

Course 6.8. Soloviev: Cosmology

Location:

6. Courses from 1990 to 1993

6.1. Elements of Philosophy of Thought and Methodology, 1990-1991, (EDM1-EDM71, 97p.)

6.2. Elements of harmology 1990-1991, (EH72-EH201, 157p.)

6.3. Elements of Logic, 1990-1991 (EL202-EL321, 351p.)

6.4. Elements of Methodology, 1990-1991 (EM322-EM363, 334p.)

6.5. Elements of Platonism, 1991-1992 (EP1-EP117, 147p.)

6.6. Elements of Platonic Psychology, 91-92, (EP1-EPS114, 150 p.)

6.7. Elements of Rhetoric, 1991-1992 (ER1-ER300, 356p.)

6.8. Soloviev Cosmology, 1991-1992 (SK1-SK65, 78p.)

6.9. Apocalyptic Theology, 1992-1993 (AT1-AT71, 79p.)

6.10. The Healing of a Man Born Blind, 1992-1993 (GB1-GB85, 104p.)

6.11. Elements of thinking, 1992-1993 (logic) (ED1-ED79, 91p.)

6.12. Elements of Rhetoric, 1992-1993 (R1-R61, 70p.)

6.13. Elements of Philosophy of Culture, 1992-1993 (CF1-CF84, 92p.)

Note: *This course has been spaced larger than the text of the original course. References in the older version of this text therefore do not correspond to the current 'Word' pagination. For this reason, the original pagination is displayed each time with the letters 'SOL'. They stand for 'Soloviev' and are derived from the old page number.*

Introduction: *Vladimir Sergeevich Soloviev (1853/1900) was a Russian philosopher, writer, poet, and mystic. Soloviev exerted a profound influence on Russian philosophy. The second year of Philosophy at HIVO is primarily the history of philosophical ideas. In this, the ancient Greek thinker Plato, the greatest philosopher of the West, occupies a prominent place (see courses 6.5 and 6.6). This also justifies the choice of Vladimir Soloviev. This thinker can safely be regarded as a “Platonist in the full 19th century.” He updated Christian Platonism, a Platonism that has always been predominant in the Near East. But what lends even more weight to this choice is the fact that, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the traditional Russian man once again came to the forefront.*

Course 6.8. Soloviev: Cosmology Philosophy Second Year

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Foreword

The second year of philosophy is primarily the history of philosophical ideas. -- We have chosen Platon and Platonism because Platon's ideas have influenced both the East (read: the Near East) and the West to a very high degree, and continue to do so invariably. Did Whitehead not say that all of Western philosophy is “a series of footnotes to Platon”?

This also justifies the choice of Vladimir Soloviev (1853/1900). This thinker can safely be considered a “Platonist in the height of the 19th century”. But what lends even more weight to our choice is the fact that, after the collapse of the communist era, the traditional Russian man is once again coming to the forefront.

Well, Soloviev is the one who has attempted to make that traditional Russian man survive through the 'Apocalypse' (understand: end-time history) of the Postmodern social environment and thought.

We call it 'post'-modern. Why? Because Soloviev lived through the crisis of Modern, Western thought and life like no other and literally 'survived' this crisis—thanks to his re-establishment of Christian Platonism, which has always been predominant in the Near East.

1. Episodes from Soloviev's life. (01/07)

One only understands what he says about cosmology (the description of the universe) if one knows, in the background of it, his life as a Russian 'intellectual' (this term is not to be understood in a Western sense).

1.-- The crisis of faith.

Library st.: Fr. Muckermann, SJ, Wladimir Solowjew (*Zur Begegnung zwischen Ruszland und dem Abendland*), Olten (CH), 1945.

On Oc, 15/16, the author recounts the following. -- In the house of Sergius Mikhailovich Soloviev, the well-known historian, in Moscow, the atmosphere is one of constant anxiety. The second son, Vladimir (born 16.01.1853), barely fourteen, breaks with family traditions.

He has emphatically and with great passion removed everything that reminds him of church and religion, even from his study. He no longer participates in the pious customs, as they were customary in his parents' home.

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But for entire nights he sits engrossed in the works of German materialists such as *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804/1872; known for his demythologizing * *Das Wesen des Christentums* *) or of French freethinkers such as *Ernest Renan* (1823/1842; known for his **Vie de Jésus** (1863), a completely Rationalist work).

Such writers brought the Russian youth of the time into "inspired confusion".

But in the course of his crisis of faith, Vladimir still retained a basic respect for his parents. Later, he himself would reveal how painful his youthful—immature—attitude came across. -- One learns this already from these words: "My father loved Orthodoxy (note: the Russian Eastern Church as well as science and the Russian fatherland) with all his soul."

What to do? Sergius Mikhailovich Soloviev realized the exceptional giftedness of his son, who—in this respect like G.W. Leibniz (1646/1716; Cartesian Rationalist)—was already fully engaged with the most difficult questions of philosophy, almost still a 'child'.

It was no secret to Sergius that his son's behavior differed fundamentally from that of his classmates at the gymnasium: they were less interested in the

intellectual side of the new philosophy and more in the practical libertinism that went with it.

His son was, morally speaking, a truly 'pure' man, a young seeker of God who was first and foremost seeking truth—not the excesses of total freedom.

The result was: Father Soloviev showed trust and let things take their course. He did, however, occasionally speak of a grandfather who was an Orthodox priest—he told him, an excellent connoisseur of Russian history, about the religious nature of his people. But that paternal interference went no further than that. It did not become an “exercise of coercion.” One thing was, however, impressed upon him: that weighty questions of life were at stake here.

Incidentally: Vladimir understood that. Over time, his inner self was already beginning to experience a great emptiness.

2.-- Survival.

Oc,18f . -- People began to become more confident: they saw that the rapidly maturing son could not endure a Feuerbach nor Positivism (*A. Comte* (1798/1857; *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830/1842)), which was gradually coming into fashion, -- a school of thought which, at that stage of its development, stood hostile to any philosophizing that went beyond mere “positive facts”.

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It was established that Vladimir ended up with B. de Spinoza (1632/1677; Jewish pantheistic Rationalist): the latter reintroduced him to the world of the spirit and the religious, as well as the mysticism of “the Absolute”, which transcended the domain of the passions as far as possible.

But Spinoza instilled in him ideals that Spinoza himself could no longer handle. -- He was nineteen at the time: for him, the crisis of his early youth was behind him. From a total nihilism (**note:** the questioning of higher values, God included) he had returned to the great traditions of his people. (...).

Also: the study of Mathematics and the natural sciences, which he had begun with such a result, was abandoned in favor of a philosophy that concerned itself with the great questions of life.

3.-- *The crisis of Western philosophy*

Oc, 21f.. -- It is September 24, 1874, in St. Petersburg. When Soloviev appeared in public for the first time that day before the official commission—in the presence of many hundreds of academically trained men—the astonishment and enthusiasm were widespread, -- not only because of the degree of erudition of a doctoral candidate who was only twenty-one, but above all because of the quiet certainty, the maturity, -- indeed, the 'magic' that emanated from him. The young thinker spoke of “the crisis of Western philosophy”.

1.1. He discussed the long road that began with subjectivism (**note:** the philosophy that places the “thinking self” (= the subject) at the center) and idealism (**note:** not the Platonic theory of ideas, but the Western way of thinking that places concepts at the center),-- specifically: from R. Descartes (1596/1650; founder of subject-idealist philosophy) to G.Fr. W. Hegel (1770/1831; German Absolute Idealist).

1.2. He discussed the development of empiricism (**note:** Rationalist school of thought that centers on experience and experiment)—from *Francis Bacon or Verulam* (1561/1626; known for his **Novum organum scientiarum** (1620) to John Stuart Mill (1806/1873; Empirical Rationalist).

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Note: With this, Soloviev brilliantly outlines the two main tendencies of Modern Enlightened Rationalism.

2. He made clear how both currents—compelled by their presuppositions—led to Positivism—to the undermining of what was traditionally (certainly in Russia) called 'community life'—to revolution and pessimism.

Everyone realized that in the person of this young thinker, Russia could welcome its first philosopher of high caliber.

4.-- *The resistance of occidentalists and Slavophiles.*-- oc, 23/26.--

Soloviev would soon discover (...) that the purity of the idea, once it enters the waters of interests, breaks through only with great difficulty (...).

Philosophy and Christianity were the ideals of his young, enthusiastic soul. But they had fallen into complete disrepute: the vast majority of the Russian intelligentsia (*note* : the intellectual and artistic vanguard)—they were, after all, his audience—was entirely under the spell of Positivism or Skepticism (*note* : philosophy that rejects anything that goes beyond the immediately given 'phenomena').

1. For years, Soloviev will have to fight to maintain that life demands more from us than the continuous accumulation and classification of scientific data—that, in other words, there is a fundamental question imposing itself on everyone, namely the question of the ultimate meaning of life, the main problem of philosophy.

2. Time and again he will have to emphasize: Christianity as it prevailed in Russia in his time is corrupted, a caricature, narrow-minded. It was not Christianity as it ought to be.

Note: - Incidentally, note how S. Kierkegaard (1813/1855; father of Existentialism) arrived at analogous conclusions in Denmark, within Lutheran circles.

a. The occidentals (...) could not stomach the fact that Soloviev criticized what was absolutely certain for these 'worshippers' of the West (*note*: hence their name).

b. The Slavophiles (*note*: the name says it all: those who advocated Slavophilicness as a cultural ideal) (...), or at least the extremists among them, regarded any insight that had not originated on Russian soil as suspect.

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'Universalism' (*note*: “in Christ all peoples and cultures are one” was the ideal of both F. Dostoevsky (1821/1881; novelist) and Soloviev) was, in the eyes of the extremist Slavophiles, “the betrayal of one’s own nation” (...).

5.-- The brutal elimination.

In 1875 – Soloviev is twenty-two – he gives his first lessons on “the defense of metaphysics”.

But the young lecturer would not live to see the good fortune of crowning his career as a professor. In 1881—the year his good friend Dostoevsky died—his fanatical opponents succeeded in permanently eliminating the twenty-

eight-year-old professor, whose influence among the youth and even throughout Russia was rising astonishingly rapidly.

Tsar Alexander II is assassinated. At that critical moment, Soloviev dared to ask the new Tsar to be a true Christian role model for his people and... instead of executing the Tsar's murderers, to devise a punishment that prepared the way for their moral improvement and their complete conversion. Such a thing was never forgiven for Soloviev: he was given a lifelong speaking ban.

6.-- *The magic of Soloviev's aura.*

Prof. Szylkarski, who is an expert on Soloviev, says the following.

A magic emanated from the person of the prematurely deceased thinker. - His whole life seemed one great celebration. At every moment of his life, he was open to the boundless possibilities of this—to him—'wonderful' world, yet from God's perspective.

Everyday life, wherever Soloviev appeared, unfolded as follows. Dangerous dogs came to lie at his feet. Pigeons came—wherever he stayed—to flutter at the window.

His friends quarreled to take him in. For, with him, a kind of "light and warmth" came over all the inhabitants of the household. Children began learning their lessons with joy. Servants forgot that the fate destined for him was unworthy. Married couples granted each other forgiveness—were happy with their children.

Beggars clung to every house where he was a guest: he always gave them what he had with him: purse, handkerchief, scarf, shoes (...).-- His deep affection went particularly to all the failures. He was almost humble in their presence, for he possessed the ability to empathize with their plight.

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He was tireless when it came to sparing destitute people and bad people the shamefulness of their way of being. Something in which he was unusually inventive. - So far Szylkarski. Cfr oc, 203.

7.-- *Soloviev, the mystic.*

It is clear to anyone who is somewhat familiar with Soloviev's philosophy: he is underpinned by a mystical experience. Namely, of the unity (= coherence) of the universe, especially of all that lives.

Muckermann , oc, 175/183 “Divine Wisdom”, (*Hagia Sophia*) dwells on that aspect of his being. - Oc, 177, he gives an example of this. It concerns an experience in which Soloviev has the impression that divine wisdom—sophiology (the doctrine of wisdom) thoroughly dominates him—revealed itself to him.

For him, that “divine Wisdom” is first and foremost the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, whom St. John, in his Gospel, calls 'logos', world- or universe-wisdom. The 'vision' he experienced was a turning point in his life.

He attempted to render it in a text entitled “ *Three Encounters* ”. In one of them, Soloviev is on his way in the vicinity of Cairo (Egypt). He is in the desert and, at a certain moment, becomes weary and restless at the same time. At that moment, he hears a voice: “Friend, slumber in!” In the dream, a pleasant scent hangs around heaven and earth. Suddenly you revealed yourself to me in the purple of the sky, with eyes sparkling like azure, -- like the virginal ray of light of the great day of creation. -- what is, what was, what will be in the womb of the future: a single, motionless gaze encompassed everything. -- Beneath me, flowers and oceans, the distant forest and the snow-white peaks of the mountains become one. I saw everything and everything one: a single form, interwoven with feminine beauty-radiance. Infinity stretched on endlessly.

For me, within me: only You! So it was for one moment. -- My face faded. The sun rose at the horizon. The desert was silence. But my soul prayed in the wondrous play of eternal bells.

O shining star! You do not deceive me! I have seen you fully in the vast desert. -- These flowers in my soul never wither, no matter how far the waves of life cast me. Although trapped in this world of illusion, I have nevertheless experienced the good fortune (beneath the rough shell of matter) to see the eternal purple and the fiery radiance of the deity (...).”.

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Note: -- Soloviev was not without the influence of a certain vague mysticism: what is, was, and will be, on the one hand, and 'deity' (rather

vague, at least in the description just presented), on the other, flow together somewhere ... into what is called “a mystical experience”.

If one may cite at least one relevant work here: *Bruno Borchert, *Mystiek (Geschiedenis en uitdaging *)*, Haarlem, Gottmer, 1989, 9*, states: “Knowing from experience that everything is connected in one way or another, -- that everything is one in origin” is 'mysticism'. Now reread Soloviev's poem, and you will see that Borchert's definition (or rather approximate characterization) is present in it.

Which proves that 'mysticism' belongs much more to the order of (psychological) experience than to (ontological) experience of reality.

Note: -- Of course, Soloviev's authentic Christianity is much more and different than that 'mysticism'. For further explanation, see e.g. *J. Sutton, The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev (Towards a Reassessment)*, Library of Philosophy and Religion, 1988;

Tomas Spidlik, Les grands mystiques Russes, Paris, Nouvelle Cité, 1979 (a very rich book that perfectly situates Soloviev within the centuries-long tradition of magic and mysticism).

Julius Tyciak, Morgenländische Mystik (Charakter und Wege), Düsseldorf, Patmos, 1944 (Om 108/125 (*Liturgischer Geist und Russe Religionsphilosophie*) (an extremely fascinating book that immediately feels Russian and 'Oriental')

J. Tyciak, Die Liturgie als Quelle Ostlicher Frömmigkeit, Freiburg i.Br., 1937 (a work that brilliantly captures the spirit of the Eastern liturgies, particularly the Russian ones: figures such as Dostoevsky, or certainly even more so Soloviev, draw their inspiration from the liturgies of the Greco-Eastern churches).

2. Soloviev's Christian 'realism' (07/16).

We now know the man a little better. Now, his philosophical-theological thrust. We do say “philosophical-theological”. Why? Because, unlike us Western Christians, the domain of philosophy and that of Christian theology have never been separated (although distinguished). It is still as in the days of the Greco-Eastern Church Fathers (33/800): even the specialized sciences and philosophy are interpreted from the perspective of Biblical-Christian faith, with its epistemological and conceptual contents.

