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SOME ASPECTS
Of The
PHILOSOPHY of SPINOZA
and his
ONTOLOGICAL PROOF
Of The
EXISTENCE OF GOD

By
Patrick A. Coyle

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Baruch Spinoza was born at Amsterdam in 1632 of Portuguese Jewish parents. In accordance with the wishes of his father he was carefully educated by the Rabbis of his own people in Hebrew theology and literature including of course the Talmud and the more modern commentaries of Maimonides and Ibn Ezra. He was also sent to the Latin school of Van den Ende, an Amsterdam physician, where he received his first impulse to the study of Descartes' philosophy and his first lessons in the principles of natural science. After he grew to manhood suspicions of his orthodoxy were raised and after several attempts to induce him to conform to the faith of the synogogue had failed he was expelled from the Jewish community in 1656. Henceforth he provided for himself a slender but sufficient income by grinding and polishing lenses for optical instruments, while devoting the remainder of his time to the development of his own philosophical ideas.

His love of independence led him to

decline the Heidelberg professorship of philosophy offered him by Karl Ludwig, the Elector Palatine. He wrote his principal works at the Hague between the years 1660 and 1667. In 1663 he published the treatise entitled: "Renati Descartes principorum philosophical Pars I et II more geometrico demonstratae, and in 1670 the anonymous work: "Tractatus Theologico - politicus", in which he discusses and gives rationalistic solutions of such problems as inspiration, prophecy, miracles and free investigation. His chief work, *Ethica more Geometrica Demonstrata* and several other less important treatises were published after his death under the care of his friend, Ludwig Meyer. His "Tractus de Deo, Homine, ejusque Felicitate" was unknown to the philosophical public until 1852.

Difficulties of Interpretation.

The philosophy of Spinoza would be a difficult and subtle one to state even were it completely formulated: as he left it, the articulation and dependence of its parts are not perfect.

Distinctions are frequently reiterated to become clear cut only gradually; sometimes it seems as if definitions are modified in rep^etitition. Extension and thought are defined only after repeated explanations have been made clear, how these attributes are to be distinguished from the traditional ones and what correlation and contrast there is to be between them. Sometimes the difficulty seems to be one of expression, for though the language is tersely exact and beautifully accurate it bears the marks of painful revision. Since there is so much misunderstanding it seems probable that the work of revision may not have been perfected or completed. But possibly the fault is not Spinoza's and if what he means by idea, seems to be labored to its final conception through the whole length of Book II of the Ethics, the confusions may not have come from any vagueness in his mind, but from the variety of senses in which we have been reading that word since his time.

In expression as well as ideas Spinoza stands between two ages. Within his lifetime

even the language he used had come to have different meanings. He is a contemporary of the first of the philosophers we have come to call modern, but in a significant sense his intellectual fellowship is with the mediaevals. This place which he occupies in the history of thought is another source for much of the strange interpretation that has been found for his doctrine and his terminology. He was concerned largely with problems which occupied the attention of his predecessors; and except in rare instances, the statements he cited with approval from the works of his contemporaries pleased him for other reasons and because of other implications than those which their authors had mostly tried to bring out.

Sometimes the difficulty and the confusion of Spinoza's writings are genuine problems which yield no solution. He was faced, to take an example, with the problem of the relation of finite bodies and God. In the "Short Treatise", which was his first work, it seemed a simple problem and he disposed of it thus: "Now to prove

that there is a body in Nature, can be no difficult task for us. The proof requires only a knowledge of God and of his attributes". Fifteen years later a correspondent, Tschernhaus, raises that problem in almost the same terms: "In the first place I can conceive only with difficulty how the existence of bodies which have motion and figure can be demonstrated a priore; since nothing of the sort occurs in extension considering the thing absolutely." (Ep.80) To which Spinoza replies: "If extension be conceived as Decartes conceived it, that is, as a quiescent mass, it is not only difficult but impossible to demonstrate the existence of things." (Ep.81) Tschernhaus recognizes and expands on the difficulties in the case of Descartes, but asks Spinoza to indicate "how the variety of things can be shown a priori from the concept of extension according to your meditations." (Ep. 82) He answers that the variety of things cannot be demonstrated from the concept of extension, but that it must necessarily be explained through an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence. This position

and statement were those which in the "Short Treatise" seemed to him the solution of the problem. "But," he adds now, "I shall treat of these things with you more clearly some day if life be sufficient. For up to the present I have been able to put nothing concerning these matters in order."

