his whole being. He now thought he had learned by experience what his friend had so often talked about, — the religious feeling that lies deep in the nature of man and is in itself independent of all dogmas and all external forms. Through his strong concentration he also gained the capacity to influence others through hypnotizing and suggestion.

Dahl was convinced that what he now experienced was something purely natural,

conditioned by definite causes. It must therefore, he thought, be possible to bring about the ecstatic state again. But only imperfect and fleeting glimpses emerged in him. The constant, convulsive exercises made him nervous; the forced exertion caused only uncanny hallucinations, and at the same time sensual drives were aroused, just as had already been the case in his years of transition, precisely when he had been most "open." In this state he was impressed by the calm and assurance with which his theosophical friends carried through their methods. They went through a kind of preliminary school and could thereafter receive direct instruction from masters from the world of spirits itself, emissaries from the great Indian leaders. Dahl then also went through a new training in ecstatic dreams, in which he moved on the "astral plane" among the departed, whose time in purgatory he witnessed. Soon it came to the point that he did not know the difference between dream and waking. He had hallucinations in the street and had to be conveyed home by the police. In a moment of reflection he saw that he had misused the "open" states that had been granted to him, in that he had sought only enjoyment in them — just as he had treated the women he had met on his way as herbs from which he had extracted a precious elixir, while they had individually been nothing to him. In vain had the English clairvoyant admonished him not to strive so much to *[141]* see the angels of Heaven, but rather to see to it that the angels he met here on earth got their full and proper significance in his life. He had, as he himself finally saw, "made God's garden into a pleasure garden, and it was therefore denied him to work in it." — One day, as he sat on the shore of a lake, he saw on the opposite shore a female figure beckon. He wanted to go straight across to her, but the water closed over him.

If one asks what human interest the depiction of Jens Dahl's development and downfall has, it must doubtless be sought in this, that in a single example there are presented the dangers that threaten in the transition from the dreams of childhood and early youth to the reality of life and the demands of life. There are, as we have heard, those who in a way for them selves imperceptible manner glide over into the reality of life. Dream and goal work in them as mildly animating forces, and it does not come to a crisis, to say nothing of downfall. But there are natures for whom the "openness" of childhood, its naive faith in the ease of solving the riddles of life, leads to hard and fateful collisions. They do not see that it is only through serious work, a work that must be chosen in accordance with personal need and ability, that the conversion of the dreamed ideals into reality can take place. And it is then not merely the given reality that is to bend before the dreamed ideal; it is quite as often this ideal that must assume new forms in accordance with the new experiences that force themselves upon one. Here an inner struggle

is waged that is not always noticed by others, but that can be of great significance and mark the innermost life. In all domains there can be occasion for such a struggle, — in science, art, religion, in the relation to individual people and to society, and not least
[142] in the domain that at all times has been a favorite theme of poets, the erotic relation between man and woman. The book about the philosophers' stone also indicates a parallel between Jens Dahl's relation to the reality of life and his particular relation to the women whom life brings in his way. It could have been examined here whether there was not a direct connection between mysticism and eroticism. In Jens Dahl eroticism appears rather as an opposite to mysticism, a kind of contrast effect.

But the reader cannot avoid asking himself why he is to be led into all this mysticism and theosophy, which makes it necessary for the author to let one of his characters give a lecture, so that the reader can be à jour with what is to be presented. Does life not offer relations enough that can be used to illuminate the significant transition that is the book's real theme? It is possible (of this I cannot judge) that mysticism, yogism and theosophy play so great a role in the human life of the present that it might lie near for an author to choose his subject here. And it cannot be denied that the author gives characteristic pictures in the mystics and theosophists with whom he brings the young man into contact. They are living figures each in his own right, and each takes his religion in an individual way. It is moreover one of the theosophists who utters the most liberating word about the philosophers' stone. He is a poor craftsman who has abandoned his wife and his children and has combined his theosophy with striving to produce a perpetuum mobile. In the end he comes to see the impossibility of both, and he returns to his craft, where work can and must go piece by piece, step by step. And when he is asked whether he does not believe in the philosophers' stone, he answers: it is a milestone on the way, — and when asked, which milestone, the answer is: the next one on the way and always the next one! It is Voltaire's old watchword about cultivating one's garden, only that the good theosophist has seen that the garden does not always lie at the same milestone.