Not that specialized sciences and philosophy lead no independent existence whatsoever. Far from it! That will soon become clear. But the divided existence, such as the radical autonomy within our Western Enlightened Rationalism has brought about, even among 'believers', is unknown to Eastern theologians and philosophers.

Before we discuss Soloviev's ideas in more detail, we will delve a little deeper into the concept of "Christian realism".

We are not going to lose ourselves in mere theoretical 'reflections'! No, we are going to take a singular text from the Gospels and, from there, determine Soloviev's correct position more precisely.

1.-- *The story about the 'haimo.roöusa'.*

We first provide the three evangelical texts in translation.

(1) *Mark 5: 25/34* .

A woman suffered from a hemorrhage—for twelve years. She had already endured much because of many doctors. She had spent all her possessions on them—without result. On the contrary: her condition worsened.

She learns through stories what concerned Jesus. -- She approaches Jesus with the crowd and touches his garment from behind. For she said to herself: "Even if I only touch his garment for a moment, I will be saved."

Immediately the bleeding stopped: she perceived in her body that she was healed of her affliction.-- At that very moment Jesus knew within himself that a power ('dunamis') had flowed out of him. Whereupon He turns around in the midst of the crowd and says: "Who touched my garment?" His disciples then say: "You see the crowd pressing in around you and you ask: 'Who touched me?'"

Jesus looks around to see the woman who did it. The woman is frightened; she trembles—realizing what had happened to her. She comes forward, throws herself before Jesus, and tells the whole truth ("pasan tèn alètheian").

To which Jesus replied: "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

(2) Matthew 9:20/22 .

Look, a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. For she said to herself: “If I only touch his cloak, I will be saved.” Whereupon Jesus turned around and saw her. He said: “Do not be afraid, daughter. Your faith has saved you.” The woman was indeed saved “apo tès horas ekeinès”, from that moment.

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(3) Luke 8:43/48.

A woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years, and who could not be healed by anyone, approached Jesus from behind and touched the hem of his garment. Instantly, the flow of blood stopped.

Whereupon Jesus asked: “Who is the one who touched me?” All denied it. Peter said: “Master, it is the crowd pressing in and pressing upon you.”

Jesus: “Someone has indeed touched me. For I felt that a power (dunamis') flowed out of me.”

Seeing that it had been discovered, the woman came trembling closer, threw herself upon Jesus, and told in the presence of the whole crowd why she had touched him and how she had been healed instantly.” -- Jesus said: “My daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

2.-- Further illumination of the story.

A vast amount has been written, since the beginning of the Church, about the correct interpretation. -- Let us confine ourselves to one work: *Xav.Léon-Dufour, ed., Les miracles de Jésus selon le Nouveau Testament* , Paris, Seuil, 1977.

2.1.-- The three synopticians.

Oc, 318/320.

a. Markus.

Faith is central to him. It revolves around the 'certainty' of the haimorrousa, hemoroïssa, that Jesus could save her—notwithstanding a severe obstacle.

1. As a haimoroöusa, within the context of the culture of the time, she was easily 'unclean': the blood that is shed possibly contains some kind of ominous life force ('dunamis') and was as such to be 'avoided' (taboo). Moreover: in that state, she herself ought not to approach or touch anyone (taboo).

Note: -- What the work does not mention is that even today, all people who are somewhat sensitive—let's say in Dutch: “clairvoyant”—still “feel” this double “avoidance” (= taboo)—without necessarily having to be written off as “abnormal”; far from it.

ii. Yet she approaches Jesus and does not touch his body, but only the hem of his garment (so as not to let him needlessly share in her 'impurity').

b. *Matthew.*

The story leaves quite a lot out. The 'pleading' faith receives healing as a gift from the life force of the supremely powerful Jesus, who even, in other cases, heals from a distance, without approach or touch. Such is He who is 'powerful'.

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c . *Luke.*

Lukas, as a doctor, omits the painful impression that the medicine of the time exposed in its radical powerlessness.

What the authors fail to mention is that even today, countless people voice the exact same complaint regarding the same powerlessness of our 'rational' (not to say 'Rationalist') medicine: they go from one doctor to another, specialists included, without result. Until, to their great surprise, some are eventually cured by... a 'healer'.

In Lukas, the emphasis lies on the clandestine stealing of her healing, as well as on the admiration and wonder at the story told in public by the healed person herself.

2.2.-- *Healing or exorcism?*

Oc, 64. -- **a.** The aspect “medical diagnosis and/or treatment” is apparently not unknown.

-- **b.** Yet a question arises here: *Luke 4:39*, for example, says that Jesus 'threatens' Peter's mother-in-law's fever, -- just as he 'threatens' the rising

storm (*Mark 1:43*). This seems to indicate that behind the phenomenon of 'fever' and "rising storm" lies the same 'power' that can yield to threat.

Note-- Let us read another book on the subject: *La Bible de Jérusalem* , Paris, Cerf, 1978, 1426, nc

a.1. Awaiting the Day of Judgment, the demons enjoy a degree of freedom in carrying out their evils on earth (*Acts 9:5*). They do so, and preferably in the form of possessing people (*Matthew 12:43/45*).

a.2. This possession is often accompanied by sickness. For sickness is—as a result of “sin” (*Matt. 9:2*)—another sign of the grip Satan exercises (*Luke 13:16*).

Consequence. -- The incantations of the gospel sometimes take place in the pure form (*Matt. 8:28/34; 15:4/28; Mark 1:23/28; Luke 8:2*), but they often occur in the form of healings (*Matt. 9:32/34; 12:22/24; 17:14/18; Luke 13:10; 13:17*).

b.1. By virtue of his control over the demons, Jesus dismantles “the kingdom of Satan” (*Matt. 12:28; Luke 4:6; 10:17/19; John 12:31*). At the same time, he ushers in “the kingdom of God,” the Messianic kingdom. The “Holy Spirit” is the defining promise of this (*Isaiah 11:2; Joel 3:1/2*).

b.2 . Even if people fail to grasp this (*Matt. 12:24/32*), the demons know it all the better (*Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; 3:11; Luke 4:41; Acts 16:17; 19:15*). –

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c. Jesus passes on the power to soothe to his disciples, -- along with the ability to miraculously heal that goes with it (*Matt. 4:24; 8:3; 8:16; Luke 13:32*).

Note: Even today, it can regularly be observed that truly possessed people have far more profound insights than 'ordinary' people (also, and indeed especially, in the religious sphere).

2.3.-- Different method, same result.

Oc, 18, n. 25. -- *Marie Cardinal, Les mots pour le dire* , Paris, Grasset, 1975, 41/44, says: she consults a psychoanalyst; as soon as she hears his

first words, her bleeding suddenly stops (she had suffered from it for “long years”).

To which the book responds: “It is nevertheless clear that for both her and us this is no 'miracle'”.

Note: This—along with other 'proofs' of such healing processes (also performed by, for example, ordinary healers when it also involved bleeding)—demonstrates that Jesus' method is not the only one that achieves 'results'. The fact that the authors of the book do not call this a 'miracle' is due to their narrow definition of 'miracle': they adhere strictly to Biblical 'miraculous' interventions performed by Jesus. The rest, however miraculous, are not 'real' miracles.

2.4.-- Automatic or not?

Oc, 235s... -- The question arises: “Did the healing of the haimoroöusa occur automatically?”

One of the means of answering that question with a negation is the following: Jesus knew “in a mysterious way” (the author admits) the silent, pleading faith of the woman who was standing behind him.

If that is correct, then it follows that Jesus asks the question of who touched him (while pretending not to know) “pro forma” (= for appearances' sake). Which has not been proven anywhere. On the contrary: the impression is clear that Jesus, as a human being, did not actually know who had touched him.

This is also evident from the fact that he 'perceives' the event in his body, -- not directly.

Steller adds that Jesus was neither a “popular enchanter” nor a “magician (sorcerer).”

Note: According to the evangelists, he certainly was not that. However, this does not prevent his method—or infrastructure (better)—from being exactly the same as that of the (despised) folk healers or sorcerers, but purified and elevated to a higher—supernatural—level (what is called 'catharsis' in Ancient Greek).

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Once the necessary and sufficient conditions have been brought about by Jesus the Messiah—once the person or persons to be graced, for example, or their realm (Jesus calms the storm, for instance), exhibit the necessary and sufficient conditions, his 'dunamis,' his divine life force, comes through and salvation follows 'automatically': what can be objected to? What is ungodly about the fact that Jesus controls nature and the external nature (= paranormal phenomena) to such an extent that, once he did what was necessary, the effect follows 'automatically'?

3.-- *Practical fideism.*

Oc, 258s .. -- The evangelists give faith a 'considerable' place. Indeed, faith is the necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the success of the salvation process. It is up to the individual, his family, his neighbors, his friends, etc., that they, thanks to their faith in Jesus' miraculous power, 'provoke' on his part his free act of salvation. It is the human share in his divine salvation.

Note: Anyone with even a slight knowledge of the healing process of the healers will notice the emphasis that they too—with the occasional arrogant 'magician(ss)'—place on faith in what they are doing or have done.

Moreover: what honest doctor, within the framework of established 'rational' medicine, would dare deny that the 'contribution' of faith to his practice is sometimes so great that it is the decisive factor? Let us only think of the placebo effect. Not to mention the suggestive power of the fame of a new drug (after five years, a new drug automatically becomes less effective) or that of a 'famous' doctor who attracts crowds.

Conclusion: on the rational, the paranormal, and ... the supernatural level, faith is one of the necessary conditions in very many cases. -- Jesus is therefore no exception: he confirms the rule.

We speak of 'fideism'.

By this we mean, for example, the fact that both academic scholars and preachers, etc., emphasize faith but often do not mention the 'dunamis'—the active and activating life force—at all. This, even though the texts themselves explicitly mention this very important factor.

'Fides' (Greek: 'pistis'), faith, is found in 'fideism': overemphasis, to the point of exclusivity, on the role of faith.

Note: Some contemporary Christians go so far as to create a pair of opposites: “faith/religion”, whereby 'religion' encompasses just about everything 'pagan' and 'magical-mystical'. In this context, the term 'power (belief in power)' – dynamism understood as a belief in power or life force – plays a role.

SOL13

Note -- It is quite clear, if one places oneself in the mentality of the days of Jesus, that the woman believes (the 'fideism' component) *and* in his 'dunamis' (the 'dynamism' component) *and* in his exceptional, perhaps divine or at least Messianic personality (the Messianic faith, or belief in God, component). One should not, in the name of (exaggerated) 'faith', wish to see only one factor where there are at least three.

4.-- Synergy.

This term comes from the Greek 'sun.ergeia', literally: “the coming together of more than one force”.

Oc, 22s. -- “There is 'synergy' of man and God” (Oc,23). -- The more God acts, the more intensely a creature—in this case: the incarnate Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus as man and thus as creature—can act, and can even establish something new.

Note-- This is reminiscent of the Pauline expression “kainè ktisis” (Lat.: nova creatura). Specifically: Jesus

- a.** starts from what is - e.g. a woman suffering from a hemorrhage -;
- b.** he purifies from and
- c.** simultaneously elevates to a higher (here: supernatural) plane. In which something peculiar happens: what is given vanishes, as it were, into nothingness ('dies') – the element 'purification' – and rises entirely anew from God's almighty life force (dunamis) as something new (“a new creation”) from his 'nothingness' or 'death' – the element 'resurrection' or recreation –.

This, following the example of Jesus, who could only attain 'glorification' through his death. In the Greek-Eastern style: the unity of Cross Easter and Resurrection Easter.

More concretely: the woman with the blood flow has 'died' to her natural and supernatural being and, thanks to Jesus' dunamis (divine life force) – through the touch – 'resurrected', i.e., her blood flow ends (becomes 'nothing')

and her blood system, one with that of Jesus, is recreated into “a new something”.

SOL14

Note: The opposite pair “death (nothing)/life (reality)” already belongs to the Pre-Biblical religions.

a . As 'anankè', an incomprehensible necessity, 'death'—that which is doomed to die as soon as it begins to live—in all forms—diseases, accidents, dying, possessions, etc.—weighs upon all that lives from nature (and its eventual supernatural (= paranormal) influence).

This aspect of fate is beautifully outlined in A. Rivier, *Etudes de littérature grecque*, Genève, Droz, 1975 (om *Remarques sur le 'nécessaire' et la nécessité' chez Eschyle* (oc, 163/194)).

b. As a process of “death/resurrection,” the same necessity is beautifully expounded by W.B. Kristensen, *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions*, Amsterdam, 1947 (especially oc, 231/290 (*Cycle and Totality*)).

In other words: Jesus connects with what was already clear to him, namely, humanity subject to the incomprehensible necessity of death and life that becomes death again. He intervenes, provided the necessary and sufficient conditions (for faith) are fulfilled, from the supernatural (which infinitely surpasses nature with its supernatural forces).

As a result, magic and mysticism, which are merely the supernatural aspect of nature subjected to necessity, degenerate into outdated myths.

Even supernatural faith—the truly Biblical-Christian 'faith', in its distinguishability from natural and supernatural faith—is a new creation, a pure gift from God.

Conclusion: that is the correct interpretation of the 'catharsis' (cleansing or even 'liberation') that Christianity introduces into the person and work of Jesus.

5.-- Trinitarian life.

Oc, 366. -- According to a metaphor of the Greek Church Fathers (33/800), the 'dunamis', the divine and God-given life force or 'power', is comparable to

the primordial source, of which the Father is “the mysterious springing”, -- the Son the “collecting vessel” and the Holy Spirit “the outflow that flows into creation”. Life, a privilege exclusively of the Trinity, thus transforms both the cosmos and humanity within it. Into “something new”.

The miracles of Jesus (and his disciples) are the “striking signs” of this.

SOL15

Conclusion. -- Realism .

Where, then, is 'realism': the belief in reality? Let us stick with Xav. Léon – Dufour's book.

According to the evangelists, Jesus performed deeds that, in the eyes of his contemporaries, were 'extraordinary' ('extraordinaires'): healings, incantations, amazing effects.” (Oc,11).

Viewed through the eyes of a modern historian (scientific historian) – oc, 109/144 (*Le historien en quête de l' événement*) – the question is: “What value do the evangelical writings have?” The answer is: in the eyes of the eyewitnesses, Jesus was “a miracle worker”. This is the overall value judgment.

Regarding individual 'pericopes' (pieces of evangelical text), the term 'probably' seems the most tenable. Indeed: it is possible that the narrators confuse some facts, for example, or present them one-sidedly. Which is then what has arrived in the evangelical texts.

Conclusion: realism has a minimal basis.

The textual methods.

The work distinguishes three groups.

a.1.-- The dogmatic method.

The method of the Church Fathers, -- especially St. Augustine of Tagaste (354/430),-- who already established in his time that the signs - miracles - had disappeared from the Church.

In summary: the creative power of God encompasses an ordinary 'miraculous power'—such as the fact that the sun, insofar as it was created

by God, rises and sets daily—and an extraordinary miraculous power—that of the evangelical signs.

Note: The focus is on the facts, not the text.

a.2 .-- *The 'critical' method.*

Here too: it is not the text but the facts that interest the 'critic'. The Enlightened Rationalist, in the form of natural sciences and humanities, establishes that the 'miraculous' facts, for example, run counter to the laws presupposed by the natural sciences. Thus regarding B. de Spinoza (Sol. Kosm. 03). -- To which X. Léon-Dufour responds: God does not intervene in the laws of nature from the outside, but rather from within.