(Ep. 83) Apparently his life was not sufficiently long enough to remove the difficulties. But it had been long enough to indicate that the confident statement of the Short Treatise was the statement and not the solution of the problem; bodies are related to the attribute of extension; but the mechanism to mediate between bodies and extension was never set in order. There are other such definite outlines in the Ethics which were never to be filled in.

Consequently there are enough elements of confusion gathered about the works of Spinoza. But it does not seem too much to hope that the coherent, logical form which he strove so definitely and consistently to confer upon his philosophy, can be recovered in at least the detail that he gave it. Restatement of that unity is

needed, particularly since it can be made with an emphasis determined by criticism to which he could not have anticipated. "From the method Spinoza employed and from the confidence he had in the efficacy of deductive or synthetic reasoning, one is led to expect that the answer will be a consistent and autonomous doctrine. It may be incomplete in some details, for the unity is a formal one, and concerned therefore, not with the specific inclusion of everything that is known, but rather with the conceivable manner in which anything that may be known is to be included. To say this is only to insist on Spinoza's firm conviction that the search for truths could be conducted with profit only after one had investigated what is implied in the fact that we can conceive a truth or can desire that which we conceive to be good. Then one may speak of the power of the intellect and the strength of the emotions. Such an insistence will bring out forcefully what is involved in his philosophy and will recognize, too, as a proper consequence of this philosophy that in the age which was to go into madness of observation and experimentation

he could appraise Bacon's little stories and insist that Boyle's experiments revealed and could reveal nothing which was not already known about that nature of things." McKeon, Philosophy of Spinoza, p. 188.

Method

In developing his doctrines, Spinoza is not content with pure deductive reasoning but presents them in geometrical manner. From a certain number of definitions he deduces a system whose parts are logically connected with each other. This method of Exposition is not an arbitrary form or a provisional framework; it is of a piece with the system and constitutes its permanent skeleton. When Spinoza treats of the world, of man and his passions as Euclid in his Elements treats of lines, planes and angles, it is because, in principle and in fact, he sets as great value upon these objects of philosophy as the geometer upon his. And just as the conclusions of geometry invariably follow from their axioms, so the moral and physical facts which the philosopher considers, follow with absolute nec-

essity from the nature of things, expressed by their definitions. He no more inquires into their final causes than the geometer asks to what end the three angles of a given triangle are equal to two right angles. It is not his method that leads him to mathematical determinism; on the contrary, he employs it because from the very outset he views the world from the geometrical, that is, the deterministic standpoint. He agrees with Pythagoras, Plato and Descartes that philosophy is the generalization of mathematics. However, to the writer of this thesis, this geometrical form adds little to Spinoza's work, and in many respects it is a real drawback, for it gives to his profound insights an appearance of artificiality which tends to obscure their real meaning. But Spinoza believed that mathematics furnished the universal type of true science, and he assumed that the absolute certainty which was then regarded as essential to science, could only be attained by following the same method. What is most valuable in his system is not the result of his formal deductions, but the fruit of his genius as shown through his wonderful speculative

intuition and keen psychological analysis.

Man's Place In Nature

Notwithstanding its severe scientific form Spinoza's philosophy is based on ethical motives, and has a decidedly practical character. What he sought throughout his life of lonely meditation was not knowledge as the mere satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, but rather knowledge of man's place in the universe. In the "Improvement of the Understanding" we find an autobiographical account of Spinoza's decision to choose the lightest end of life. After explaining the unsatisfactory nature of a life devoted to pleasure or honor or riches, and the evils and disturbances to which such a life is subject, he says: "All of these arise from the love of what is perishable, such as the objects already mentioned. But love toward a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy and is itself unmingled with any sadness. Wherefore it is greatly to be desired and sought for with all our strength." (Opera Posthuma, p. 185.) Moreover "whatsoever in the sciences does not serve to promote our

object will have to be rejected as useless." (idem p. 185) Nevertheless there is for Spinoza no opposition between theory and practice; for the knowledge of the systematic unity of all things, and of God as their source and essence, is itself the supreme good and blessedness for man. The highest good is realized only in and through the most complete knowledge.