[143] The significance of the book would in my eyes have been greater if it had moved more in the daylight of life, where in the end all real tasks lie, even if we may need the brooding of the night and the stillness of the night in order properly to solve them. And even if one precisely wishes to depict how one can dream oneself away from real life, one need not fetch one's examples from theosophy. There are unfortunately examples enough besides. —

As regards the depiction of the mystical phenomena, there are a couple of remarks

I cannot refrain from making. It ought to have played a greater role in the presentation that ecstasy, even if preparatory exercises have been made, nonetheless always comes involuntarily, as a surprise, and that it is hopeless and self-contradictory to build one's life on the attainability of that kind of states. A closer study of biographies of mystics leads moreover to the conjecture that ecstatic states are tied to certain periods of life and fall away after their close. In the famous ecclesiastical mystics this does not come out so strongly, because they with great ease glide over from experience to interpretation. And since they take their interpretation from the ecclesiastical ideas as a matter of course, they do not always lay strong weight on the difference between the actual ecstasies and the vivid and captivating moods into which they can come when the mighty images of ecclesiastical tradition strongly seize them. Differently will *he* be placed who, without such support, wishes to live himself into the world of mysticism. For him the opposition between what one might call the great and the small moments will be unendurable, and it will be able to be overcome only when work is undertaken to carry through in the valley of experience what has been beheld up on the heights. But it is precisely such work that modern mystics and theosophists shun. Mysticism has brought great and good things with it, above all by leading away from blind absorption in dogmas. It has often led precisely from dogma to life. But it can itself become a danger, and it is perhaps that for many in our days. However much we must hope that concentration, *[144]* enthusiasm and self-absorption will never cease to exert their fertilizing influence on human spiritual life, it is nevertheless not always fortunate that they assume the form of ecstasy, and they will presumably also more and more seldom do so.

There is one person in the book whose childhood history is not told. It is "the Candidate." Occasionally we learn that he has made journeys around the world. His adventures on this journey are said not always to have been innocent; but he can nonetheless say that he has nowhere done anything that was contrary to the laws of the country concerned. Now he has settled down in the village from which he comes, and has bought his late father's house. He finds the region to be the Garden of Paradise, if one only looks at it with the right eyes. Each one must procure these eyes by his own way. With this outlook on life the Candidate then wanders about the region and helps great and small along, when things get tight for them. A harsh missionary he makes ridiculous in the eyes of the population. A married couple he helps in a cunning way out of the "incompatibility of temperaments" that threatens their life together. A young woman who, overwhelmed by the wickedness of life, wants to take her own life, he saves at the last moment. He strengthens people in their religious conception, when he notices

that it really accords with their interest and need. The pastor of the parish, who for the rest is very well disposed toward him, says of him that he always has the religion that the person he has just been talking with has need of having. It is the Socratic art he practices, and despite the sympathy that stirs in him, it is a pleasure to him to practice this art, and he can "chuckle" when it has succeeded well. This Socrates of the village is a highly enlivening, and often also touching, element in the narrative. One is always glad when he takes matters in hand. If I remember rightly, he already appears in one of the author's earlier narratives.

[145] If the Candidate did not always take his pastoral work solemnly, there was nonetheless one figure in the presence of whom, despite all his art and all his knowledge of human nature, he came to feel small. This was Holger Enke, the rapist and murderer, he who after having come out of the penitentiary went his pilgrimage in his home district, where his deed had been done, and slowly worked his way forward despite suspicion and contempt. What he had to suffer was to him a relief, and in ecstatic rapture he even declared that he willingly went under eternal damnation, if it should be so. Forgiveness he did not seek. The Candidate drew from this the conclusion that Holger had overcome hell, had come out beyond the opposition between sin and grace and rested in the assurance that everything he had been and done was an object of the eternal understanding of the Deity. Psalm 139 gave him his philosophy of life: From the hour of his coming into being everything was written in God's book. The days were determined before they came, also everything that happened in the days. This eternal thought, the source of the great laws of the course of things in the world, he bowed before, and what it taught him he applied not only to himself, but also to others. When he then met the man who in his time had seduced the young girl he admired and loved, and who thereby had become the cause of his crime and misfortune, he let him calmly go his way with the words: "I did not create you."

In the last chapter of the book Holger develops his whole pilgrim philosophy for the Candidate: Even if one came up to Heaven, one would nowhere find God, precisely because he is everywhere and permeates everything. When man stops on his way and thinks himself to be something, he thereby makes God into nothing, and every thought we make of God removes us from him.

Doubtless we hear here rather the author than Holger Enke. It is the author who in Spinoza's spirit converts Psalm 139 into a speculative system. The real Holger would have stopped beforehand and held to the great images that his religion presented to *[146]* him. Perhaps he would, without being aware of it, have interpreted his images in his

own way, on the basis of what he had experienced, forfeited, suffered and understood. But abstract concepts like being and non-being he had hardly wrestled with. And the Socrates of the village would have been gripped by the depth of his mind and the power of his spirit without it.