The 'literary' (understand: literatological) method.

Here, the text as text is central. That is to say: the terms in which one speaks and writes—the stories with their characteristics, in which miracles are written about—interest the textual scholar. In this way, he pays attention to the commonplaces from the Old Testament already at work.

SOL16

c. *The hermeneutic method.*

Here again, the text seemingly takes center stage. In fact, life takes center stage: the reader of the miracle stories reads from the perspective of life. For example: “What can I do with those stories in my life situation, here and now?” More concretely:

a. The literary scholar states that a 'dunamis' (life force), at work in 'erga' (works, the deeds of Christ, for his miracles), in fact comprises 'semeia', signs (messenger entities), for the fact that the Father, through the Son, Jesus, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, establishes “the Kingdom of God”.

b. The hermeneutician asks the question: “Does that message still apply today, to me, here and now?” Or again: today there is a growing interest in New Age (the New Era), in which magics and mysticisms of all kinds are once again being addressed—even in 'educated' circles.

If the comparison with the Roman-Hellenistic 'miracles' (let us think of Apollonius of Tuana (late first century AD; Greek Neo-Pythagorean miracle worker, in whom late antique paganism saw the counterpart of Christ)) or with

the Jewish 'exorcists' tells us that the Gentiles and the Jews also knew their miracles, why then not the New Agers (at least the 'gifted' ones)? Can I, as a potential New Ager, make anything of the evangelical stories? Edm ..

Conclusion. -- Regarding realism concerning the miracles of the Gospels, the practical disbelief of the (purely scientifically oriented) critic is fatal to realism. And the dogmatic method is a support for it. And hermeneutics (in) makes realism a question of life.

Interpretationism.

“The event itself (i.e., of the miracle) is indispensable. But it is only that without which there is no interpretation. The event itself cannot be grasped in itself (“ne peut être étreint en lui-même”), as if it had meaning of its own.” (oc, 356).

Admittedly, the authors of the work do not pursue this statement except with reservations! But the sentence sounds implausible in itself if the facts themselves have no meaning; in that case, the totality of meaning comes from the interpreter. In what way does this 'interpretationist' proposition still differ from pure subjectivism, in which the autonomous subject posits itself as the source of all meaning?

SOL17

3. Soloviev's philosophical 'realism'. (17/23).

The realistic interpretation we just set out above applies to Scripture regarding the miracles of Christ, in the narrower and also in the broader sense (that 'broader' sense concerns, for example, the 'miraculous' transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, where he displayed his 'aura' (radiant sphere), -- an aura that made his new life force visible and tangible).

Now we turn our attention to what lies hidden in and behind 'Christian' realism, namely Platonic realism.

1. -- The pure nominalist.

For the pure nominalist, the terms of the miracle stories—'dunamis', saving life force at work in the 'erga', the (miraculous) works of Jesus, which, in turn, are considered or at least intended as 'sêmeia', signs, messages, or informative references to the fact that the Father (the primordial source), through the Son (Jesus), with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, calls the

doomed cosmos (back) to 'eternal' life—are merely 'sounds' (in Medieval Latin: 'voces') or 'names' (hence the term 'nomina', which gives 'nominalism').

What the (semantic and pragmatic) meaning might be still needs to be rigorously investigated.

If such a nominalist is, moreover, a scientifically trained individual (especially in the spirit of Enlightened Rationalism), then his judgment reads roughly as follows: “The stories concerning so-called 'miracles' contain far too many unmodern elements that cannot be verified by current specialized sciences—take, for example, that uncontrollable concept of 'dunamis' (life force)—to be taken seriously now, at the end of the 20th century.”

Perhaps such 'names' or 'sounds' might one day be translatable into purely scientific terms—such as the term 'possession', which can stand for a “psychiatric ailment”—. The only thing that is 'certain' is all that current ethnology—physics and chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, cultural studies—teaches us. The rest is 'empty'.

2.-- *The symbol-fideistic nominalist.*

'Fideism' is a one-sided emphasis on the act of faith as a meaning-giving act. 'Symbol' (= symbolic image is anything that is metaphor or metonymy); thus, for example, 'life force' stands for the 'will to live', which is understandable to every modern person, or something similar.

SOL18

In this way, we also translate all other terms, not only of the miracle stories but of all evangelical texts, into terms of our current Modern or even Postmodern “religious experiences”.

Note: reminiscent of Modernism, late 19th and early 20th centuries: the modernists, too, read the sacred texts from the perspective of the "religious or faith experience" of the time.

Applicable model. -- Let us take the term 'faith'

a. This word—pistis, fides, faith—had a well-defined meaning among the writers and contemporaries (the latter at least in large numbers), as is evident from the study concerning the miracles of Jesus, summarized above, namely that of a supernaturally arising assent to God's offer of salvation in Jesus.

b. In our usage, the same sound 'faith' reflects trust in “a higher power,” for example, or even in Yahweh (Judaism), the Trinity (Christianity), or Allah (Islam), as we secularized people can still sense.

Or let us take the figure of Jesus.

a. To the evangelists he was apparently the 'kurios' (Lat.: dominus, the lord),-- the incarnate Second Person of the Trinity.

b. The term 'kurios', lord, is something from a distant past, when there were, for example, ancient rulers. To us, Jesus is first and foremost an extremely influential and even remarkable 'man'. Whether he was or is 'God' (and immediately the Second Person of the Trinity) is not at all clear to us, even when reading the biblical texts. We therefore leave this open.

Conclusion. – Only our current “religious experience” counts. It offers the foundation of reality when reading the Bible. If you will: the Biblical terms are 'models' that provide us with information—albeit indirect—about our 'original', our experience of faith. In other words: the Gospels offer us the 'symbols' (= models) in which we see our own religion reflected, far removed in time and space.

Conclusion. -- Admittedly: this, too, is 'nominalism'. For us, too, 'believers' of the current type, the Biblical words are 'sounds' ('nomina') that have no meaning of their own, except from the perspective of our current form of religion. We autonomously assign the meaning to them ourselves.

That is 'hermeneutics' -- interpreted nominalistically. But we differ from the 'pure' nominalists in that we do not take specialized scientific experience as 'original', but a kind of 'faith'.

SOL19

3.-- The realist.

Here the books of the New Testament—as well as those of the Old Testament, for that matter—are works “that show how it actually was” (Leopold von Ranke (1795/1886; German historian)).

For the realist, “the Gospels show how it actually was.” This entails two things:

a. the cited facts – such as the miracles – are, in principle, real events and not invented 'stories' ('myths');

b. the eyewitnesses (including the evangelists) indicate the actual facts correctly, in principle.

This does not mean that problems of historicity cannot arise. -- For example, it is readily admitted that some details—take in the individual stories of a miracle—are open to critical remarks. But the essence is considered to be both real and correctly interpreted.

Moreover: the essential essence that actually happened and was correctly interpreted is, in principle, accurately represented in the texts.

Conclusion. -- This threefold 'realism' is summarized in Von Ranke's famous formula: "show how it was".

In other words: the 'names' cover **1.** Real events, **2.** correctly interpreted by contemporaries, **3.** correctly presented by the evangelists.

Especially when one treats evangelical texts by exactly the same standards as profane texts from the same period. As often happens out of some nominalist prejudice, much stricter standards are applied when it comes to sacred texts.

With the inevitable result: those texts are three times below their standard:

1. the facts are not true (or not proven or provable);
2. they have not been interpreted correctly (for example, they are in fact 'myths');
3. They are not displayed correctly.

The assessment problem.

The realist admits that he, too, is not the immediate eyewitness to the facts. But there is the following.

a. There are undoubtedly still miracles today (healings, incantations, for example).

b. They show a clear analogy with evangelical miracles (even though there is sometimes a great difference).

The reasoning goes: if such phenomena are still ascertainable today, indeed, seriously verifiable, then evangelical phenomena of an analogous nature become indirectly accessible.

Claiming that "absolutely no" real value judgment can be passed on it does not hold up.

The conclusion. -- What the evangelists tell us—in their contemporary manner, which is certainly not the style of modern or even ancient historians (let us think of Thucydides of Athens (465/395: author of **The Peloponnesian War**, a work that proceeds with exceptional precision)—is a theophany, namely the fact that God—the Triune God, at that—reveals Himself in and around the person of Jesus. Not least in His miracles.

4.-- The East Russian realist.

Let us give the floor to a fine connoisseur: “Theophany or epiphany means the gracious revelation of God as the primordial source ('Urquelle') of deification and as the beginning of a new creation in the 'doxa' (Lat.: gloria, glory) of the Lord.

The epiphanic aspect is at work throughout the entire history of salvation, but reaches its most thorough realization in the Incarnation and in the redemption of the kurios (Lord, Jesus as glorified God-man), and this up to the parousia (**note:** divine epiphany, especially at the end of times) which constitutes the completion of the theophany. (*J. Tyciak, Heilige Theophanie (Kultgedanken des Morgenlandes)* , Trier, Paulinus, 1959, 7).

Note -- For those familiar with Eastern Russian religion, and in particular Christianity, any further explanation is superfluous. Alas! In Western Europe, people are far from understanding those terms correctly. This, under the influence of two cultural revolutions that were very active only in the West:

a. Medieval Scholasticism, which, although still living on Platonic-ideative remnants, nevertheless thinks substantially Aristotelically (and re-establishes its 'rationalism');

b. the Modern Enlightenment with its Rationalism.

Both of these cultural revolutions did have an impact in Russia and the Byzantine-Eastern world, but they never substantially penetrated the soul. This remained fundamentally Ancient. And Platonizing.

The liturgical ideation. -- “When we want to know what the Eastern Church is, let us ask its liturgy.

In all its poignant symbols and images, words and actions, the Eastern Church sees a glorious theophany: God reveals Himself to man, enters into him, sanctifies him, transforms him, makes him godlike.

What takes place here on earth is a true representation of the heavenly archetype ('Urbild'; understand: embodiment).

SOL21

The liturgy on earth is an 'icon' ('eine Ikon'; the Platonizing term for 'image') of the heavenly liturgy:

- a. glorification (**note** : here in the sense of 'praise') of the Most Holy, undivided (**note**: although three 'persons', yet one nature) Trinity by man;
- b. which has become an 'image' ('Bild') of the same Trinity.

When we enter an Eastern church, for example, the feeling arises: "Here one goes to meet God; we encounter God. (...)". (*J. Casper, Weltverklärung im liturgischen Geiste der Ostkirche* , Freiburg i. Br., Herder, 1939, 1).

Note . -- Josef Casper is an outstanding expert on Eastern Byzantine culture.

Casper, oc, 5, continues: "The Eastern Church is the repository of Christian realism ('realismus'). It lives from the mysteries (**note** here: signs that make God's action present). (...) It realizes it: since the day that the Logos (**note** the Johannine word for Jesus as universal wisdom) assumed 'flesh' (**note** wretched humanity), he ennobled human nature, the world has been 'glorified'. (**note** : here in the sense of "partaking in God's glory, that life-force as power") deified. (...).

The liturgy, now, is the invariably persisting 'incarnation' (becoming human) – **note**: here in the metaphorical sense – of the Son of God. -- That is the primordial Christian realism ("der urchristliche Realismus") of the Eastern Church: transformation of the world, deification of man.

Western rationalism, in the form of a "God-world" theology, is alien to it. Herein lies the most fundamental distinction between the more ethically-legalistic (**note**: 'legalistic', as it is somewhat fond of applying the Code of Canon Law) minded West and the Christian East. The aim of the Eastern

Church—its prayer and its worship—is an encounter with God ('Gottbegegnung').

Note: The contrast here has certainly been somewhat exaggerated by Casper compared to reality. But it is also certain that—as far as the different 'soul' and 'tendency' are concerned—the church in the West is much more secular, much more worldly than the church in the East. With the consequences that follow, of course, for the entire culture.

The veneration of the Gospel book.

One of the best ways for a Westerner to grasp the difference with the Russians, regarding liturgy for example, is the experience of the Gospel book.

SOL22

In this context, what one might call “a materializing symbolism” becomes apparent: invisible data such as the glorified Christ are, as it were, sacredly identified and made visibly and tangibly present in material realities. A kind of metonymic thinking is at work here: thus, the Gospel text is, as it were, That One whose word is written within it.

We give the floor to Casper, oc, 163f..

At a certain moment of the “divine liturgy” (what we call the celebration of Mass), the royal door of the ikonostasis (the wall inside the church containing icons) opens. For He who has promised the faithful heavenly glory, Christ as 'kurios', risen Lord, wishes to make His entrance. (...).

The priest and the deacon take “the holy Gospel book” and carry it in deep reverence as if they were carrying the kurios, Christ himself, in their hands. (...) Christ, the Lord, immediately 'appeared' in a mysterious manner among his people (...). At a certain moment, the priest kisses “the holy Gospel book”: this kiss is for Him, the Lord. (...) The deacon lifts the Gospel book and cries out: “Wisdom! Stand up straight.” (...).

With this call, the Eastern Church thinks of Christ, the uncreated Sophia, wisdom.

a. In lowliness that holy Wisdom, the primordial-eternal Logos of the Father, came into this world.

b. In glory she ascended, into heavenly heights, -- to the throne of grace and power. -- Thus the deacon (...) enters with the Gospel book (...).

Note-- Two characteristics emerge:

1. a highly developed insensitivity to and sense of the sacred,
2. a need to 'materialize' that 'sacred' into tangible things such as the Gospel book.

This materialization of the sacred is typical of Russian-Eastern realism: that 'realism' is 'theoria', 'seeing' straight through the material world, and at the same time making the invisible, which reveals itself thanks to that theoria, visible and tangible in material forms.

Thus the sacred is twice 'real':

1. first of all in itself, thanks to 'theoria', insight (which is Platonic), and
2. subsequently (or rather: simultaneously) personified in tangible and visible things, thanks to a kind of identification of the invisible and the visible.

Note: Just as Platonic philosophy is inconceivable without 'sophiology' (doctrine of wisdom), so too is this liturgy.

SOL23

The dramaturgical aspect.

The theophany, or self-revelation, of the Trinity in the drama of salvation of Jesus is made visibly present among the 'forms' specific to the liturgy.

It is not only, for example, the Gospel book that contains such a representation. Let us consider the processional "joyful entry" (= Epiphany) of Jesus. -- J. Tyciak, **Sanctuary Theophany**, 42, clarifies this aspect.

1. Altar servers at the front—priest and deacon, with the "holy gifts" in their hands: this is how the 'procession' proceeds through the church.

2. Now look at how the Eastern Christian views this. "The procession comes across as a great dramatic scene from the Apocalypse (**note:** the Book of Revelation)".

We saw that Platon's dialogues are, without exception, dramas in which the emergence of ideas in the course of a logical dialogue is literally 'acted out'.

Something analogous is the Eastern Christian liturgy. "Not merely in the sense of a pure 'play' and 'representation' (of the apocalyptic event), as if

somewhere above, in the inaccessible world, the heavenly liturgy (...) was taking place, while we, down here, are performing an imitation!

“Rather, the religious realism of the mystery world lives here,” according to Tyciak. The mystery of worship (the 'cult mystery') is not merely a symbol (in the nominalist sense): it is the salvific act of Jesus himself visibly and tangibly ('materially') made present. Just as the Eastern icon, for example, which depicts the Transfiguration of Jesus in the form of a 'mustèrion', a material representation of a sacred event, makes the depicted—here the fact that Jesus shows his true radiance or 'aura' to his three doubting disciples before his Passion—visibly and tangibly present. Just as the proclaimed word is a 'mystery': it is Jesus' proclamation visibly and tangibly made present in the person and language of the proclaimer.