From this conception springs his ethical doctrine, developed in the third, fourth and fifth parts of the Ethics. In its practical form his teaching assumes that everything, so far as in it lies, strives to remain in its own being. The effort by which this striving is manifest is nothing but the actual essence of the thing. This effort when it is in the mind alone is will; when in mind and body, it is appetite. If desire is satisfied we have pleasure, if not, we have sorrow. All affections and emotions resolve themselves into desire, joy and sorrow, accompanied by ideas. A thing is not desired because it is good; it is good because it is desired. Knowledge of good and bad can be a cause in the moral world, counteracting passion, and raising us from the world of

appetite and mortality to the world of eternal truths. Hence, it is with the problem of man's place in nature - his relation to God or the total system of things, and the possibility of his freedom depends upon his first recognizing that man is a part of nature, and that his mind, like everything else, is subject to uniform natural laws. Man forms no kingdom within a kingdom. It is not contingency or some strange power of free will which governs his mental experiences; but here as elsewhere all takes place according to law and necessity. "Nature's laws and ordinances whereby all things come to pass and change from one form to another are everywhere and always the same. There should, therefore, be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things whatsoever, viz., through nature's universal laws and rules.....I shall consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner as though I were concerned with lines, planes and solids." (Eth.I - 16) From this standpoint he gives a scientific account of the origin and nature of emotions, showing how they necessarily arise from certain assignable causes and how their intensity depends on definite natural conditions. The var-

ious emotions are all found to be compounds of the primary states: pleasure, pain and desire. But this reduction of the emotions to law is only a preliminary step in Spinoza's treatment. To attain freedom it is first necessary to recognize the bondage of man, the fixed determination of the emotions through natural laws. But just as knowledge is power in regard to external nature, so we can free ourselves from the emotions by understanding their laws.

The mind is, after all, something more than a series of passive states. Its essence consists in an effort to preserve its own being and promote its own good. In carrying out this purpose it finds that nothing is so serviceable as knowledge. Through knowledge it is possible to free man from the bondage of the emotions. An emotion when understood becomes transformed and ceases to be a state of passivity. Moreover, when the conditions of an emotion are understood, it is possible to arrange and associate the various emotions in such way as to strengthen and promote the occurrence of those that are desirable and to weaken and repress those which are hurtful.

The highest kind of knowledge for Spinoza is not scientific reason but intuition, the direct insight that all things follow necessarily from the nature of God and hence from one system.

God and Nature

The logical foundation of his whole system lies in the validity of all relative propositions leaving the Absolute as the sole reality of the universe. All turns with Spinoza as with Descartes on getting true and adequate knowledge of the essences of things. All essences when presented to the mind, carry with them a conviction of their own truth, and as they cannot contradict one another they form a system of truths deduced from one principle as their primary cause. Such a principle can only be God, from whose qualities all the essences of things flow as a matter of necessity, or in other words are caused, since Spinoza does not distinguish between logical dependence and dynamic causation. In this way his logic passes over into his metaphysics and in attempting to determine the cause of things Spinoza has to determine the essences of things and their relation to the Highest Reality.

This Highest Reality he calls at the beginning of his Ethics either God, or Nature, or Substance. An attempt has been made to distinguish three stages in the development of his thought, each one finding its characteristic expression in each of these words. The attempt fails not only because there is not sufficient regularity in usage but also because the triplicity of standpoint is fundamental. It is God who is Nature, and it is Nature which is Substance; and the different words appear as the matters dealtwith, change and change about. The three primary problems of thought are those of origin, structure and stuff. When Spinoza is thinking of the first he would seem to prefer the word God, when of the second - Nature, and when the third - Substance. They are all one and the same, and are only different from different points of view. This is really the argument of the earlier propositions of the Ethics just as it was of the Short Treatise.

Substance

The Short Treatise took over the conception of Nature and showed that if taken seriously it is one with God. Now the Ethics takes

over the word Substance, a favorite word in current thought, and shows that Substance and God are one. The point is simple. The traditional philosophy had spoken of substances as if each one of them were independent and self-contained. Spinoza insists that such self-contained entities do not as a fact exist. All things are bound together inextricably. Hence, if only that which can stand by itself is substance, there is only one substance - the system of the whole universe. This system as being infinite - self-coherent and self-complete - is one with the eternal self-sufficient and self-subsistent being called God. What was asked from the conception of Substance is in fact only given by the idea of God and so Spinoza can say in his 14th proposition: "Apart from God there is not, nor can there be conceived any substance." (Ethics I-14) There can be only one real Substance because a Substance is defined as self-contained and only the whole of things is self-contained. Everything less than the whole is dependent on something else. Even Descartes saw that his two substances were dependent on God who was the basic substance, and therefore were not substances in the same sense as God. But if substance is really self-dependent, it must be all