I have set myself the task in this review of examining whether the author has succeeded in converting the understanding of human spiritual life, particularly of its religious forms, which he doubtless possesses, into real poetry. I do not believe that he has everywhere succeeded. My task has made me keep to the principal characters and their thoughts. But around them stands a series of figures, each with his life course and his way of taking life. And here I have found genuine poetry. When I again take up the book, as I doubtless shall, I shall first and foremost seek out these minor characters, who appear partly in the village, partly in the market town, partly in Copenhagen. In the depiction of them a knowledge of human nature and a love of mankind are displayed, which for me determine the mood the book leaves behind. It lay only outside my task, unfortunately also outside my ability, to characterize these figures.

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ANKER LARSEN: "FOR AABEN DØR"

Attentive readers of Anker Larsen's earlier books will find this book, for all that it brings of the new and fresh, no surprise. The subject which in his earlier books was treated, in the eyes of many, with the greatest love and skill, the life of happy children in the country, plays a decisive role in the new book too, though it appears and works more directly. The child's full surrender to its states and moods, its inward absorption in what single moments can give, its untouchedness by criticism and reflection make it for the author an ideal for adults, whose minds are often weighed down or narrowed by difficulties and problems that do not always have their good ground. The road to Hell is in our day often paved with groundless cares.

Already in the author's perhaps most widely read book, "De Vises Sten", and no less in "Martha og Maria", the child's mind stood not merely as a poetic subject but was held up as the expression of a state in which we could open ourselves completely and feel wholly free. There he already takes up the old saying that we must become children again. The fundamental thought of "De vises Sten" is given in the opposition between the open and the closed. For him who is "open", differences of time and place do not count. He lives wholly in a valuable Now, and everything gathers for him into a whole. In the "closed" states, by contrast, one is captivated by distances, by obstacles, by a multiplicity that cannot be gathered into harmony.

Already by its title the new book recalls what was a main subject in the preceding ones. The difference is that this subject is now taken up more directly, partly in autobi-
[148] ographical form. One follows the author's presentation with great interest, and it is of no small psychological significance. Anker Larsen relates how, at a certain point in his life, after he had tried both theology and theosophy, and after he had become entangled in what he calls "daily-newspaper culture", a need arose in him to relive what had made his childhood so bright, so peaceful and so whole. More and more the longing for the vanished time filled his mind. "The first step on the road home" he came to take one day during a walk in a forest. He felt at once full of health and strength and intoxicated by the mood of the forest. In this paradisal mood the image of a lovely forest path arose in his soul. It appears from his account that this image arose only after the mood had unfolded. The joy in the image then increased the very mood whose symbol it became. He had had his fill of looking at what surrounded him and had withdrawn his eyes, and only when he looked up again did he see before him "a little forest path so fresh, pure and fairy-tale-like that it must have been one of the paths in the Garden of Paradise". Only later did he become aware that the path belonged to the region of his childhood.

There was really no particular likeness between the path he was walking on and the one that now stood before him. — I believe that his description must be exact. It was the mood that overwhelmingly became the cause of the image's arising, and the likeness between the two paths was in any case of subordinate significance. On the other hand there was a likeness between his mood now and his moods from his childhood, yet in such a way that the former did not reach the latter in full life until the sight that had been tied to a childhood experience arose involuntarily. The need that in every strong mood stirs for expression, a kind of mental mimicry, led to a sort of vision, in that the sight of what was present at the moment did not sufficiently satisfy it.

The older mystics distinguish sharply between the experiences themselves and the images in which these experiences find expression. One can infer from a likeness be- *[149]*
tween the images that arise in different mystics a likeness in their experiences. In my book "Oplevelse og Tydning" I have particularly brought this out in the comparison I make between two women mystics, the Spanish nun Teresa in the sixteenth century and the remarkable Protestant mystic in the twentieth century, whom her psychological confessor calls Cécile V. There is an analogy between Teresa's image of the iron that glows in the fire but otherwise lies as a black mass, and Cécile's image of the plank in the sea water, which now shines lit by the evening sun, now is seen merely as a black board. Both mystics have felt the oppositions of life and of the mind so strongly that these oppositions involuntarily found symbolic expression in their visions. On this point there is a characteristic difference between Anker Larsen's visionary experiences and those of those other mystics, an opposition to which I shall return later. Of course in his case too it is a sharply felt opposition that gives rise to the need and the mood. But, by his account, it has precisely been the striving to get beyond division, toward unity and toward whole and free life, that has led him into the states which his visions symbolize, and he has not felt a need to let the very oppositions he strives to get beyond find expression in the visionary symbols. He longs for the naive, undivided life of childhood, and he finds satisfaction in dwelling on an image that makes him forget everything else, the strife and the divisions too. "The deep happiness of reality", he says, "fills me; my state spread out and became One with all similar states". — And so he walks, free and glad, along his reborn forest path.