Conclusion. -- “Just as the seer—the apostle John—sees realities of the Apocalypse (and not merely symbols), so too is the drama of worship symbolic (through material representation) and 'real' (as a present proposition of what becomes symbolic) at the same time.” Thus, once again, Tyciak.

Mystery theory. -- Odo Casel et al. have understood this aspect well here in the West: 'mystery' is presenting through material things.

SOL24

4. Soloviev's earthboundness. (24/32).

'Chthonic' (from Ancient Greek 'chthon', earth) or 'telluric' (from Latin 'tellus', earth) religion. That is what it is called.

'Cosmic' religion, too. In other words: the cosmos is intensively involved in the sacred sphere (i.e., the sphere of all that is 'consecrated' or 'holy'). In this context, the sacred, or the divine, is visibly and tangibly present or is made present. In other words: that realism, time and again.

To begin with, the sidereal world (the world insofar as it consists of celestial bodies). -- “Even nature is, among the Russian writers, included symbolically and as glorified (**note:** partaking in the glory of Christ's resurrection).

“The wisdom of the steppe, the impressive sky arching over the earth, the silence of the breathing night, the diamond twinkle of the great lights in the firmament.” (*J. Tyciak, Morgenländische Mystik* , 41).

Note: -- Religious studies establish this sidereal aspect of religion everywhere: *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1953, 47/116 (*Le ciel: dieux ouraniens, rites et symboles célestes*); 117/141 (*Le soleil et les cultes solaires*) 142/167 (*La lune et la mystique lunaire*), -- all these chapters by this eminent religious scholar bear witness to it.

The Earth Mother.

Bibl. st.: CJ Bleeker, *The Mother Goddess in Antiquity*, The Hague, 1960 (Fri. oc, 21/35 (Mother Earth));

G. De Schrijver, *Pachamama (Mother Earth and the struggle for democratic rights in Peru)*, in: *Streven* 54 (1986): 3 (Dec.), 223/236 (on the veneration of Mother Earth in Peru and the impact on politics);

M. Stone, *Once God Was Embodied as a Woman*, Katwijk, Servire, 1979.

T. Spidlik, *Les grands mystiques russes*, 339, says: “In the zagovory, rhythmic magical formulas, Christ is sometimes invoked simultaneously with ‘the damp earth’”.

Note: -- Wherever Biblical Christianity has taken root among ordinary people—whether colonially or freely—the pagan infrastructure has always continued to live on in one way or another.

Spidlik, oc, 369/381 (*La terre et le peuple*) gives us a schematic insight into this regarding the country where Soloviev lived.

SOL25

Spidlik begins by emphasizing how pagan this earthbound aspect is: “How often the Church Fathers (33/800) emphasize the dignity of man by saying that man, in the image of God, is “the prince of the universe””.

Indeed: Biblical theophany is directed primarily against the “unintelligible necessity” (Solubo Cosmic 14) that is so typical of the non-Biblical world and the characteristic 'submissiveness' of all those who know nothing else.

But let us listen to Spidlik, where he characterizes Earth Mother worship. A kind of “earthbound mysticism” among quite a few Russians causes them to worship “the damp earth”: she is often invoked as a living person through whom the people who inhabit her bear within themselves the mark of 'divinity' (**note:** in the pagan sense of the word). (Oc, 370).

This is how the ordinary traditional Russian peasant feels—not the prince of the universe, but—“the humble son of the earth”.

For him, the earth is a loving mother who loves her children.

a. She is, first of all, an inexhaustible source of strength and health: she produces the plants that cure human ailments and she herself, in time, cures all miscalculations.

b. In times of adversity she weeps with them over their lot; she suffers with those who suffer.

The pure womb of the earth.

A well-defined sense of 'purity' to be cultivated—in conscience and also in hygiene—coincides with earth-boundness.

a. After death, the pure man finds eternal rest in the womb of the earth.

b. The unclean person, however, is rejected by that womb of the earth demanding purity: like the magician who surrenders himself to Satan; like those who were declared outlaws by their parents; like, finally, whoever was banished from the church.

Note -- This proves that this Pagan remnant does indeed contain a morality in itself and, moreover, was somewhat Christianized. Typical “folk religion”. The damp earth is 'pure', because it is 'holy' and therefore 'inviolable'!

The sin against the earth.

Whoever lives against God's law—the Decalogue (e.g., the Ten Commandments)—“defiles the earth.” And so it is, through lewd curses.

An old book by preachers states that such immoral words first insult the Blessed Mary, the Mother of God, then one's own mother to whom one owes life, and finally “Mother Earth.”

SOL26

This Earth Mother manifests in the conscience; even the most secret breaches of morality provoke the torment of remorse, because the earth perceives all faults.

The confession of sins.

What was just said explains that people 'confess' their faults to Mother Earth. In the event of church confession, one asks forgiveness = from the sun,

the moon, the stars (**note:** sidereal nature), = from the dawn and the dark nights, = from rain and wind, = from Mother Earth:

“I beg you, moist earth, who are my nurse, -- I ask you, -- I, wretched, not very wise sinner, to forgive me that I have trampled you underfoot, struck you with my hands, looked at you with my eyes, -- that I have spat upon you. -- Forgive me, beloved mother, in the name of Christ the Redeemer and of his holy Mother, the Holy Mother of God, as well as of Saint Elijah, the very wise prophet”.

Note: -- Again:

- a. the underlying layer is cosmic Paganism;
- b. the upper layer of such religion is Christocentric biblical faith.

Assessment: -- Spidlik notes that this cosmic religion comes through strongly in *Dostoevsky and Ivanov*. -- In the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, for example, Dostoevsky describes how the young Aliosha kisses the earth “which was offended by countless sins”, while promising to love it “for all eternity”.

Now, Dostoevsky, intimately befriended with Soloviev, was an educated Christian. As Spidlik himself adds: a deeply Christian idea comes through in this Earth Mother religion.

In particular: sin is never a merely individual phenomenon, since, by reason of the intimate cosmic interconnectedness of all things (think of what we said about Soloviev's mysticism, Sol. Kosm. 06v.), the entire creation is harmed by it.

For us Westerners, with our sometimes very individualistic conscience, such a thing may come as a surprise. Yet it seems to us that Spidlik is right: due to mysterious—some say: 'occult'—connections, even the most individual sin damages the whole in which it inevitably situates itself.

This does not imply, however, that the Archaic-Primitive praxis called 'tellurism' is the right path for us, the 'educated'.

SOL27

Plant nature.

'Fusis', nature, also encompasses, besides the Earth Mother, her plant wealth, as already mentioned.

God's boundless life-force, or 'dunamis' in Greek, reveals itself visibly and tangibly in the plants. Also: as *J. Casper*, **Weltverklärung**, 102f., states, the Eastern Church celebrates Pentecost, like the Roman liturgy, as the culmination of the Paschal drama. For the Father, the Primordial Source, in cooperation with the 'kurios', the Glorified Jesus, sends the Holy Spirit with his gifts.

When this event of salvation is commemorated—or rather, liturgically made present—homes in the Eastern Church are decorated with fresh greenery (the symbol of eternal life) and with flowers and herbs (the symbols of the never-fading crown of God-given grace).

Note: Pentecost is not without connection to a Jewish celebration: once, in a remarkable theophany, Yahweh—in fire, lightning, and thunder (**note:** cosmic phenomena)—gave the law. It was precisely the time when the area around Mount Sinai was full of green plants. In remembrance of this, the Jews decorated their homes with green leaves, flowers, and herbs (think of the Feast of Tabernacles).

Casper: the faithful carry the first gifts of early summer in their hands during the Pentecost liturgy to offer them to God “as firstfruits” (meaning that the life force in the leaves, flowers, and herbs represents God’s own life force—which is acknowledged in the offering thereof).

Note: -- *A monk of the Eastern Church*, **The Jesus Prayer**, Nijmegen / Bruges, 1976, 24v., explains this brilliantly.

As is perhaps known, a tradition in the East prays by pronouncing the name of Jesus (= the Jesus Prayer). It is recited over things in nature – stone, sea and land, tree, flower, fruit –.

Steller says the following.

A. We regard nature and the universe as the work of the Creator: “Yahweh created heaven and earth” (*Psalms 134:3*). Moreover, nature can be seen as “the visible sign of the invisible divine beauty: “The heavens declare the glory of God” (*Psalms 19:1*); “See the lilies of the field” (*Matthew 6:28*).

B. This interpretation of nature is only a beginning. The creative presence of God is in perpetual motion. As a result, the entire cosmos is also in motion—incessantly.

Moreover, one of the great, indeed, the greatest changes is the incarnation of Christ: “The whole creation groans and moans in birth pangs” (*Rom. 8:22*), until it “will be set free from the bondage of decay to partake in the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (*Rom. 8:21*).

In other words: the entire inanimate world is also taken up in a movement towards Christ. Or again: all things come together in the incarnation of Christ. Specifically: the elements of nature as well as the products of the earth—stone and wood, water and oil, grain and wine—change in meaning. They become symbols and bearers of grace.

Note: The Eastern monk goes even further: mysteriously—he says—the entire creation pronounces the holy name 'Jesus'. In doing so, he refers to a sentence of Jesus taken out of context and intended purely symbolically: “I tell you: if they keep silent, then the stones will cry out.” Literally, the monk says: “It is the interpretation of this 'name' that the Christian must listen for in nature.”

Note: We cite this short paragraph to demonstrate once again the level of nature experience that Eastern Christian mysticism can achieve. After all, it is such a mysticism that also inspired the highly mystically inclined Soloviev.

Let us now listen to the true philosophy of nature of the monk. By pronouncing the name 'Jesus' over things of nature—a stone or a tree, a fruit or a flower, the sea or a landscape or whatever—the one who believes—note how faith stands central—brings the secret of these things to light.

Note: What is stated more clearly in other texts is presupposed here:

a. there is first the natural (and possibly extra-natural) infrastructure of natural things: they are stone, tree, whatever;

b. Since the day Jesus became man in the womb of Mary, the Mother of God, there has been a supernatural present in the things of nature themselves: the divine Logos, cosmic wisdom, which Jesus is as the Second Person of the Trinity, is present and active in a manner beyond our natural and extra-natural capacity—with a view to the Last Day of history, which will make clear and evident what the process of deification currently underway, also in the material cosmos, truly means and accomplishes.

SOL29

Note: The question arises: “Does the monk in question interpret the Pauline text – *Rom. 8:19/24* – correctly?”

Do we lean again on *La Bible de Jérusalem* , -1636, nd

The material world—they say there—is destined for man. He therefore shares in the fate of that man.

a. *Genesis 3:17* tells us that the sin of mankind entails a curse. The whole of nature shares in that curse, that subjection to the incomprehensible necessity entailed by the Fall. This amounts to a 'vanity' (that is, a false reality)—forced upon nature by force—which is both ethical and purely physical.

b. *Romans 8:21, 23* tells us that even the physical body of man is destined for a glorified, understand: divinized, state, since the glorification of Jesus' body.

Immediately, the entire material reality, the human biotope, is ripe for deification: it will (and this is already real in a mysterious way, largely invisible) share in the “freedom inherent in the glorified (deified) state”.

Conclusion: The monk interprets correctly indeed.

If, on our part, such statements cause surprise, the explanation is obvious: we Westerners are living through a twofold cultural revolution that alienated us from the Biblical world: rational Medieval Scholasticism and, even more thoroughly, the rationalism of the Enlightened minds.

What traditional Russians and Easterners invariably reproach us for is that we “think in compartments”: here nature (with possibly the external nature), there the supernatural. They sometimes call this “the analytical mentality of the West”.

Bible o pm.: That plant nature and its sacred (Pagan or Christian) meaning is indeed universal is shown again by *M.Eliade, Traité d'hist.d.religions* , 168/231 (*Les eaux et le symbolisme aquatique*), -- 232/284

(*La végétation (Symboles et rites de renouvellement)* , -- 285/314 (*L'agriculteur et les cultes de fertilité*).

Regarding Biblical phytotherapy (healing through herbs):

M. de Waal, Medicinal Herbs in the Bible , Amsterdam, Bark, sd;

Daan Smit, Plants from the Bible (Their Origin and Use Through the Ages)
(*A Guide to Cultivation*), Amsterdam, 1990 (with beautiful photos).

SOL30

The wild.

Nature encompasses inorganic (lifeless), plant reality. It also includes animal life. -- This layer of the biological world, too, is involved in the universal process of deification, ever since, in the virginal womb of Mary, God the Son became man. -- We listen once again to our Eastern monk.

The Jesus Prayer, 25ff..

“The world of living beings, too, must be transformed by us.” -- Behold the motto. -- Now for the explanation.

a. We resemble Adam (and Eve): he once, in Paradise, gave names to all the animals.

Note: -- For us Westerners, that 'name' is usually a nominalistic case. For the monk, it is sacred-realistic: the 'name' is the very essence of things insofar as it can be indicated in some human sound. All pre-modern cultures assume that such an indicated name 'evokes' to such an extent that the utterance—indeed, the mere inner murmuring—of it makes the thing indicated by it present itself.

“Then Yahweh—God—formed out of clay all the animals of the land and all the birds—and brought them to “the man” to see what he would call them”
(*Genesis 2:19*).

b. When we, Christians, pronounce the name 'Jesus' over the animals, we restore to them their “original dignity”—we forget it so easily, that original dignity. For they are living beings, created by God in Jesus and for Jesus, and kept alive. -- Thus, literally, the somewhat confusing language of the monk who is not a born professor.

Note: -- It comes down to this:

a. creation also gave the animals, with the inanimate things and with the living plants, a divine life force, which is both natural and possibly extranatural;

b. Since the Incarnation in the womb of Mary, the Mother of God, the essence of things, plants, and animals has been directly involved in the process of deification initiated by Jesus. A purely 'energy' emanating from above and beyond nature—the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as that which Jesus displayed during the brief Transfiguration on the mountain—works, if we need it, also in inanimate things, also in plants, and also in animals.

This explains the tendency, astonishing to us Westerners, of sacred-minded cultures to constantly see God, the Trinity, or Jesus in everything.

SOL31

By way of explanation, the monk says: “When Jesus stayed in the desert for forty days, ‘He dwelt among the animals’ (*Mark 1:13*). We do not know what happened then, but we can be certain that all living creatures came under his influence there.

He Himself says of the sparrows that “not one of them is forgotten by God” (*Luke 12:6*).

Note: -- Wild regions, where, for example, only animals inhabit, were considered in the cultures of the time, at least in religious and/or occult circles, as particularly 'demonic', indeed, Satanic.

Incidentally: it is precisely there that Satan comes to tempt Jesus. Also: some Bible texts, especially apocalyptic ones (concerning the disasters of the end times), speak of a “kingdom of animals” – in contrast to “the kingdom of the Son of Man”.

Understand: the one who is of human descent and thus exhibits a 'nature' that is that of a human being -- : it is quite possible that the stay of Jesus, who expressly refers to himself as the 'Son of Man' of the prophet Daniel, is directly connected with this.

If this 'apocalyptic' interpretation of Jesus' contact with the animal world of the wild region where he stayed is correct, then this further reinforces the interpretation of our Eastern monk: Jesus' influence on the desert animals would then be a 'conjuring' and liberating influence of a much stronger degree.

Indeed: the entire Bible says that the establishment of the kingdom of God – the deification – begins with the reckoning with the satanic powers.

Human nature.