that is. And if it be all that is, it must be unlimited; for to be limited is to be limited by something, and hence to depend - at least for its limitations - on something else. But the whole of being has nothing outside of it to limit it and hence is unlimited. Spinoza calls this, infiniteness. The essence of an infinite substance is to have all possible attributes. An attribute is the essence of a substance as perceived by the intellect and the intellect has two such attributes; thought and extension. Therefore God is a thinking and extended substance as we know him; but since he is infinite, he must be much more besides. The basis then of the parallelism between mind and body, ideas and things, is their fundamental identity in Nature or God.

The changes which go on in Nature, then, are manifested now as ideas, now as things. As our minds are a collection of ideas, there must be corresponding to them collections of things or bodies; and contrariwise, if the object of the idea constituting the human mind be a body, nothing in that body could happen which would not be perceived by the mind. Now, as a matter of fact,

the object of the human mind is a body, to wit, the human body, for all our ideas of the external world are modified by our sense organs at least. Man becomes both body and mind. Some of our ideas of our body are obscure, others are distinct; but Spinoza in a scholium (Eth. II - 10th) to his theorem proving our dual nature, indicates that there is a parallelism between certain characters of the body, e.g., its activity, its perceptual acuity, its independence of other bodies - and of the mind - its power of forming many perceptions and distinct concepts. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate this point.

The one substance then is God or Nature with its two attributes of thinking and extension among the many others. These two attributes were in the eyes of Spinoza's contemporaries not only different but "opposite". Thus mind was considered to be all that was active, creative, purposeful, free; and matter all that was passive, inert, mechanical and determined. So that Nature seemed to have contradictory properties. Could one thing have these two sets of properties and still be one? Spinoza in Ethics I, proposition 29 reviews the Neo-Platonic conception of *natura naturans* and

natura naturata both fused in one. It means that Nature is not created by a power outside itself but, being subject only to its own laws is both creator and created. It is both active and passive, not in the sense that as an agent it is different from acts upon itself as patient, but in the sense that it "just grown" or happens in accordance with physical law, and that since physical law prescribed for it by a supernatural power, it is autonomous, making, so to speak, its own laws. The distinction implied in the words "agent" and "patient" was necessitated not by logic but by certain scientific presuppositions. It was presupposed, as early as Empidocles, that a change implied a changer and something to be changed. If now there was no changer, then the changed must be both agent and patient. It was another manner of saying that Nature was sovereign. And we can easily see how easy it was by emphasizing the materialistic side of Nature, to make Spinoza an atheist, or by emphasizing the mental side to make a pantheist.

Attributes and Modes

Spinoza realized the problem that confronted him. He was to connect this Sovereign Nature,

this Being, or Principle which is rigidly one with the multiplicity of things and persons constituting the world of imagination. This he does by positing intermediate aspects of the One. God being self-caused and therefore infinite must have infinite aspects or attributes. As previously mentioned, two only of these are known to man: extension and thought which sum up the world as humanly known. These attributes are perfectly parallel one to the other, all portions of extension or space, having attached to them, as it were, corresponding ideas or thoughts, though these in Spinoza's curious psychology are not necessarily conscious and certainly not self-conscious. But these attributes being infinite, like their substance, cannot constitute finite beings which are due to modifications of these attributes or modes as he calls them.

These modes then are infinite like the attributes they modify. Movement, intellect and will, the physical universe and the intellectual universe have neither beginning nor end. Each one of the infinite modes constitutes an infinite series of finite modes. Movement, i.e., infinitely modified extension, produces the infinitude of finite modes which we call bodies; intellect and

will becoming infinitely diversified, produces particular and finite minds, intellects and wills. Bodies and minds, that is, ideas, are neither relative substances, which would be a contradiction in terms, nor infinite modes, but changing modes or modifications of the cosmical substance, or, what amounts to the same, of its attributes.