The author lays strong emphasis on the fact that what he saw before him were not memories that could be called up at will. The glimpses came of themselves, and the state itself had the character of a presence, not of fantasy. The state took on in him its character of having been called forth by longing for the holy simplicity of childhood,

[150] and the glimpses acted as exhortations to begin life afresh. They had, as he expresses it, a will-determining power, set him a goal that cannot be changed. This goal is to take up life as it now happens to lie before one, — to will one's fate. If one meets resistance, it is regarded as a means, an instrument for overcoming oneself. The freedom that broke through in the single glimpse becomes real only by being held fast in the course of time.

Gradually the glimpses took on a more lasting character and led to a clear vision that lifted above time and space and opened the way to eternity. "Eternal life", says Anker Larsen, "is not a life on the other side of death. Eternal life is a state in the soul of man; it is life's deepest reality, which unfolds in his whole being and before his wondering eyes. Alas, all words are useless for describing it." It seemed as if the things of the world too now opened themselves to him and showed him their whole true reality. The old "closed shape" was only a disguise, not their real reality. To the "closed" shape belongs especially the opposition between life and death. It falls away for the open gaze. The author recalls that in one of his books he lets a boy sit under an elder tree and speak "the language of heaven" with his departed brother. That boy has been in "an inner state in which all his experiences were present": "There is no distance; everything is *here.* There is no past and future, everything is *now.*" "Death does not exist at all." "He who has experienced the Now sees no bottomless abyss between 'Life' and 'Death'." "I am not interested in duration, but in eternity."

The thought Anker Larsen strikes here recalls Shelley's "Sensitive Plant", where the poet maintains that beauty and love are raised above the oppositions between life and death. The profound English thinker Herbert Bradley, who died a few years ago, expressed his assent to Shelley's beautiful poem, and he adds, what will appeal to our
[151] author, that the paradise in which those things grow is not any region or place in time and space, but that it is *here,* — that it is everywhere where a finite being is raised up to the higher life that is now waking reality. —

The openness that was won, as lasting illumination replaced the single glimpses, gave rise not only to visions but also to a need for exclamation, for words, — clear as the author otherwise was about the inadequacy of words in face of the best and the highest. He found an outlet in the exclamation "God!" This word contained for him "jubilation, being, presence, personal relation". What was to be expressed was that "something mighty and good came to him". It was like a deep soulful breath, — as if warmth, strength and security streamed into the soul. But not even the language of the gods would be able to express such experience, and the author does not wish to discuss the various theological and speculative concepts of God. "Here," he says, "it is a matter

of a practical and actual life, and not of views of life." What has been experienced gives rise, as we have heard, to a need and courage to let the Eternal (the Now that *is*) permeate life in time (the Now that *happens),* to clarify and purify the limited ends, so that work stands as a good, and is not merely practiced for the sake of utility. The life-feeling thus called forth becomes devotion, without special hours of devotion being needed. —

Anker Larsen feels akin to mysticism, as it appears within the various religions. He often refers to the writings through which we come to know it as his "family documents". Yet his mysticism is of another kind than that which appears in those he names as his spiritual kinsmen. It is a kind of open-air religion, and "the open door" may often recall "the green field", in which one of our finest and boldest lyric poets found expression for his thoughts about life. And yet it seems as though he wishes to withdraw from life and its struggle; he is too quickly done with life in the world of change by speaking of "daily-newspaper culture" and "interests of the day". And it is no accident that the images in which his moods find an outlet are images of rest. The "forest path" lies still, and there is no work to be done there. This is connected, as already remarked, with the *[152]* longing for the idyll of childhood that was a main motive of his mysticism.

And yet it turned out that what he experiences in the highest moments is not enough for him. The eternal Now is for him not fully real; it needs to be "realized" in time. Thus it is (what most mystics, by the way, forget) not only the temporal that needs the Eternal; the converse holds too. And it is a main difficulty for all mysticism (and for all speculation) that even if a way has been found from time to eternity, none has been found from eternity back to time. In the great, gathering moments it is as if life and all things open themselves. But why are they otherwise closed, — and why is our own mind so often closed? How can the closed state be brought to an end? —

Anker Larsen wants to give us experiences, not views of life, thus no interpretation. He has too great a contempt for views of life, which in his eyes are only fruits of idle speculation. Description and interpretation can nevertheless be hard to separate. He himself uses images and thoughts that pose problems which in the long run cannot be overlooked. But it must be said to his credit that what we hear from him through the open door bears throughout the stamp of genuineness and of self-experience. With intellectual honesty he has taken care that neither handed-down opinions nor undigested reflections come to inhibit the originality of the experiences. And he keeps all hasty interpretation away, as far as he is able. In this he has an advantage over Ludvig Feilberg, who as the final interpretation of his observations had a whole theological physics, to which few readers have, I believe, paid much attention.