The Jesus Prayer, 26/28. -- The Eastern monk explains as follows.

1.-- *The appearances of the glorified Jesus.*

The risen Jesus appeared to his disciples several times in “a form”: a form, moreover, that aroused their wonder. Thus *Mark 16:22* : “Afterward He appeared to them in another form.” The form of a traveler on the way to Emmaus, that of a gardener at the tomb, that of a stranger on the shore of the lake.

2.-- *The interpretation.*

“It was always the form of an ordinary human being, such as we encounter daily. With this, Jesus emphasized an important aspect of his presence, namely, in all people. Thus He certainly accomplished what He had learned: “I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink (...);—without clothes, and you clothed me;—sick, and you visited me;—in prison, and you visited me.—Whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did to me” (*Matt. 25:35/36, 40*).

SOL32

Update

This Eastern realist interpretation of Jesus' presence contrasts sharply with our nominalist view of the matter: we “think of” Jesus in response to a fellow human being whose 'face' we encounter; the monk knows himself—materially—directly—to be confronted with something of Jesus in every fellow human being (the effect of the Incarnation in the womb of Mary).

The text says: “Jesus appears to us in our days in the facial features of men and women. Indeed: this human form is now the only one in which everyone can recognize the face of our Lord at will—at any moment and in any place.”

The 'mystical' body of Jesus.

Furthermore: “Men and women, -- they are the flesh and the bones, the hands and the feet, the pierced side of Christ, -- his mystical body. In them we can experience the reality of the resurrection, the real presence - without, however, identifying it with his essence - of our Lord Jesus”.

Note: -- The term “mystical body” of Christ is a theological term: every human being, at least insofar as he or she does not completely shut himself or herself off from Jesus' revelation, is somewhere, mysteriously, “Christ once again”.

Note: . -- The monk connects his Jesus Prayer to this once again: “The name 'Jesus' is a concrete and powerful means to 'see' people – think of the Platonic Theoria, a 'seeing' that looks straight through the modes of appearance – in their hidden and most inner reality. (...).

We must pronounce the name 'Jesus' over all of them, for that is their real name. (...). In many of these men and women – in the evil and the wicked – Jesus is bound. Liberate Him by acknowledging and honoring Him in them. Everyone will appear to us as transformed and transfigured (**note** : as Jesus “changed in form”). (...). -- Thus the text literally.

Conclusion. -- With this, we have attempted, by detours, to outline Soloviev's earthbound nature. We could have done so directly, -- with his texts. But the question would still remain: “Where did Soloviev obtain that viewpoint after his crisis of faith?” The answer is now crystal clear.

SOL33

5. Thinkers for Soloviev. (33/40).

Library st.: *Nikolai Berdyaev, Russian Thought in the 19th and 20th Centuries* , Amsterdam, Bezige Bij, 1947 (Follow-up Chapter II (Oc,32/63: *The Problem of 'Historiosophy' (Philosophy of History)*)).

From this book we remember the following: “Russian independent thought awakens at the problem of historio-sophy.”

This involves deep reflection on the question of what the Creator intended for Russia, -- what 'Russia' means and what fate awaits it.

The Russian people had always had the feeling—indeed, more a feeling than an awareness—that Russia held a special destiny—that the Russian people were a special people.

Messianism (**note:** the conviction of being 'Messiah', savior) is therefore almost as characteristic of the Russian people as it is of the Jewish people. Can Russia follow its own unique path without repeating all stages of European history?

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, we will concern ourselves with the question: "What are Russia's ways? Do they represent a simple repetition of the ways Western Europe has traveled?" (Oc, 32).

Note: It is advisable to keep this problem statement clearly in mind, if only because a very analogous question regarding what remains of the Soviet Union hangs in the balance at this moment.

Library st.: *Helen Iswolsky, Soul of Russia* , London, Sheed and Ward, 1944.

This book is interesting in its entirety, but, for our purpose, it is particularly relevant from *Chapter VII (From Peter to Pushkin)*, oc, 58/68. After all, with Peter the Great (1672/1725) a brutal Westernization begins. Western Europe had first gone through the Middle Ages and then the Renaissance before embracing the full Modernity, with Enlightened Rationalism.

Russia did not know that transitional period. Protestant rationalism and the ideas of the French Encyclopedists—according to Iswolsky—suddenly broke through in a Russian intelligentsia that was not prepared for it (oc, 58).

Library st.: *Nic. von Bubnoff* , Hrsg./Uebers., *Russian Religionsphilosophen (Dokumente)* , Heidelberg, L. Schneider, 1956.

The book says that Russian thinkers excel in anthropology, ethics, philosophy of religion (including metaphysics), - philosophy of history, -- but not in logic and epistemology (oc, 10).

SOL34

Library st.: *J. Tyciak, Die Liturgie als Quelle ostlicher Frommigkeit* , Freib.i.Br., 1937, 108/125 (Liturgischer Geist und russische Religionsphilosophie).

With childlike nonchalance they speak the language of their time: they speak like Schelling, - Fichte, Hegel (**note:** Schelling, the German Romantic, - Fichte and Hegel, the Absolute or German Idealists),-- yes, even like Baader (1765/1841; pupil of Michael Sailer, who introduced him to the theosophist Louis Claude de Saint Martin (which entails occultism)) and Boehme (1575/1624; German mystic who helped pave the way for both the later

Romantics and the German Idealists (as well as for the later Russian Slavophiles (Sol. Kosm. 04)).

Yet their speaking is merely the mention of Christ and the Church. They are not subject to the danger of 'Gnosticism' (**Note:** the natural and possibly supernatural cognitive effort of the 'Gnostic' leads to genuine knowledge of God). Moreover: they overcome the erroneous paths of non-Christian Western philosophy through their Christian realism, which time and again points to something that transcends mere natural (or supernatural) philosophizing, -- which draws its ultimate foundation from mysticism." (Oc, 109).

We quote this text as literally as possible to demonstrate how richly and variedly Russian thinkers were influenced. How decisively they nevertheless pursued their Christian-realist premises —without loss of faith. Even though the wording was repeatedly, as is understandable in such difficult situations, susceptible to much and fierce criticism.

Library st. : T. Spidlik, *Les grands mystiques russes* , Paris, 1979, 351/368 (*Le Christ chez les penseurs russes*). -- For the (primarily Greco-Eastern) Church Fathers, 'philosophy', knowing oneself at home with (divine and human) wisdom, was first and foremost a natural (and possibly, as with many Late Antique thinkers, supernatural) matter. But the cornerstone was and remained, just as naturally, the divine-trinitarian 'wisdom' of the Old and New Testaments: Christ is, after all, the eternal wisdom made human – hagia sofia

Philosophical life—says Spidlik—was synonymous with a life of decay, and the term 'philosopher' was synonymous with 'monk'.—After all that precedes, we understand this very well.—But Western influence is going to change precisely that.

SOL35

The concept of “Russian intelligentsia”.

Berdiaev, Russian Thought , 18ff. -- “Only in the 19th century did the Russians really learn to 'think'”. (Oc, 18). -- By this, Berdiaev means: “Modern way of thinking”. He maintains that what we, in the West, call the “intellectual and artistic elite” is something different from the “Russian intelligentsia”. -- He exaggerates in this. However, he is right when he asserts that the Russian vanguard exhibits distinctive characteristics.

First characteristic.

“We must remember that the awakening of Russian consciousness – **Note:** The emergence of Modern thought, the vanguard – meant a revolt against Imperial Russia. And this is true not only regarding the Zapadniki (Westernists, Oscidentalists) but even regarding the Slavianophiles (= Slavophiles).” (Oc, 25).

Second characteristic.

The Russians were swept along by Schelling, Hegel, Saint-Simon (1760/1825; thinker on the industrial and political revolution), Fourier (1772/1837; precursor of Socialism), Feuerbach (1804/1872; theological transformation of Christianity), Marx, -- just as no one in the countries of these thinkers themselves was swept along.

The Russians are not doubters: they are 'dogmatists'; with them, everything takes on a 'religious' character. They have a poor understanding of the relative. -- Take Darwinism, for example: in the West, it was a biological hypothesis; among the Russian intelligentsia, it took on a 'dogmatic' character, as if it concerned salvation for eternal life.

Take Materialism, for example: it became an object of 'religious' belief, and its opponents were, for a certain period, treated as enemies of the liberation of the people.

In summary: in Russia, everything was judged according to two fundamental concepts: either orthodoxy or heresy. —So much for Berdiaev's description. Cf. oc, 25ff.

Third feature

The main motif of the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia was twofold:

a. a stormy desire for progress, -- for revolution, the ultimate results of world civilization, socialism;

b . a deep and unmistakable sense of the emptiness, the monstrosity, the soullessness, the petty-bourgeois nature of all those results of world progress, of the revolution, of civilization, etc.

SOL36

So much for three characteristics that Berdiaev, himself a true Russian, believes he has discovered.

We paused at the concept of the “Russian intelligentsia” because it leads to a much better understanding of Soloviev’s crisis (and countless others), as well as the way out of it.

What influences was Soloviev subjected to?

Library st.: *Maxime Herman, V. Soloviev (Crise de la philosophie occidentale)*, Paris, Aubier, 1947, 5/157 (*Vie et oeuvres de Soloviev*).

When one reads the introduction to the translation of Soloviev's work **Crisis of Western Philosophy** (**Against the Positivists**), published in 1874, a complete list of influences is impossible. One can, however, provide groups of influences:

1. The Orthodox religion (especially its liturgy, which is uncommonly rich like all Greco-Eastern liturgies);

2.1 . Scripture and the Church Fathers (primarily the Eastern Church Fathers);

2.2 . Platonism (including the Neo-Platonism of Late Antiquity (250/600)), -- immediately including the influences incorporated by Late Platonism: Pagan, Jewish (Philon), and Gnostic-Manichean currents, -- including the Jewish occultist Kabbalah (the Old Testament interpreted occultly, -- especially since -200);

2.3. Western philosophies of all kinds, especially the German (because so many young people from Russia went to Germany to study), -- in particular the Romantics Schelling and Hegel;

2.4. Sophiology (cf. Sol. Kosm. 06)

2.5. The own Russian schools of thought, especially the Slavophiles (Cfr. *A. Gratieux, AS Khomiakov et le Mouvement Slavophile, II (Les doctrines)*, Paris, Cerf, 1939, 252/255 (*Khomiakov et Soloviev*)). -

Note: The Western Romantics generally constitute a distinct influence. To understand something of this, *LJ Kent, *The Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevsky and its Antecedents**, The Hague / Paris, Mouton, 1969, is particularly revealing: depth psychology and occultism merge in that atmosphere. Soloviev was familiar with this as well, if only through his intimate friend Dostoevsky.

Conclusion. -- All this clearly demonstrates the encyclopedic, extensive horizon of Soloviev's vision. We can only provide samples here.

Note: -- For those wishing to learn about the element of 'folk culture' regarding magic, we refer to a recent work: *Andrei Siniaevski, *Ivan le Simple (Paganism, Magic and Religion)*,* Paris, Albin Michel, which shows that what Soloviev knew in his time is still far from dead.

SOL37

The Russian Christian Realists.

The following is a list of figures who paved the way.

G. Skovoroda (1722/1794), P.J. Chadaev (= Cadaev (1796/1856), I. Kirevsky (1806/1856), A.S. Khomiakov (1804/1860), V.Gr. Bielinsky (1810/1848), K. Aksakov (1817/1860), J.F.Samarin (1819/1876), et al., who usually, sooner or later, belonged to the Slavophiles . -- According to brief characterizations now.

1.-- Skovoroda.

N. Arseniev says of this pioneer par excellence, in the height of the 18th century: "With genuine zeal (...) he is, in a deliberate manner, Christocentric" (T. Spidlik, oc, 353). In particular: cosmology stands or falls with "Christ is the essential law of the cosmos" (which demonstrates how what we have outlined above regarding Christ as Universal Wisdom ('Logos', after Heraclitus of Ephesus, but Christianized) does indeed give rise to genuine philosophizing.

One flaw with Skovoroda: he incorporates Christ as Logos so deeply into the entire evolution of creation that the fact that Jesus is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is lost too much. But then again: Skovoroda was a 'beginner'.

2.-- Chadaev.

Known for his Philosophical Letters. -- Christianity is the final word on the enigma of the world: as ever-active cosmic energy, Christianity penetrates societies and changes them (even without them realizing it). Christianity leads humanity toward the goal emanating from the deity: blessed are those who consciously fit themselves into that all-encompassing process.

Chadaev and multiculturalism.

“How to make one all people, so different in race and culture?” was a primary concern. -- According to Chadaev, this desire for unification crashes against death, which creates a radical chasm between the living and the dead.

True unity is to be expected only from the One who has conquered death. To the question: “If Christ had not come, what would the world be?”, he answers: “Nothing!”. “Sad philosophy that refuses to see that eternity is nothing other than the life of the 'righteous' (**Note:** the conscientious in a Christian manner), -- that life of which the Son of Man has given us the epitome”. Thus literally Chadaev.

Christianity demonstrates, through its universalism that encompasses all people, that it is of divine origin. Figures such as Dostoevsky, Soloviev, and V.I. Ivanov (1866/1949) would further develop universalism.

SOL38

3.-- Chomiakov.

The figurehead of the Slavophiles.-- Khomiakov's epistemology is remarkable: life is central. That 'life', understood in the broadest possible sense, comes to (full) self-awareness, first and foremost in rational thought, but not without the primordial Christian faith.

Note: In this respect, he differs, along with all other Christian Realists, from Western Scholasticism (especially when the latter sets itself against mysticism) and, certainly, from Western Enlightenment rationalism. For these thinkers, thinking besides the fact—the well-known historical fact—of Christianity is a form of one-sided abstract thinking.

Note: -- G. Samarine, *Préface aux oeuvres théologiques de AS Khomiakov*, Paris, Cerf, 1939, 52, characterizes Khomiakov: “For those who were indifferent to faith, Khomiakov was something strange and even comical”.

To those who stood behind the faith with their high protection, he was unbearable because he upset them.

For those who consciously rejected the faith—in a responsible manner according to their own judgment—he was a living refutation to which they knew no answer.

Finally: for those who had preserved within themselves the sense of a gifted religious feeling, but at the same time became bogged down in all kinds of contradictions and suffered from an inner conflict, he was, in his own way, an emancipator who imparted true insight to them (...).

Note: . -- This list reflects the enormous crisis of foundations (which has broken out in our circles, especially since the Second Vatican Council (1962/1965)) with which the Russian Christian Realists are attempting to come to terms.

4.-- *Belinski.*

Cf. Spidlik, oc, 357ss. "Eternal movement" is Belinsky's central idea. Life is constant change. Well, sorrow cannot be removed from this. For human history is one uninterrupted series of collapses and deaths."

What is the true value of life within such a framework? For the individuals who perish in that stream, the only salvation is the unity of the Easter of the Cross and the Easter of the Resurrection, which forms the foundation of human history.

SOL39

Belinski says: "In this world of destruction and death, a hopeful voice still resounds—strengthening the soul: "Come to me, all you who groan under the weight of the burden, and I will grant you relief (...).

It seems that, in the atmosphere of that solemn peace of the soul, man conjures up the mystery of eternity—specifically: a new earth and a new heaven—before his eyes.

Note -- The term "new earth and new heaven" comes directly from the Apocalypse of St. John, -- a book that is deeply alien to us Westerners, but which can be very close to the Greco-Eastern Christian.

Vladimir Soloviev.