By distinguishing between infinite modes and finite modes, Spinoza means to say that motion is eternal, while the corporeal forms which it constitutes originate and decay - that intellects and wills have existed for eternities, but that each particular intellect has a limited duration. Bodies or limited extensions are to infinite extension, particular intellects to the infinite intellect, and the particular wills to the eternal will, what our thoughts are to our soul. Just as these exist only for the soul, like the body exists only for the substance of which it is a momentary modification. Compared with God, souls and bodies are no more substances than our ideas are beings apart from ourselves. In strictly philosophical language, there is only one substantive; everything else is but an adjective. The substance is the absolute,

eternal, and necessary cause of itself; the mode is contingent, passing, relative and merely possible. The substance is necessary, that is, it exists because it exists; the mode is contingent and merely possible, that is, it exists because something else exists and it may be conceived as not existing.

The cosmic substance mentioned above is an extended and thinking thing; it forms both the substance of all bodies or matter, and the substance of all minds. Matter and mind are two different ways of conceiving one and the same substance; two different names for the same thing. Each of the attributes of the substance is relatively infinite. The substance is absolutely infinite in the sense that there is nothing beyond it: the attribute is only relatively infinite, that is after its kind. Extension is infinite as such, and thought is infinite as such; but neither extension nor thought is absolutely infinite, for alongside of extension there is thought, and alongside of thought there is extension not counting such attributes of substance as are unknown to us. Substance as such is the sum of all existing things; extension, though infinite as extension, does not contain all existences in itself, since there are in addition to

it, infinite thought and the minds constituted by it; nor does thought embrace the totality of beings since there are besides, extension and bodies.

Spinoza's God seems to be both an unqualified being, and an infinitely qualified being. By calling God an absolutely undetermined being he does not mean to say that God is an absolutely indeterminate being, or non-being, or negative being, but on the contrary that he has absolutely unlimited attributes or absolutely infinite perfections, - that he is a positive, concrete, most real being, the being who unites in himself all possible attributes and possesses them without limitation.

God is therefore no longer conceived as having separate attributes, which would make him a particular being; he is the being who combines in himself all possible attributes or the totality of being. Now each divine attribute constitutes a world: extension - the material world; thought - the spiritual world. Hence, we must conclude from the infinite number of divine attributes that there exists an infinite number of worlds besides the two known to us - worlds which are neither material nor spiritual, and have no relation to

space or time, but depend on other conditions of existence absolutely inaccessible to the human understanding. This conception opens an immense field to the imagination, without being absolutely contrary to reason. However, it must be added strictly speaking: infinita attributa are boundless attributes rather than innumerable attributes. Had Spinoza been decided on the question as to whether the absolute has attributes other than extension and thought he would evidently not have employed an ambiguous expression. (Vidi Ep.63) In fact his substance has extension and thought only, but it has them in infinite degree.

Spinoza's God is not an object outside the world, which together with the world makes up the universe. He is himself the universe within which the distinctions and differences constituting the world obtain. And if so, he is among other things inevitably and irrevocably extended.