By his own declaration Anker Larsen has not been influenced by Feilberg. Yet in many points there is a kinship. Feilberg's "values of possibility" stand just as separated from life's great work as Anker Larsen's "eternal Nows". Common to both is above all
[153] the fresh, unprejudiced gaze and the ability to give us immediate experiences. Here it cannot be denied, however, that Feilberg is the master. He was a psychological botanist without equal, unsurpassed in grasping and rendering those glimpses in which so much that we as a rule pass by indifferent and thoughtless can come into being for us. But he will rejoice in his grave that a worthy successor has come, who by his own way has been led to discover valuable features of life's involuntary unfolding and to protect their significance.

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LUDVIG HOLSTEIN: "DEN GRØNNE MARK"

This little book comes as a refreshing breath from nature and human life, invigorating after all the shallow talk one has been able to hear here at home in the recent past, a talk in which neither the sound and free human life nor the work of research has come into its due. The book comes from the one of our poets who has most lived in nature, who has filled our imagination with the finest and freshest pictures of nature, and who now proves that he can look at the mental life of man and at human history with the same clear eyes as at the nature around us. We are in high degree in need of such a poet, for we often go by, learned and unlearned, uncomprehending, not only the life of nature around us, but also the inner life in the minds of men.

Ludvig Holstein takes his stand on purely human ground. All religion has for him ultimately sprung from human souls and their experiences. Here is the green field, where all the plants of the life of the spirit, the religious like all others, grow. Here the religion of life grows forth, with its deep root in human life-feeling, in which all profound experiences are laid down. It is the poet's calling to interpret life, not least where it stirs deepest. And faith itself is the greatest of all poets.

In this last sentence the author's personal standpoint is felt. In itself it does not say enough, for a scoffer could also utter it. But here it is uttered with seriousness and fine understanding for the involuntary unfolding of religious feelings and thoughts under the struggle of life, as well as with an open mind and good understanding for what the history of religion can teach us. — I may perhaps remind the reader that I have often, the first time in my book on Kierkegaard (1893), called religion the poetry of life. But — *[155]*
alas! — what good is it for a philosopher to speak about poetry! A poet is needed. And now he has come as a poet should, not with attempts to stop up the holes of theology with lyric poetry, but with the fresh green of life and nature about his brow. Let us then see how he arranges his thoughts. I cannot, unfortunately, present them with the rich poetry in which his speech appears, although here, for the first time, he writes in prose.
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Holstein demands "studies in the field". If we go the way of observation, we easily discover how many different views there are among men, even among those who count themselves as of the same confession. Everyone creates his paradise according to his need, and there is good use for the many mansions Jesus spoke of. But only when we leave the human world and go out into free nature do we stand before the mystery that holds the key to all mysteries, first and foremost to the myth of the mother and the child, the basic myth of all religion, springing from the heart of nature itself: "Every

growing blade of grass is a mystery, indeed Mystery itself. Like the shepherds we stand face to face with the mystery of coming-to-be of All-Nature." Oehlenschläger already saw this in "Jesu Liv i den aarlige Natur": "Each year, when the mists flee away, then the little child Jesus is born again." — And out here, Holstein continues, on the green field Mary and the Child shall remain, the human mother, the mystery of coming-to-be itself, incomprehensible and eternal, reality and illusion in One, the primal myth, from whose womb all religions have sprung! — No dualism! In human life as in nature the great process of birth, death and renewal makes itself known.

As Holstein here involuntarily passes from nature to history by reason of the inward connection of the two, so one also detects his historical sense, in that the myths of the ancient Oriental religions about the mother of the gods and her son and the mysteries attached to them come to stand as predecessors of the Christian conceptions. His historical sense shows itself also in the remark that the church as church reached its zenith in *[156]* the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Protestantism is for him a half-measure when it wishes to appear with authority. It is consistent only when it builds on freedom of conscience. Out on the green field we believe in the natural growth of life, borne by will and led by honest thinking. We sing hymns — but not all church hymns can we use. We see clearly that time goes a long way, and we ourselves do not know to what building we are gathering stones. But to peep behind the curtain we cannot. —

Holstein is not the only one of our poets who has taken part in the discussion of the religious question. Before him Helge Rode has made his contribution, not so much as a poet (though more than he wishes to be), but as a critic of the position of the sciences in relation to the church. Holstein reproaches Rode with holding fast to the Christian dualism that is due to the influence of Paul's way of thinking, but objects especially to him that his standpoint is "occult rationalism". This last expression aptly characterizes a conception that wishes to prove the possibility of miracles by referring to the inventions of recent times, surprising to lay souls. The way of thought of the old rationalistic pastors was the same as Helge Rode's. — I regard it as exceedingly significant that one poet has here countered another poet.