T. Spidlik, oc, 364ss. -- Soloviev has brilliantly summarized and surpassed all his predecessors. Even his opponents admit that.

"Soloviev (...) has succeeded in demonstrating in a masterful manner how the entire cosmic and historical process – that is, the whole evolution of nature

– from the basic elements up to and including the emergence of human consciousness – is directed towards the God-Man, towards Christ, the incarnated Second Person of the Holy Trinity.” Thus Spidlik, who explains this.

1. He severely criticizes those who—like Leo Tolstoy (1828/1910; Tolstoy describes Christianity as ascetic-mystical but rationalistic)—want to reduce Christianity to a mere system of excellent truths that we ought to put into practice in life. Christ is not the mere result of our human intellectual and ethical efforts.

2. Christ is, on the contrary, the primordial principle of cosmic history—the force that steers the events of the universe in the direction he wills.—So much for a first introduction.

Note-- Nik. Berdiaev, **The Russian Thought **, 80, characterizes Soloviev as follows. In doing so, he uses the term 'humanism'. Generally speaking, 'humanism' means “anything that promotes man”. In a sense alien to religion, or worse, hostile to religion, 'humanism' means “anything that promotes man outside of religion, indeed, against religion”. For many, the two or three meanings are rather confused and intertwined.

But let us listen to Berdiaev. -- “Vladimir Soloviev can be called a Christian Humanist. This 'humanism', however, bears a very special character.

SOL40

In his polemic with the right-wing Christian camp, Soloviev insisted on maintaining that the 'humanist' process of Russian history was not only a Christian process, albeit an unconscious Christian one, but also that the non-believing Humanists realized Christianity better than the believing Christians, who did nothing for the improvement of human society.

After all, the non-believing Humanists of Modern history attempted to build a society in which more humanity and more freedom could be found. This, while the believing Christians opposed them in this endeavor and defended the existence of a society built on violence and servitude.

Soloviev put forward this view primarily in his article **On the Fall and the End of the Medieval Worldview**, -- thereby provoking the stormy indignation of K. Leontiev (1832/1891; nicknamed “The Russian Nietzsche”).

At that moment, Soloviev had already recovered from his “theocratic utopia” (**Note:** for a time, Soloviev dreamed of establishing a kind of utopian system on this earth; it was called 'theocracy').

Note: also 'God-manhood') as the fundamental idea of Christianity . What Soloviev calls 'Humanism' is an integral part of the religion of the God-human.

a. In the person of Jesus Christ, the union of the Divine with human nature took place in such a way that “the God-human” made its entrance.

b. This must, however, also take place in humanity, in society, in 'history'.

The realization of God-humanity—of the God-human life—presupposes an activity of man.

In the Christianity of the past, there was insufficient human activity. This applies especially to the orthodox churches. As a result, people were often oppressed.

The liberation of human activity in Modern history was therefore necessary for the realization of God-humanity. Hence, Humanism—which in its consciousness was perhaps non-Christian, indeed, even anti-Christian—realized the religious thought without which the ends of Christianity are unrealizable. -- Thus Soloviev attempted to illuminate Humanism from a religious perspective. Thus Berdiaev on Soloviev.

SOL41

6. Soloviev's cosmology. (41/44).

The motto.

Soloviev 's main intention is expressed in his * *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle** : “The fundamental truth, the defining idea of Christianity—that is the perfect union of the Divine and the human. Its individual realization takes place in Christ; its social realization takes place in human society.” (*Fr. Muckermann, SJ, Soloviev* , Olten, 1945, 105).

Note: In the following exposition, virtually no attention is paid to the role of evil in the cosmos and in humanity. This does not, however, imply that Soloviev, who was by nature very optimistic, even to the point of naivety, had

no awareness of 'evil'. Quite the contrary: in his view, evil in the world exhibits two main forms:

- a** . the slowness ('inertia') or ethical lethargy of humanity,
- b** . the actually evil power of the Evil One, (to be in the person and the working of the Evil Antichrist).

But see here what Muckermann, oc, 173f., says about this. Soloviev, who devoted himself to progress with such optimism, (...), nevertheless always had a sense of evil within him. Although he had that sense, -- indeed, precisely because he had it, he committed himself to the good with such energy.

a. That he was capable of such a thing ultimately rests on his faith in the final victory of good, which, compared to the phantoms of evil, is the only real thing.

b. That he was capable of such a thing rests likewise on his belief in the historical Christ who makes world history and concludes world history with the final victory. Soloviev's total worldview is distinctly Christocentric: his worldview is a stepwise, self-realizing unfolding of the incarnation of the God-man in all things and in all people. -- What Muckermann says, we shall now see in detail.

Library st. : Vl. Soloviev, *La justification du bien (Essai de philosophie morale)*, Paris, Aubier, 1939. -- This work, in edition 2, dates from 1898. It is perhaps his most mature work.

The Five Realms.

We begin with an overview. Oc, 185ss. Soloviev adopts as a viewpoint what can be translated as "rising fullness".

SOL42

Viewed from the perspective of "ascending fullness," minerals, plants, animals, 'natural' humanity, and 'pneumatic' (animated and glorified by God's spirit) humanity are distinguishable.

Note: 'Pneuma' stands for "God-given, life force". The principal identifiable stages in the development of the universe on the way to full maturity (where 'full maturity' is understood as the effect of the self-revelation of the Triune God in matter), as they are given in experience, are designated by the traditional and, moreover, meaningful name 'realms'. The name 'realm' is

meaningful because it is fully applicable only to the final and decisive phase of the universe's development. Something that is usually not taken into account.

Note: This implies that Soloviev regards the entire development of creation as purposeful, indeed, as purposefully guided by the Trinity. This does not exclude the possibility that—to our limited cognitive abilities—many things in the cosmos and humanity appear 'accidental' ('contingent'): God's purposeful action encompasses precisely the winding paths of the creatures—even those of the malevolent ones who attempt to thwart the goal to be achieved. Which signifies only a part of one all-encompassing teleology.

From approaches other than increasing full-fledgedness, one can – according to Soloviev – also make other classifications.

a. Plants and animals can be summarized as “organic nature” (coming after “inorganic nature”).

b. One can label both inorganic and organic beings as 'nature', which then gives rise to a three-part classification “nature/ humanity/ Kingdom of God:

c. One can also contrast “the world” (= the pre-biblical universe) with “the Kingdom of God”: this gives the contrast “world/Kingdom of God” (in Western theological language: “nature (extra-nature) / supernatural”).

Characteristic of the five realms.

'Characteristic' means “brief description”. -- We first provide a brief description to give an initial insight.

1.-- Inorganic nature.

Note-- The term 'nature' (from Ancient Greek 'fysis', Lat.: natura) means:

a. the collection and the system of all that has a 'nature' (form of being),

b . the being form itself.

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“All that exhibits nature”: everything exhibits 'nature' (essence). In other words: the term 'nature' (as a collection and system) encompasses everything. It is an all-encompassing or transcendental concept.

Moreover: the term 'nature' invariably refers to 'origin' (and thus merges with 'genesis', becoming, arising). Indeed: the nature of something is passed on through reproduction. Such that 'nature' easily acquires the additional meaning of “(derived by descent) form of being”.

For example, in Biblical language: “son/daughter of God” means “(sharing in) the nature of God”. Or 'Son of Man': he who (by human descent) possesses human nature.

Soloviev mentions “stones and metals” as samples in inorganic nature. -- These are self-sufficient and do not evolve of their own accord. In other words: if it depended solely on such things, nature would never have awakened “from a dreamless sleep.” -- This does not, however, prevent the subsequent growth phases of all that exist from finding, precisely therein—in dead matter—“a solid foundation or terrain”—we said, paraphrasing, almost a 'biotope'.

2.-- *Plant nature.*

Plants distinguish themselves by—what Soloviev calls, in poetic terms—“unconscious and motionless dreams”. Such that the terms 'dreamless' and “unconscious and motionless dream” play a significant role in Soloviev's poetic characterization.

More matter-of-factly, he says: the focus on heat, light, and humidity makes plants distinguishable from inorganic matter in terms of their essential form.

In other words: the plant does not simply choose dead matter, but warm, luminous, and moist matter to form a biotope, to nestle itself in the dead matter, and to be habitable within it.

3.-- *Animal nature.*

The essential form of animals as animals is distinguishable from the rest by the fact that an animal exhibits perception (sensation) and free movement.

Immediately, animals are focused on the satisfaction of sensory existence: they seek the 'fullness' of sensory existence through

- a.** to satisfy oneself with food and drink,
- b.** to satisfy oneself sexually,
- c.** to enjoy being there by, for example, playing and/or singing. —

Above all, animals exhibit their own type of 'consciousness' (on a purely animal level, of course).

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Note: Curiously, in contrast to Plato, who devotes a large place to the drive for self-assertion in his psychology (“the lesser lion,” he says), -- in contrast to

Darwin and other evolutionists who devote a very large place to the “struggle for existence,” Soloviev nowhere mentions that plants and animals—like humans and everything that lives in the soil—must defend themselves in order to survive.

Berdiaev states somewhere that Soloviev was exceptionally 'irenic' – peace-loving: perhaps this character trait explains the gap.

4.-- *Natural humanity.*

'Natural' here means “that which has not yet been made more complete by Biblical grace ('spirit', life force)”. If you will: 'Pagan'. -- Pagan human nature is oriented towards sensory existence, just like animals: it desires satisfaction through food and drink, through sexual life, through pleasure.

But it does not stop there: pre-biblical humanity desires existential improvement based on 'spirit'. Skills of all kinds, sciences, and social institutions demonstrate that the will to improve one's lot can indeed succeed. -- Natural humanity also arrives at the idea of “absolutely full existence”.

5.-- *Pneumatic humanity.*

Humanity guided by God's spirit ('pneuma', Lat.: spiritus, life force) encompasses the Kingdom of God. As “born of God” (and thus endowed with a divine nature), this type of humanity understands not only the completely full existence with the spirit: by God's grace, in Christ, it is ready for its realization. For it accepts, in heart and conduct, the idea of “full existence” in the Christian sense as “the true beginning of all that, in all things of the universe, is at work as a final direction”.

Conclusion. -- *Full existence.*

Soloviev understands this term as follows:

1. actual existence (inorganic realm),
2. to be alive, (plant kingdom),
3. to be aware of the surroundings (animal kingdom),
4. to be endowed with spirit (human realm),
5. to be moved by God's Spirit, the supernatural life force (Kingdom of God).

The Biblical concept of man is simultaneously both a summary of what precedes and a transcendence of all that precedes. The 'new' man, in Christ, situates himself within the total cosmic order, which in Christianity experiences “the true beginning of all things.”

7. Soloviev's cosmology. -- notes (45/65).

Note: Before we continue, a word about the relationships between the evolutionary stages.

It is clear—according to Soloviev—that each of the preceding 'kingdoms' serves as an immediate basis for the kingdoms that follow. Thus, plants find their nourishment in inorganic matter, animals feed on the plant kingdom, humans on the animal kingdom, and the Kingdom of God consists of humans.

The irreducibility of what follows to what precedes.

If we examine a living being more closely, we find, from the perspective of “material composition”, only inorganic elements. However, as soon as these inorganic elements are incorporated into a life form, they are more than mere inorganic matter.

1. Life employs physical and chemical properties and, in general, the laws of dead matter, yet life remains, notwithstanding this, irreducible to dead matter.

2. In an analogous manner, human life exhibits animal functions from a material perspective. However, these are no longer valuable in themselves as merely animalistic: they are transformed into means and/or instruments. For human life, compared to animal life, focuses on other, higher objects and ends. Namely, from a higher level of life—specifically, the life of the spirit—it values all that is animalistic as an integral component.

Applicative model.

The sole purpose of the animal as an animal is, for example, the satisfaction of its sexual instinct. If, however, a human seeks only that kind of satisfaction, then such a person is called “a brute” (**note:** we would now say: “a sex maniac”).

This, not merely to voice an insult, but precisely because of the decline to a lower standard of living.

3. The Kingdom of God in an analogous manner.

It consists of 'people'. Yet they have ceased to be 'people', because they share in a higher standard of existence. There, merely human objectives become means and/or instruments of a new objective.

Distinctive Characteristics.

We will now explain, with Soloviev.

1. *The distinguishability of the inorganic.*

Note-- As may have already been noted: the term “(actual) existence” is reduced to “inorganic factual existence”.

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Language usage which Soloviev knows very well must be employed with reservations. After all, ontologically, “actual existence” means that which exhibits anything whatsoever as soon as it is 'something' (the aspect of 'existence', distinguishable from 'essence' (mode of being)). In this cosmological context, however, the bare term “actual existence” is the word to vividly indicate the meager existence of merely inorganic realities.

Thus, Soloviev characterizes the inorganic with the sentence: "The stone exists." Soloviev, along with other thinkers, seeks the 'proof' (if one may use this weighty word here) in the experience of resistance: if you doubt the existence of inorganic-material things (which some hyper-internalized or hyper-spiritualists once did), then bump your head against a stone, for example.

That purely material-inorganic existence thus becomes 'tangible' and immediately indisputable. And indeed in a sensory manner.

Note: Hegel viewed everything 'dialectically'. This means: even a stone exhibits, in its essence, an inner tension (usually referred to by the term 'contradiction').

This inner tension generates movement (understand: change, indeed, evolution), and indeed “of its own accord”.

Thus, a stone, for example, in a cosmic context, would in itself already entail movement somewhere, and even dialectical evolution.

Soloviev: “As an inorganic reality, a stone exhibits no ‘inner tendency, for example, to turn into its opposite.’ A stone is what it is and what it has always been, namely, the symbol of a mode of existence without change. A stone does nothing other than merely exist. Thus, for example, it does not live, with the consequence that it does not die either. It can, however, fall apart: the fragments into which it is, for example, shattered, do not differ in composition from the stone parts when it was still intact.”

Note: Think of the expression “a petrified existence”.

Soloviev on the sacred view.

We know that Soloviev had an encyclopedic interest, particularly in religious studies (which struggled to emerge in his time). -- In religions, for example, one speaks of “the life of nature”.

Note: Primitives see even dead things as animated (animism) or alive (animatism).

SOL47

Some Archaic thinkers—think of some Pre-Socratics—perceived all matter as 'living' or even 'animated' (which is denoted by the word 'hylozoism'; 'hulè', Latin: materia, substance, and 'zōè', Latin: vita, life).

a. Soloviev mentions the presence of a 'soul' in more or less complex aggregates in nature, such as a sea, rivers or streams, mountains, and forests.

Note: Think of the 'sacred' river Ganges in India; think of the 'sacred' forest of the Germanic peoples, about which the Roman writer Tacitus wrote. The presence, subtle that is, of 'beings' of all kinds encompassed “life in nature”

b. Separate inorganic bodies—according to Soloviev—such as stones, although without any life in themselves, can nevertheless be made subservient, namely as durable means for the living activity of place-bound beings. Such a devotional stone. Such a 'bethel' (also: 'bethil') or dwelling place of God.

Angels, for example (in a biblical context), or simply divine forces seem to 'dwell' in such inorganic stones.

2.-- The distinguishability of the plant.

“The stone exists, the plant exists and lives.” -- As proof: it is a universally observable fact that plants die. This implies that they first 'lived'. Stones do not know such a thing.

Consider the undeniable distinction between a tree that is growing and a stack of blocks of firewood.

Think of a newly bloomed flower and a wilted one.

The miracle of plants.