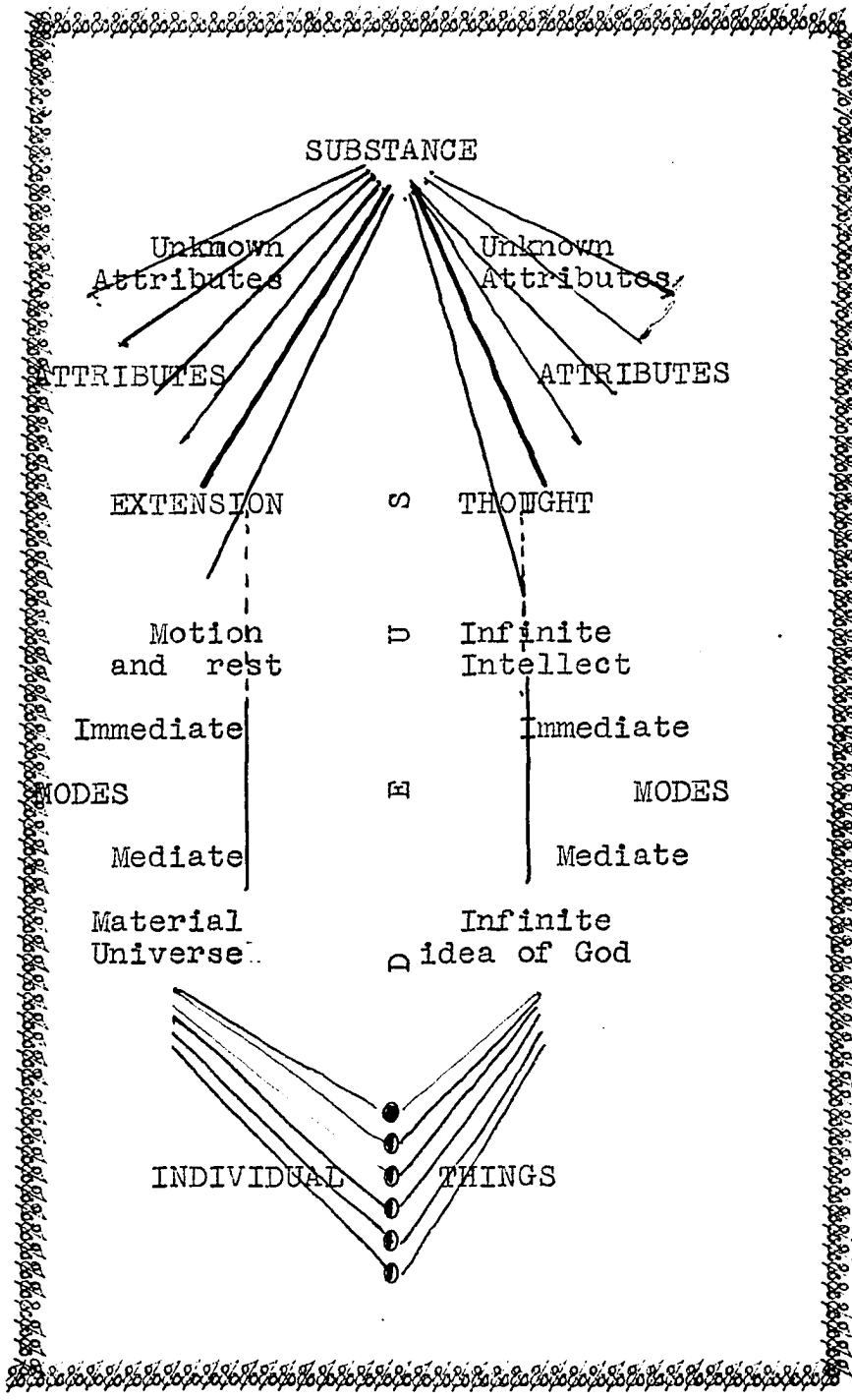
It is easy to inveigh against a doctrine which identifies God with the universe and which sees in the essential characters of the one, essential characters of the other. Yet it must be repeated that the universe, according to Spinoza's

conception of it is for more than the physical world. His God is the fulness of being, the supreme reality. Such characters, therefore, as constitute the Real as we know it must constitute, at least in part, the essential nature of God. Spinoza is trying to give content to the word God and whatever one may think of the result it is indubitable that few have made the attempt in so forceful and noble a fashion.

God then comprises all things, and that of the free necessity of his own nature, not as the result of any passing whim or caprice. Yet He is not their mere framework, a passive container or conserver. He is their active source. "It is as impossible for us to conceive of God as not existing as to conceive of him as not acting." (Eth. II - 3 sch.) "There are bound to follow from the necessity of the divine nature an infinity of things in an infinity of ways - - - and since all things are in him, there can be nothing outside him by which he is determined or compelled to action, and therefore he acts from the laws of his own nature only and is compelled by no one. Hence it follows firstly, that there is no cause which can excite God to action, either extrinsically

or intrinsically except the perfection of his own nature; and secondly, that God alone exists from the necessity alone of his own nature." (Eth.I -16)

The whole scheme of Spinoza Ethics may possibly be indicated in the accompanying diagram as found in the Jewish Encyclopedia. Vol. XI. p. 515.