Holstein stands somewhat unclear toward the so-called Biblical criticism (which ought to be called Biblical research, by analogy with research on Homer and Plato). Sometimes he speaks of "Biblical criticism" in general, sometimes of "a certain Biblical criticism", which is rejected with particular emphasis, and sometimes of "objective Biblical criticism". There was every reason to keep to this last alone, which is the properly scientific one, and which therefore, like all true science, has a clear eye for the diffi-

culties that still remain. This kind of research will agree with Holstein's remark that, as regards the origin of Christianity, "it will hardly ever be possible to unravel all the threads".

Since the discussion is of Biblical research, I will remark that many scholars will *[157]* not agree with Holstein in the weight he places on the claim that the development of Christianity, especially in the Pauline and Johannine direction, is supposed to be understood from the connection between the Old and the New Testament. Undoubtedly certain Oriental influences have made themselves felt here, which it would not be hard for Holstein to admit, since he lays so much weight on the "primal myth" of the mother and the son. —

As to future development, Holstein first points out that a crisis has set in here in this country, because the time is past in which "the high renaissance of Danish spiritual life, unchecked by the dogmas of the church, could flourish under its roof", so that "the church, in spite of its dogmas, was the mediator of its time between Christianity and spiritual life. Since then spiritual life has gone its own ways, and the Lutheran church stands as an anachronism" without connection with spiritual life as a whole. Yet Holstein does not wish the church separated from the state, since that would breed rule by pastors and narrow orthodoxy. What matters is whether the church will set the spirit above the dogma. Holstein's last words are: Let the bells ring and the dogmas sleep!

With this last word the real state of affairs among our people is probably also expressed. People do not want to be rid of the bells, they like to hear them ring and are moved by them, as by the liturgical part of the church service generally. But people do not want to hear too much about the dogmas. History must show how long this spiritual condition can last. Both those who stand outside the national church and those who stand inside it will follow with suspense its further historical development here. And all of them will have reason to be grateful for the reference to life's green field that one of our finest poets has given us in the present book.

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SHAKESPEARE'S "STORMEN"

For all who admire Shakespeare and live in his works, a great event is at hand, as the Royal Theater is now [1926] to perform the drama that sets the crown on his life's work. For my part I have found in it an incentive to immerse myself anew in this wonderful work, and have felt a desire to write down something of how I understand it. I am not a Shakespeare scholar, only a Shakespeare reader, and I must say in advance how much I owe to the excellent English interpreters of Shakespeare, especially Edward Dowden and A. C. Bradley. It is among my best memories from my visits to England that in the autumn of 1904 at the University of Oxford I heard Bradley's lecture on Shakespeare as a man ("Shakespeare the man"), which was later printed in his "Oxford Lectures".

I shall try to give the content of the drama in brief outline.

Prospero, Duke of Milan, was by treachery driven from his land by his own brother, to whom he had left the government of the country while he himself immersed himself in his studies. Now he lives with his daughter on an island far out in the sea, still absorbed in his investigations and occupied with instructing his daughter, Miranda, who in her tender age was torn away from all human intercourse but her father's. Prospero has, like Faust, immersed himself in magic, but his life of thought has during his stay on the island won such power that he can command the elements without needing, like Faust, so questionable a helper as Mephistopheles. Yet he has two serving beings, whom he found on the island. The one, Ariel, is an ethereal being, who was held bound by a
[159] witch, who formerly ruled on the island, in harsh torment until Prospero freed him. Ariel moves with the speed of thought, acts swiftly and wisely in his master's spirit and can give him good counsel. Indeed, though he is an ethereal being, without human flesh and blood, he can tell Prospero what magnanimous humanity commands; he knows how he would act if he were a man. In the midst of all his zeal in his benefactor's service he longs, however, to be released from this service in order again to become One with the purest elements of nature. The other servant, Caliban, is a cross between beast and devil, a son of the witch. Prospero has tried in vain to awaken a human mind in him. He cannot forget that he is the son of the island's former mistress. He continues to be bestial and vindictive and is therefore treated severely, especially after he had tried to rape Miranda. The human language Prospero has taught him he uses mostly to curse his master. The only human trait in him is his joy in hearing music. He too longs for freedom, but it is the unruliness of raw elements he yearns for. He is forced to toil for Prospero's material necessities, while Ariel works for the carrying out of the master's ideal plans.