Plants once arose amidst an inorganic environment. As the first life forms of plant existence. Over time, they developed into a “luxurious realm” of flowers or trees.

a. It is sometimes claimed that this plant phenomenon appeared 'just like that', i.e., without any necessary and sufficient reason or basis, as it were “of its own accord”.

b. It is sometimes claimed that they 'originated' from inorganic elements that became structures merely by chance.

Soloviev considers both statements 'absurd'.

The added value.

Life, of which the plant is one degree, exhibits a well-defined new, positive (identifiable) form of being. Something stands out in this regard: the fact that a plant is more than inanimate matter.

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Soloviev's reasoning.

To derive something that exhibits added value. The term 'derive' taken in the strictly deductive sense—from something that lacks that added value—means that **a.** from nothing (namely the radical absence of something) **b.** something can emerge,—without any other intervention. Which is pure absurdity.

Note: Something like this does occur in fairy tales, where it is called “conjuring up”.

Note: The absurdity of such a deduction can be clarified in another way: what is initially 'a' without further ado would, if that formula to be “conjured up” were to merge into reality, -- not in a fairytale atmosphere, suddenly, without any other factor or parameter, become 'a+b'. -- Replace 'a' with “merely inorganic matter” and 'a+b' with “plant life”, for example

Conclusion. -- On the one hand, therefore, there is a clear break, a chasm, between inorganic nature and plant nature; on the other hand, this chasm builds upon an uninterruptedness somewhere, a 'continuity'.

While there are borderline cases where inorganic and organic are difficult to distinguish—think of viruses—it is nevertheless the case that, as plant abundance develops further, the distinction from dead matter becomes clearer

over time. This indicates that the new form of being is gradually gaining ground.

3. *The distinguishability of the animal.*

“The stone exists. The plant exists and lives. The animal exists, lives, and is aware of its life, in its diversity of states.” -- Behold the first sketch.

Note: One can, of course, define the term 'consciousness' in such a way that it cannot be pronounced of the animal. But Soloviev reserves the right to speak of “natural consciousness,” by which he understands the following.

Between **a** . the inner-psychic life of e.g. the animal and **b** . its environment there exists a mutual 'correspondence' and 'influence':

Note: In modern usage, one might replace these terms with 'communication' and 'interaction'. Well, Soloviev argues, such a thing does indeed exist, upon closer inspection, in animals.

1. *Environmental awareness.*

This type of awareness exists primarily in highly evolved animals. Note the difference between the animal in a sleeping state and the same animal in a waking state: the animal in the waking state participates, and indeed in a somewhat 'conscious' manner, in what is present around it.

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That type of awareness of what is and is happening is clearly absent when an animal sleeps. A second clear indication that animal awareness exists lies in **a.** the purposeful movements an animal performs, **b.** facial expressions, and **c.** animal language with its alternating cries.

Note-- We are thinking of:

a. the fact that a cat watches a mouse and jumps at it (purposeful movement),

b. the expression of a horse when it sees its master approaching in the distance (whereby the head, eyes and ears, and facial muscles suddenly change shape) (mimicry),

c. the howling sound of the dog expressing its satisfaction upon the return of its master (verbal expressions). Upon comparison with the plants, it appears that this is absent in plants.

2. Time awareness.

So far, it concerned synchronic awareness. Now, the diachronic aspect.

An animal does not merely possess perceptions and 'images': it connects them to one another through correct associations.

a . On the one hand, the animal is governed by the interests and impressions of the 'now' (the present moment).

b. On the other hand, it has memories of past situations that it lived through, and anticipates what is to come.

Note: A mail carrier once kicked a dog on his rounds. Whenever the animal saw the man approaching, it reacted aggressively: the past lived on in its 'awareness'.

Some animals build up winter stores before winter has set in. In the spring, birds prepare for reproduction by building nests. The future is already present somewhere in the awareness of such behavior.

In which Soloviev states that the upbringing and training of animals would be unthinkable if animals did not possess such a sense of time: everything would be forgotten, for example; the animal would not 'learn'. No one denies the memory of a horse or a dog: 'memory' encompasses 'consciousness' (according to Soloviev). Which some 'philosophers' deny on the grounds of "deviation in thinking".

Note: We may add to this: an animal has a kind of 'understanding'! As soon as a dog sees or perceives a hare, it reacts specifically, i.e., it distinguishes the form of the creature (which amounts to a kind of understanding).

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The added value.

a. Sometimes it seems that plant and animal spring from the same principle of life (form of being). Soloviev brings up the 'zoophyte' here. Earlier zoological classifications featured this term, which means "plant animals".

Note: We can now add that some observations point to something analogous: for instance, "red blood cells" (hemoglobin) are said to occur in plants (which seems to point to a common ancestor).

b. Soloviev readily admits such things. But he says: the further the abundance of animals develops, the more clearly the animal differs from the plant. The essential form 'animal' gradually becomes clearer.

If one wishes: the borderline cases confirm the 'rule' (the pure essential form).

4.-- *The distinguishability of the human.*

The stone exists. The plant exists and lives. The animal exists, lives, and is aware of its life in its various states. Man exists, lives, is aware of his life in various states, and grasps the meaning of life according to the ideas.

Whereby "meaning of life" means "the fully conscientious order brought about in all things and this endlessly". (Oc, 187). In other words: an ethical definition.

The natural man as spirit.

Oc, 189. -- Man is not distinguishable from the animal by consciousness. Consciousness becomes "human awareness" thanks to the human mind. This principle in man (oc 244ss.) shows itself phenomenally: unlike the animal, man possesses universal concepts in the strict logical sense (with an inductive basis), indeed, (higher) ideas, such as the good.

Note: Here one senses the Platonic element, as it were.

The natural man as linguistically gifted.

Animals possess a kind of vocal language.

Language, however, only becomes 'human' insofar as it is "thoroughly and radically determined by the spirit" (oc, 189). -- Thus, the word, insofar as it is truly human, expresses not only states of consciousness but also "the all-encompassing meaning of everything". Thus Soloviev.

With which we arrive in full ontology: 'everything' is strictly all-encompassing (transcendental). -- Soloviev says: Ancient 'wisdom' rightly did not define man as a being that exhibits consciousness.

SOL51

For such a definition says too little. Ancient wisdom defined man as "a being that possesses the use of language, i.e., a being endowed with 'reason'".

Note-- 'Rede' means 'language faculty', 'logos'.

The natural man as susceptible to truth.

'Reason' and the language use associated with it naturally exhibit the capacity to grasp the truth.

A truth that **a** . encompasses everything and **b** . makes everything one. Precisely this capacity demonstrates once again that man, as a being, rises above the animalistic level of life.

This does not exclude the possibility that this is happening gradually to a large extent: it is, for it is a fact, that this capacity has operated very differently from people to people, for example, until now.

Biological evolution is not yet cultural evolution.

Soloviev appropriates, to a certain extent, an evolutionary schema that takes the form of a differential: "ape/ man-eater (semi-savage)/ domesticated man".

1. Thus he says: a man-eater is perhaps, taken in itself, of not much higher a level compared to the ape. The 'low' nature of that level of being human lies in the fact that he remains below the typically human.

2. Human dignity requires 'spirit'. However, this is present even in the most backward savage, although its expression is 'rudimentary' (certainly by our modern cultural standards).

Note: With this, Soloviev categorically distances himself from a Hume (David Hume (1711/1776; skeptical Enlightenment figure) and a Darwin (Charles Darwin (1809/1882, the famous evolutionist), who are known for their disdain, typical of the Enlightenment in Western Europe, for the "primitive savages".

In Soloviev's case, his reaction to this disapproval is certainly connected with the Biblical conviction that every human being is, without exception, a child of God. (Cf. Sol. Kosm. 32: mystical body).

a. Biological transmission.

The animal has a sense of time. However, this does not extend very far. There is an inheritance of characteristics from the previous to the next animal genus. Evolutionists argue that the animal shares in evolution to a certain extent.

But – according to Soloviev – animals do not realize that they are in the midst of such large-scale evolution: the scope of their consciousness falls short.

b. Cultural-historical transmission.

An unbroken series of generations—occasionally rising in cultural level—lead from the man-eater (the 'savage' or 'semi-savage' in the language of the time) to figures such as Platon or Goethe.

SOL52

However—unlike animals—human (cultured) man realizes this. In other words: besides a bond of heredity resembling that of animals, there is clearly a cultural-historical memory and a unity of collective consciousness within the human being.

The added value.

“The ape, as long as he remains an ape, acquires no substantial added value in terms of a full existence.” Man does.

a. In the phenomenal order (the immediate data), there is unmistakably a close merging and a profound material bond—not a brokenness—between animal and man.

b. Through his spirit, however, man apparently transcends the animal, even the ape. -- As the history of humanity, which is essentially more than mere biological history—it is cultural history—progresses, the likelihood increases that the 'man/animal' distinction becomes more clearly defined.

Note: Incidentally, attention should be drawn to the brilliant exposition of the ethical nature of man as Soloviev sets it out in * *La justification du bien* *, 25pp. (* *Le bien dans la nature humaine* *).

a . sense of shame (“I am ashamed. Therefore I exist (as a human being)” (oc, 32)),

b . humanity (“I empathize with my fellow man. Therefore, I exist (as a human being)”),

c. reverence (“I am reverent. Therefore I exist (as a human being)”).

In those feelings of value, man situates himself as a human being in relation to what is below him (shame), what is his equal (humanity), and what is above him (reverence).

The more human man becomes in ethical evolution, the more clearly he/she stands out against the background of the animal. - Cf. *Fr. Muckermann, Solowiev* , 35/90, where the author comments on the main points.

5. -- *The distinguishability of the deified man.*

“The stone exists. The plant exists and lives. The animal exists, lives, and is aware of its life, in its various states. Man exists, lives, is aware of his life, in various states, -- grasps the meaning of life according to the ideas.

The supernatural human rises above that: he/she is moved by God's 'spirit' (life force) (he/she is then a 'pneumatic' human).

With this, we touch the endpoint of cosmic evolution.

SOL53

The Biblical foundation.

Let us first read *Mark 9:2/8* .

Six days later, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John and leads them alone and separately to a high mountain. -- In their presence, He changes His appearance: His clothes shine, -- with a whiteness such as, on earth, no fuller can make anything white.

Elijah and Moses also appeared to them, conversing with Jesus. -- Then Peter said: “Rabbi, it is wonderful for us to be here. So let us put up three tents, -- one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But Peter did not know what he was saying, for they were beside themselves with fear.

A cloud overshadowed them: from that cloud came a voice saying: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him.” -- Suddenly, when they looked around, they saw no one else but Jesus.

The threefold interpretation.

According to *La Bible de Jérusalem* , 1469, it is as follows.

1. Mark —true to the main motto of his Gospel—sees a theophany in the glorification of Jesus: the Messiah harbors divine glory within himself. This is: “divine life force.” This power lies behind the miracles (healings, exorcisms, other miraculous events).

Is this revelation—by showing his true 'aura' or radiance—merely fleeting, yet it shows what Jesus is—who will be humbled for a short time as a “suffering servant of Yahweh” (think of Isaiah)—and what He will definitively be later, after his death on the cross.

Note: It is that glorified Jesus who appears to well-defined persons (Soluble Cosmic 31), in the 'forms' of, for example, a traveler.

2. *Matthew (17:1/9)* interprets the transfiguration or 'metamorphosis' differently: in that event, Jesus is solemnly proclaimed as the new Moses who meets God in the cloud on the mountain—a new Mount Sinai.

3. *Luke (9:28/36)* shifts the emphasis differently again: the metamorphosis of Jesus is the immediate preparation for Jesus' suffering. While He prays, He is 'transformed' and “heaven” informs Him about His departure, i.e. His death in Jerusalem, “the city where prophets are put to death”.

Conclusion. -- All three interpretations highlight one aspect of this extremely rich event.

If we are to understand anything at all of what Soloviev says about 'pneumatic' (= glorified) humanity, we must constantly bear in mind the metamorphosis.

SOL54

The liturgical foundation.

Here, the cosmic aspect of the new humanity in Jesus (and in time in us, believers) comes particularly to the fore.

Note -- Before taking a few samples from the liturgical richness of the East, a small model of cosmic poetry.

J. Ballard et al., Permanence de la Grèce , Cahiers du Sud, 1948, 245.
A love anthem is performed there.

The desire for love.

I kissed a red lip, and my lip turned red. I pressed it onto a handkerchief, and that too turned red. I threw it into the river, and that too turned red. And the edge of the sea turned red. And the middle of the ocean turned red. The eagle came to drink from the water, and its wings also turned red. And half of the sun turned red. And the whole moon turned red.

Note: One sees the cosmic-unlimited nature of the minute kiss on the lip of the beloved. Precisely that—that cosmic solidarity of something with everything—is, in Soloviev, expressed of Jesus.

He is the center of a glorified cosmos. In it he situates humanity—each of us. But the Greco-Eastern liturgy does this constantly. A few samples.

Romanos (5th century).

This Syrian from a Jewish family is called “the Pindar of Byzantine literature”.

Let us listen to his Christmas carol: “What can we offer You, Christ, who appeared on earth as a man to save us? All that You have created pays You homage: the angels the hymn, the heavens the star, the Magi the gifts, the shepherds the miracle, the earth the cave, the desert the manger, and we a virgin who is a mother”.

Note-- Once again the newborn, however tiny, is the center of the cosmos. Cf. J. Ballard, *oc*, 201.

Romanos. -- Song of Passion.

Oc, 212s.. -- Jesus, on his way to Calvary, says to his mother: If you wish to follow, do not be an unhappy woman like me, my mother! Do not be surprised that the elements shudder. The whole creation is rising up in rebellion. The blinded dome of heaven awaits my command to open its eyes. The temple tears the veil as it cries out against the arrogant. The earth and the sea hastily retreat. The mountains are falling apart. The tombs begin to shake.

When you witness that spectacle, astonishment will overtake you. As a woman, then call out to Me: “Be merciful, my son and my God.” -- A text that is once again cosmic.

SOL55

The Akathistos Hymn.

Library st.: *Kilian Kirchhoff, Ueber dich freut sich der Erdkreis (Marienhymnen der byzantinischen Kirche)*, Münster (Westphalia), 1940, 163f.

The 'mystery' (**Note:** event that transforms the cosmos by divine intervention) that was at work from the beginning is revealed today: the Son of God becomes a human child. He takes our wretchedness upon Himself to allow us to share in His glory.

Adam was once outsmarted. And, although he desired it, he did not become a 'god'. But God becomes man to make Adam a 'god'.

Jubilation befits creation. Nature ought to surrender itself to a tightrope walk, for the archangel, in deep reverence, appears to the Virgin and lets her hear the “joy be with you,” which takes away sorrow.

You, our God, who out of the deepest tenderness have revealed Yourself in the form of a man, glory be to You.

Note: The hymn of dedication, the sacred song, applies, as one may have sensed, to the message of the archangel. Once again, that cosmic vastness that encompasses the entire sacred history.

John of Damascus (+749).

This Late Antique thinker and poet speaks as follows: “Nature, which dies and perishes, took the immortal into your womb, -- you, who are exalted above all blame. Within Himself He has made it—graciously—imperishable. Therefore we proclaim you as “Mother of God””. (K. Kirchhof, oc, 72).

Or again, “The nature of the progenitor (**Note:** Adam) you have divinized through your birth—it transcends nature. Make me, who sinned by not disturbing the boundaries of my nature and displeased the God who is good by nature, a confidant of God through your maternal reconciliation.”