Now we pass to the last part of this paper: Spinoza's Ontological Proof of the Existence of God. In its main outlines Spinoza inherited the ontological proof of the existence of God from the middle ages. St. Anselm (1033 - 1109) was the first one to announce this proof. He is a typical scholastic doctor and a fine exponent of the alliance between reason and faith which form the characteristic traits of mediaeval philosophy. He assumes a priori that revelation and reason are in perfect accord. These two manifestations of the one and supreme intelligence cannot possibly contradict each other. Anselm lived in an age when practically every one believed in a God from revelation. Hence we find that he did not consider himself under any obligation to prove what Descartes thought was a necessary point in connection with the ontological proof; that is, whether all men are possessed of an idea of supreme being. Anselm draws the elements of his argument from St. Augustine and Platonism. He sets out from an idea of perfect being, from which he infers the existence of such a being. It is a platonic doctrine to say that God does not get his perfections from without; he has not received them and we can-

not say that he has them; he is and must be all that these perfections imply; his attributes are identical with his essence. Goodness, an attribute of God, and God, are not two separate things. This is a necessary preliminary to the ontological proof of the existence of God, as understood both by St. Augustine and Spinoza.

The ontological proof of the existence of God must be considered an important one, It has appealed to so many great thinkers that one simply cannot dismiss it without a hearing. No less a genius than Albertus Magnus, Peter of Tarentais, Henry of Ghent, Guanillo, St. Thomas, Richard of Middleton and Kant find it necessary to refute it; while on the other hand an equally long list of great thinkers have accepted it in the main, e.g., William of Auxerre, Richard Fishaere, Alexander of Holes, John Peckham, Bonaventure, Giles of Rome, John Duns Scotus, William Ware, Descartes and Hegel.

The argument can be stated in a variety of ways: first, you cannot have an idea of a perfect being unless that being exists. Second, the being of which you have the idea is not a perfect being unless it exists. Third, if you imagine the

case of a perfect being that does not exist, then that being would not be perfect unless it exists and if it did not exist then you could not have an idea of it. Fourth, perhaps the best statement of the question is the one that indicates its validity as being as resting on the principle of contradiction: you either have the idea of a perfect thing or you have not. If you admit that you have an idea of a perfect being you are also conceding that you cannot think of a perfect being that has not real existence, otherwise you would be thinking or having an idea of an imperfect being, since a being that possesses all perfections and has real existence is more perfect than such a being that has only possible existence. St. Anselm would say that I am forced to assent to the reality of a perfect being just as in every judgement I assent to a real order of things to which I infer my judgement applies. I am continually jumping from the logical to the real order. I am continually making outward reference; what right have I to do this in any instance? This is one of the most difficult problems in philosophy. Philosophers differ as to why I feel compelled in one instance and not in another. St. Anselm holds that when I judge God

to have real existence this is the one and unique instance where the very terms in the judgement carry their own guarantee. The very nature of the term "Perfect Being" once it is completely understood forces the mind to assent to the reality. If there is a hill there must be a valley; if there is an equilateral triangle the angles must be equal. The best statement of this argument is found in the "Prosolgium Sive Fides Quaerens Intellectum": Certe id quo cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est potest cogitari esse et in re, quod majus est. Si ergo id quo majus cogitari potest est in solo intellectu, id ipsum quo majus cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest existere. Ergo procul dubio aliquod quo majus, cogitari non valet et in intellectu et in re." St. Guanillo, St. Thomas and Kant objected to this argument on the grounds that if I have an idea of a golden mountain or a perfect island neither the mountain nor the island need to exist. Kant said if I have an idea of a thousand Talers that does not put the money in my pocket. It seems obvious that this objection overlooks the most important feature of the argument. The case of a perfect being - God - is unique.

I can think of a Golden Mountain or of a perfect island having a real or possible existence, but I cannot think of an absolutely perfect being as having real or possible existence because a perfect being that had only possible existence would not be perfect. Another objection that has been brought against this argument is that it is a jump from the ideal to the real. But Anselm would answer what harm is there in the jump? If you should accuse him of attributing things in your mind to things outside your mind, he would say: "Certainly, that is what it is all about. The trouble lies in the word jump. It may be illogical; where then is there the break in the logic? To say that there is a jump from the ideal to the real order, is not a refutation."