The magic into which Prospero has been initiated through his investigations he now uses to get his enemies into his power and thereby deliverance and happiness for himself and his daughter. In a storm raised by him his treacherous brother, Antonio, and the latter's helper, King Alonzo of Naples, are stranded on the island. Ariel takes care that no one loses his life. And now the shipwrecked wander about in various groups on the island. A sweet music leads the King's son Ferdinand to Prospero's cave, where he and Miranda are at once captivated by each other. One of the most graceful love relationships Shakespeare has portrayed unfolds now. It causes Prospero the greatest joy: "As glad as they I cannot become, and yet nothing could give me greater joy!" Yet he puts the Prince to a hard trial through strict labor before he gives his consent.

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When the most important group of the shipwrecked, Antonio, Alonzo and their courtiers, are known to be in Ariel's power, Prospero, in his great joy at the young couple's happiness, has Ariel conjure up a series of scenes in which goddesses bring their good wishes to the pact, and nymphs and harvesters dance. And then comes one of the most characteristic scenes in the play. In the midst of the conjured spectacle Prospero suddenly starts up and bids the spirits vanish. Suddenly the thought had shot through him that all was not yet safe. He had, absorbed in the visions that conjured themselves up, forgotten that the monster Caliban out in the woods had met two men from the ship, who had saved a good supply of wine, and that now all three were on their way to attack Prospero and seize his daughter, at whose side the one of the conspirators, the King of Naples' butler, in whom Caliban saw a revelation of his erstwhile god, then was to rule over the island. No wonder that Prospero was dismayed and upset when he came to think of what was brewing against him, while he had begun to celebrate the settlement in which his magnanimity toward his enemies was to bring peace and joy. His daughter had never seen him so embittered. But he collects himself and calms himself and the others with the thought that not only such visions as they had just had must dissolve into nothing, but that it would go so with everything great and glorious, with our very earth. Our life is indeed only like one of those dream-visions that just now came forth.

It now dawns on Prospero that his trouble in educating Caliban has been in vain, and that he must proceed severely before he lets magnanimity rule. Ariel brings the brutal conspirators into his power, they get their punishment, and when Prospero later sails away from the island, he leaves Caliban behind. The monster has not improved, but he has seen what folly he committed in seeing a god in a drunken butler. — In a theater in London one saw at the end the ship with Prospero and his enemies, who had

[161] now received forgiveness, sail away from the shore, while Caliban lying on a cliff edge follows them with his eyes. He has evidently not understood a bit of what has happened. —

Gradually all the other shipwrecked are now gathered at Prospero's cave, led by Ariel, now under sweet music, "the best comforter for an unquiet mind", now under threatening sounds. The King and Antonio awake from the magic sleep into which Ariel has put them, and Prospero receives them with an exhortation to forget what has been caused and has happened, and to set it right as well as possible. The union of the King's son and Miranda is to seal the reconciliation. If there has been any doubt in Prospero as to how he should treat those who are so wholly in his power, then Ariel appears as his good genius. Ariel thinks that if his master had seen these enemies' sufferings, he would pity them; Ariel himself would, if he had been a human being! Prospero, who as a human being can feel their wretchedness even better than Ariel, follows his exhortation. His enemies' wicked conduct has wounded him in his innermost being, but magnanimity gains power over bitterness and strength of spirit over desire for revenge. His feeling of his power over men as over nature, the consciousness that his plans have succeeded and that the vindication won by his own strength is near, gives him the superiority to go "the rarer way", that which leads beyond the urge to repay evil with evil. He has learned that the evil in nature and in human life cannot vanish from the world, but he has at the same time learned that it can be overcome with patience, without one's needing to betray the noblest that is contained in one's own mind. —

Shakespeare was not alone in regarding magnanimity as the supreme trait of character. In the thinking of the Renaissance this idea recurs again and again. In a series of philosophers the awakening research into nature and the widened view of human conditions led to the insight that selfishness and desire for revenge are a limitation of the mind's power, in the end a weakness. This line of thought is later completed in
[162] Spinoza's doctrine of the free man, who lives out of himself, and whose power is able not merely to assert itself, but to show its superiority by helping others. Generositas as an expression of spiritual strength is a main thought in the ethics of the Renaissance. It is not my opinion that Shakespeare should have been influenced by the philosophers of his time, but through his experiences and through the work in his art he has come by his own way to the same result as the thinkers of his time, and he has been able to express it in a work that no one but he could create. It is faith in life that leads beyond sorrow as beyond hatred. When King Alonzo, despite the reconciliation, cannot forget what has happened, Prospero stops him with the words: "Let us not burden our memory

with a sorrow whose time is past!" — The line of thought that had let Prospero think with calm of the fact that not only the paradises of fancy, but all human work, indeed the earth itself on which we live, is subject to dissolution, leads him to recognize that also the sorrow that has been caused him, and the wrong that has been done to him, are subject to this law.

The Shakespeare scholars are agreed that the spiritual loftiness that is portrayed in "Stormen" and has peace and reconciliation as its consequence is on the whole characteristic of the last period of Shakespeare's work as a poet. The same mood prevails in "Cymbeline" and in "A Winter's Tale". Despite all crime and wrong, fidelity and love triumph. Imogen and Hermione are natures like Prospero, although they command no other magic than patient love. All these dramas mark a peculiar period in Shakespeare's development, which, by the way, is characterized not only by the superior mildness, but also by the quite special grace with which young women (Miranda, Imogen, Perdita) are portrayed. What is peculiar to "Stormen" in relation to the other dramas from the same time is that Shakespeare through Prospero directly and more distinctly than in other dramas expresses the conception of life he has won, and that he now announces that he intends to cease with his poetic works. He takes leave of his hearers by having Prospero *[163]* break his magic staff, bury it deep in the earth, and sink his magic book into the sea. The oppositions of life have now faded away for him. He has conducted his spiritual struggle with the experiences that fell to his lot, whether they intervened in his own personal life or not. He has fought as a man and as an artist, and "Stormen" shows that he has won the victory in both capacities. Now he returns to Stratford on Avon, where with the practical sense that always seems to have worked alongside his artistic urge, he had prepared for himself a fine home. He who, according to the legend, had to flee as a young man from his native town now owned one of the most stately houses there, and as Ariel looked forward to his freedom in the ether, Shakespeare has looked forward to walking again along the banks of the Avon. An excellent Shakespeare scholar has also noticed in Shakespeare's later production the fragrance of the meadows by the Avon. (For my part, conversely, a walk across these meadows has made the impression of Shakespeare's little pictures of nature fresher and more vivid than the mere reading could do.)

The Shakespeare whom we meet in the last period of his work as a poet, and most markedly in "Stormen", must be seen in connection with the one who earlier, about forty years old, wrote Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and Lear, those mighty tragedies in which the oppositions of human life come forth so sharply and ruthlessly, and in which

downfall often seems to be the last word. As Bradley has shown, these tragedies deal for a substantial part with the disappointments and adversity that open and ardent natures can meet on their way. Such a nature was Hamlet before his father's murder and his mother's hasty wedding, before his friends' treachery and Ophelia's spying, such a one was also Othello, before Iago devilishly awakened his doubt, and Lear, before his daughters' ingratitude showed itself. Such a one was moreover Macbeth before the
[164] witch sisters' prophecy and his wife's incitement. And Bradley has aptly stressed that Shakespeare himself is characterized by his contemporaries as an open, free and fine nature. He must have had experiences of what life can bring of misfortune and wickedness, even if it did not directly intervene in his own fate. His imagination was in any case seized by it, and he did not rest until he had portrayed in great and strong strokes what he saw. But he did not lose faith in the reality of the good. He maintains it in the very fall of the great and noble, and he portrays it as fidelity and patience in figures such as Kent and Horatio. He stands in the midst of the strife and lets the oppositions rebound against one another. The same spiritual power that in "Stormen" carried him beyond life's oppositions had made it possible for him in those great tragedies to let these oppositions confront one another in all their strength. It is fear and pity that come to rule, not the transfigured and inward understanding and the patient endurance that hold sway in "Stormen". In "King Lear" too there is talk of downfall. When the old King enters with Cordelia's corpse, Kent cries: "Is this the end of all that was foretold?", — Edgar: "or an image of the horror that can be expected?" — and the Duke of Albany: "Downfall and end?" (V, 3, 263ff.). But now, in "Stormen", it is with a moved mind, but not in horror, that Prospero thinks of the downfall. A transfigured mood now prevails in the poet's mind. We would not rejoice in "Stormen" if we had not, by the same poet's hand, lived through the tragic moods that in his early manhood he felt the need to give expression to, and there would not have been the great weight in the poet's last proclamation if he had not been in purgatory before he walked in paradise.

It is not possible without more to make use of the yield of others' experience of life, so that one holds to the transfigured form in which their conception of life can appear,
[165] after they have tried life. We must all begin afresh. And however pure and clear the atmosphere is into which we are led by Prospero and Ariel, there will yet be those who, when they need support in life's struggle, rather take refuge in "King Lear" than in "Stormen". Even if the noble and great is consecrated to downfall, it is yet uplifting to know that it has been and can be in the world. And it can be strengthening to take a bout with the thoughts that are awakened by the fate of Lear and Cordelia, before one

tries to live in the ethereal world of "Stormen". Great it is to have given us a work like "Stormen", but greater that this work was created only after it had been lived, felt and thought in the world of strife and oppositions. And this he has done whom Goethe called "William, Stern der höchsten Höhe". He does not fail us, neither during the struggle nor in defeat, nor when victory is won.