When we come to Spinoza we find him wording the argument in a much more abstruse manner but in a way that he himself thought was better. Spinoza, like Anselm, places the divine order first, both in the order of knowledge and in the order of nature. Therefore he held that all philosophy should begin with the nature of God. But he is faced with the problem how to arrive at the divine nature as the first certainty. In all this Spinoza

was following mediaeval traditions. Spinoza, as was said previously in this paper, felt the necessity of putting a mathematical framework into philosophy and following the method of axioms and definitions. Like Anselm he wished to arrive at the existence of God from postulates without placing an a posteriori element in his argument. Like the scholastic he feels that the world can only be understood through and in the nature of God. Spinoza's method as he sums it up himself is: "Nothing else but reflective knowledge or the idea of an idea." (De Intellectus Emendatione, c. 7.) Concerning this dictum, Sir Frederick Pollock in his book, "Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy" page 126, says, "Now the reflective knowledge which has for its object the idea of the most perfect being is more excellent than any other. This idea, then, is the ultimate object of the mind's pursuit.... Thus the 'idea of the most perfect being' includes, if it is not equivalent to, the belief that the whole nature of things is one and uniform. Now this is the very first principle of all science.... In knowing the 'most perfect being' the mind knows itself as part of the universal order and at one with it: therein finding, as we have to learn elsewhere, the secret

of man's happiness and true freedom." It is here that Spinoza parts company with Anselm. Spinoza understands by idea first of all a conscious state of the knowing mind, in which the object is represented; without explicitly knowing this idea the mind may know the object. We can see by this blending, Spinoza has in view the identification of the human mind and its object, the universe a most perfect being, when the idea of the most perfect being is the object of a reflective act, i.e. the idea of an idea. Plainly this means when we reflect on the idea of God, we recognize that the most perfect being includes both the mind and the extended universe. It is doubtful whether this method is justifiable. In the first place an entirely new meaning is attached to the word "idea". Second, the term, idea, in its older sense as having a representative character is replaced in the argument by the newer meaning without sufficient evidence and explanation of its support. We must not be too dogmatic on this point, because after all, Spinoza was one of the greatest thinkers of all times, and his way of expressing himself on this very difficult point may be unfortunate; but it looks like an example of the fallacy of equivoca-

tion. Professor McKeon, in his book: "The Philosophy of Spinoza", attempts to give logical value to Spinoza's jump from the ideal to the real order. The whole matter is extremely difficult but he deals with it skillfully and profoundly. His words are: "Logically it can be stated in a variety of ways: any discourse marks off a realm of discourse in such wise that any consistent statement indicates a real and intelligible nature. Or stated more rigorously: a postulate may be formulated such that from it and from the definitions involved in its statement a proposition may be deduced concerning the nature of the reality in which such a postulate is possible; the truth of that proposition would follow not from assent to the postulate but from the very existence of the postulate. For thinking to be possible, it is said in effect, there must be an infinite perfect being. But to formulate such a postulate is an act of thought; it must, according to its own statement, be referred to a perfect intelligible being who is implicated in any statement. Yet knowledge of his nature will be independent of the truth or falsity of other statements; in fact, although the being of God is first indicated in these statements, once it is

known such knowledge will not depend on the truth or falsity of the statements, but on the contrary their truth or falsity will depend on the nature of God. Even the primitive postulate is no longer postulated but is made apodictic by the better attested truth of God's existence." The question of the existential status of terms in logic has received a great deal of attention among modern logicians; Bradley, Bosanquet, Joseph, Keynes and Coffey have treated it at some length. They are all very diffident about arguing from consistency in the realm of logic to objective reality. In "The Science of Logic" (I, 53) Coffey says: "It must be a realm which is not only present to, but also independent of, the individual thinker's actual thought, and to which an appeal can be made to verify his judgments about things therein."

It would seem that the first requisite of a reality in which any postulate is possible is that it be independent of the thinker's actual thought. Even as the "idea of an idea" must be checked by an a posteriori relation. Whether this is absolutely true or not the present writer feels that he is not in a position to pass judgment.

However the fact stands that every judgment has predicate which refers us to some objective sphere which is a portion at least of all conceivable reality. In this sense every judgment implies the existence or reality of its ultimate subject. Whether it is possible to find a subject or predicate which has existence beyond its possibility or conceivability, the present writer is unable to say. And even though a postulate may be imaginary through and through, it must refer to some sphere of reality; The realm of imagination may be called merely possibility; but the merely possible must have some existence. It may be that to proceed from a postulate which indicates the nature of the reality in which such a postulate is possible is merely to ask the mind to make or construct that which will fit the requisites of a preconceived definition; in the case of the "Ontological Proof of the Existence of God" the idea of a perfect being would remain purely mental or ideal, and so in the realm of logic which made possible the existence of the postulate. What Anselm or Spinoza would say to this modern objection it is impossible to tell and the present writer feels sure that he has nothing new to add.

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