Note: In the texts of Joannes Damascenus, the pre-Socratic concept of 'fysis' (nature) resonates very clearly: the salvific intervention of the Triune Deity is more than mere display. It changes the very 'nature' (essence) of the cosmos and of humanity.

Note-- Once again: if one wishes to understand something of Soloviev's philosophy, let one bear in mind such texts. His Christian philosophizing is

a. to truly philosophize, i.e. to think personally (as he emphasizes).

b . But it does not look beyond the reality of Christianity (it is not a 'paraphrosune'), -- no 'abstraction' of Jesus' cultural-historical and salvation-historical role.

SOL56

To summarize once again:

Both the Biblical texts and their liturgical treatment bear witness: “Not only this miracle.

Note-- *John 5:17, 19* - but all human acts of salvation of Christ are thus a revelation of God to men.

The divine act of salvation continually transforms itself into the human deeds of the Lord. And this is what is meant when Scripture speaks of the gradual breakthrough of the Kingdom of God taking place in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

The power of God—according to Old Testament testimony it is at work in history, transforming it and propelling it toward a meaningful end—has assumed the form of the Christ-reality in the *New Testament*. Once and for all, God's active power is now fully depicted therein." (*A. De Groot*, SVD, *De Bijbel over het wonder*, Roermond/Maaseik, 1961, 44).

Note -- The speaker is someone who apparently does not even suspect that he, unconsciously, is saying the same thing as the great New Testament-Patristic tradition. A tradition in which Soloviev explicitly wishes to be situated.

Nikolai Gogol' on the Incarnation.

God's incarnation on earth emerged in the consciousness of all whose conceptions of the deity had begun to purify themselves even a little.

Nowhere, however, was this spoken of with such clarity as by the prophets of the people chosen by God.

His immaculate incarnation from the pure Virgin was vaguely suspected even by the Gentiles—nowhere, however, with such grasping, blinding clarity as with the prophets.

Thus speaks Nikolai Gogol (1809/1852; Russian writer), in a short work he wrote in the years 1845/1852 and which appeared in Moscow in 1889 (censorship only allowed it then).

We shall see that, in slightly different words, Soloviev maintains the same position.

Soloviev on the god-manhood.

Now that we have set forth all the necessary conditions for as accurate an understanding as possible of what Soloviev says, we can begin the actual exposition.

1.-- Christianity as a 'new' form of existence .

"Enanthropèsis Theou theiosis anthropou" (Incarnatio Dei, deificatio hominis), "The incarnation of God is the deification of man."

Behold the concise summary that has motivated our Eastern brothers in faith for centuries and centuries.

SOL57

Soloviev also sees an evolutionary law at work in Christianity: the lower—Pre-Christian—life forms, plant, animal, and human, are indeed a necessary—conditioning—but not a sufficient—creative—preliminary stage for the higher ones that follow.

Application:

a.1. Christ is not simply the product of the entirety of Gentile and Jewish history;

a.2 . Analogously, the Kingdom of God, which constitutes the previously hidden essential core of present-day Christendom, is not simply the product of Christendom and its actual, earthly history. –

b . In other words: biological evolution—the plant, animal, and human life forms founded upon inorganic existence—and cultural history—by virtue of its questions and partial solutions—have brought about and continue to bring about the existence of necessary—natural and ethical—presuppositions, insofar as these are necessary and/or useful for the independent self-revelation of the God-man Jesus, the epitome and source of grace for humanity deified by him. Cf. *La justification du bien* , 197.

2.1.-- *The concept of the “Kingdom of God” seen from the inside.*

The idea—more than a human 'concept', for a divine idea present both in its realization and in its acquisition—“Kingdom of God” arose in the minds of men by a twofold path:

a. the ideal of the Pagan deified man and the God-idea 'Kingdom of God', centered around the God-man Jesus;

b . The pagan ideal emerged in minds at that time on the basis of Theosophical philosophy as a method; the Biblical Kingdom of God likewise emerged in minds, but rather on the basis of prophetic inspiration.

Note -- One sees that Gogol, decades earlier, wrote down exactly the same thought.

Note: ' Deification' is actually an ancient Greek-Pagan idea.

The Orphists, the Paleophythagoreans (-560/-300), and later the Platonists and others were already speaking of 'deification' centuries before Jesus' appearance on earth. Man only becomes truly human insofar as he or she reaches the level of life of the deities, however understood.

In Late Antiquity -- 200/ +600 - this gives rise to a distinct type of philosophizing, namely 'theo.sophia', God-given philosophy.

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Note: Soloviev does indeed lean towards Late Antique Theosophies. One need only consider the fact that, oc, 189, n. 5, he refers to the unity of naturally conceived deification by the Late Antique Theosophists and the Old Testament prophetic method as the completion of the pre-biblical foundation by the very influential thinker Philon of Alexandria (Philo Judaeus) (-20/+50), -- in Soloviev's eyes “the last and greatest thinker of the Ancient world”.

2.2.-- The concept of “Kingdom of God”, viewed externally .

Parallel to, but, naturally, slower—according to Soloviev—than the inner side just sketched, the external evolution and history unfolded.

The cultural, or rather political, unification of the principal 'history-making' peoples took tangible form in the Imperium Romanum, the Roman world-encompassing empire.

Explanations. -- Hellas and Rome.

A certain tradition, of which Soloviev was still alive, concentrates in those two terms—what Soloviev himself calls—“the outer limits of 'natural' (= pre-biblical) humanity”.

According to Soloviev—whom we wish to reproduce here as fully as possible—natural humanity at the time saw “the ultimate meaning”—a central concept in his philosophy—of life in “something absolute and unconditional”, namely the deification of humanity—certainly in Soloviev's eyes, but to a certain extent also in Pagan eyes (one need only think of Platon, by no means alone)—all too animalistic.

Hellenic human beauty.

The meaning of life, for the Hellenes, lay in a beautiful, sensual bodily form.

Note: That Soloviev is very right here is further evidenced by the fact that the 'dry' Aristotle labels a very beautiful woman as “divine in Greek eyes”.

The high meaning of life—as Soloviev rightly points out once again—also lay in some higher philosophical-scientific insight. Think of Plato and his pupil Aristotle.

Roman peace .

'Pax Romana'. -- Even St. Augustine, many centuries later, will speak of it as a remarkable pagan good.

The 'divinity' – in Soloviev's sense – emerged in the reasoned will of the Romans to build a cultural-political system of power – imperium romanum –.

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Where Soloviev speaks the truth again is when he speaks of the Torosified form of deification that later Roman emperors had 'applied' to their own person and work. In that context, one speaks of 'dominate'.

The 'Roman Peace' as a multicultural ideal.

Bibl. st. : *Fr. Mukkermann, SJ, Solowiev* , 29f.. -- The Kingdom of God must be re-established on earth: we ought to learn to see all peoples as “in service” to this kingdom that transcends all nations.

a. The universe must not fall victim to eternal repetition within the framework of a never-ending cycle with its “eternal return”—Soloviev surely means Nietzsche here—much less to horrific disasters.

No: the 'mystery' of glorification is at work in the universe in a hidden way. What was once created in God's image and likeness ought to be reduced to deification. (...). **Note:** Prevents the rejection of pure Paganism.

b. In the living center of humanity and of the immeasurable cosmos, the figure of the God-Man arises, who ought to grow into the seed of a community renewed by God-given grace. (...).

Christ is the bearer of a lifelike universalism that stands in sharp contrast to any separatism that tears itself away from the whole, -- especially to that type of nationalism which reveals itself everywhere in the world as the greatest enemy of a peaceful community.

Note: It is as if Soloviev foresaw the current nationalist-populist tensions in the former Communist Soviet state decades in advance. Soloviev must certainly have clearly sensed the various cultures—a large number of languages—in his homeland as potential sources of discord.

In the meantime, 'multiculturalism' has—especially in postmodern circles—evolved into a sort of ideal of tolerance. However, people do not fully realize how such a mutual ideal of understanding between cultures—religious (Islam/Judaism/Christianity/Paganism), racial (ethnicities of all kinds), etc.—will be practically achievable. At least not without a supranational, supra-religious (better: supra-confessional), supra-racial 'idea of community'. In this regard, the Pax Romana was indeed a kind of precursor—however flawed.

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Note: As Muckermann observes, Christ is also the bearer of a lifelike universalism that sets itself just as sharply apart from “a purely abstract humanity”.

The cohesion, namely, is in this case merely 'abstract': such a society amounts to the mere summation of individuals that are as radically independent as possible. The mutual cohesion is not the expression of anything organic!

Note: Here Soloviev uses the term 'organic'. As is perhaps known, that term features prominently in the language of the Romantics. 'Life', and specifically “life-in-community” (with a living organism as a model), was contrasted by the Romantics with the rational-abstract 'thinking together' so typical of Enlightened Rationalism.

However, we immediately add that 'organicism' can lead to, for example, National Socialist or Communist interpretations.

Something to which, incidentally, Soloviev is radically immune with his universalism.

3. -- *The Kingdom of God tested.*

Soloviev, of course, also knew that both the Pagan and Christian concept or idea of the “realm of the deity”—or “God-manhood”—must be testable.

3.1 -- *The Pagan 'deification'*

This asks to be 'embodied' - realized.

When the pagan world was confronted with the failure of its ideal, a number of faithful minds and a group of philosophers gained a view of something else.

But first, the deified man, fundamentally situated within nature—even if adorned with the splendor and pomp—the 'glory'—of a Roman emperor (during the Dominate)—had to prove to be “an empty dream”.

Soloviev says: “Just as the ape precedes man, so the deified Roman emperor announces the God-Man.” A God-Man who, even in the wretched appearance of a traveling rabbi in Israel, can still show his true—divine—nature—in healings, exorcisms, and other signs.

Conclusion. -- The outcome of the natural impasse is a more fulfilling existence than that of natural humanity.

Explanation. -- It may be surprising to see how the appearance of a God-man is fitted into the evolutionary scheme.

For clarification, reference is made to *W. Vogel, La religion de l'évolutionnisme*, Brussels, 1912, 321. -- The teller himself cites *L. Ménard, Hermès Trismégiste* Paris, 1910.

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Premise: religions are – if they are 'real' – ways of solving human problems.

The application: Christianity did not strike the ancient world like lightning. It went through a breeding ground in its own way. While it was still searching for the definitive formulation of its fundamental truths, the thinking minds in Greece, Asia, and Egypt were also grappling with the problems it sought to solve (...).

Humanity, namely, had raised great philosophical—and ethical—issues. Such as, for example, final destiny, the Fall (with the question of the origin of evil), and the redemption of the soul. What was at stake in that struggle was the mastery of souls.

The Christian solution to the aforementioned problems prevailed over all others of that time. The latter even fell into a kind of oblivion because of it.

The breakthrough of Christianity was thereby prepared precisely by those who imagined themselves to be its competitors, whereas they were, in fact, merely its forerunners.

They truly deserve the title “precursors of Christianity,” -- even though a number of them were contemporaries of Christianity and others came somewhat later. In particular: the breakthrough of a religion dates only from the day on which it is accepted by the peoples, -- just as the true reign of a claimant to the throne dates only from the day on which he succeeds. – So much for the quoted Ménard.

Note: Ménard, even though he compares it to political—military—victories (which is inappropriate here), states a truth: our Biblical religion once connected with real life problems. In that sense, it had a 'vital'—nowadays we readily say 'existential'—character. The 'souls' of the era of emerging Christianity gladly allowed themselves to be 'controlled' by a religion which they believed posed life's questions and... solved them.

Note: One also sees that Ménard attempts to situate Christianity within an evolution. Which Soloviev does in his own way as well. Both complement each other.

3.2. -- Christian deification.

She too, just like the Pagan, asks to be 'embodied'—realized! What test against reality emerges.

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Christianity had two basic premises:

a. the Theophany on Mount Sinai, with the Ten Commandments, a popular summary of a sublime morality (morality defines being human before God);

b. the Theophany on the “high mountain”, where Jesus showed his true life energy to three apostles (the Transfiguration).

In *La justification du bien* , 275, Soloviev says the following:

a. There was once a day when people belonging to a variety of nations and social classes pneumatically—led by Jesus' life-force toward glorification—

became one in the veneration of a 'stranger' and a 'beggar': Jesus as a Galilean was executed as a criminal "in the name of" national and caste interests.

b. Since that day, an albeit hidden and internal operation has indeed been at work against international wars, against the disenfranchisement of the masses within society, and against the execution of criminals (cf. Sol. Kosm. 05).

To which – listen closely – Soloviev says: "Let us admit that this inner change took eighteen centuries to become visible and tangible, -- to become only partially visible and tangible.

Let us admit that this coming to light becomes visible and tangible precisely at that moment when the driving force at work in that change, namely the Christian faith, is declining and even seems to vanish in the current consciousness of the time.

Note-- Sol. Kosm. 39ff. taught us what Soloviev thought about the religious-critical role of Humanism, which had exposed the failings of Christendom (not of Christianity). Here Soloviev connects the same with the great apostasy (about which the Bible speaks clearly, incidentally, regarding the end times): Christendom is waking up regarding its essence and its failures.

Note: In 1898, Soloviev traveled to Egypt again. There he experienced a vision: a demon sat there before him: "And you there! How do you know with certainty that Christ has risen?" To which Soloviev claims that the demon jumped on him and he lost consciousness.

M. Herman, Vl. Soloviev, 139/144, elaborates on this:

a. Previously, for Soloviev, "evil" was 'nothing' (absence of good); he did not believe in demons ('Soloviev ne croyait pas au démon' says Herman, *oc*, 141);

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b. since then "his apocalypse" (= end-time experience) arose within him (what he calls himself), with the Evil Antichrist (whom he saw active in thinkers such as Marx, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy) as an emerging figure; moreover: since then he believed in demons ("Il y crut désormais," says Herman, *ibid.*).

Conclusion. -- Throughout his life, Soloviev was a peaceful, naive, idealistic figure who sought to see "the good" everywhere.

Even where “evil” was real. In this, he shared something of the unrealistic optimism of a number of contemporaries for whom “man is essentially good”. That belief collapsed two years before his death—when he was correcting the proofs of *La justification du bien* .

Conclusion. -- Immediately, the dream of a rapid and thorough realization of the Kingdom of God became very fragile. He did, however, remain convinced that Christianity slowly transforms humanity. But the actual Kingdom of God, of which he had dreamed, was henceforth for after an 'Apocalypse', -- for after a general resurrection. Cf. Herman, oc, 139.

Note: Notwithstanding the Decalogue (Sinai Theophany) and the glory (Transfiguration Theophany) as 'trump cards', the Christianization of humanity seems to be proceeding extremely slowly, dealing with enormous resistance.

So much for the testing of the Kingdom of God.

The theological idealism of Soloviev.

This chapter is the conclusion.

Note-- The term 'idealism' is very versatile.

a. In Antiquity (and the Middle Ages) he stands for (Platonic) theory of ideas.

b. Since Modern times, he stands for a philosophy centered on abstract concepts.

1.-- Platon's ideocentrism.

Plato once founded a theory of forms.

For him, an idea is **a.** an essential form, **b.** which explains both the general and the ideal (imaginary) in a series of instances thereof that is in principle endless. It is a presupposition. However, the idea—at least the 'good' or “parting in the good”—is 'divine'.

2. -- Albinos of Smurna's Theological Theory of Ideas .

Albinus (100/175) is the first thinker who, centuries after Plato, situates the ideas, understood Platonically, in God. They then become divine ideas *stricto sensu*.

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3. -- Christian doctrine of ideas.

As O. Willmann states in **Geschichte des Idealismus**: educated Christians quickly saw that there is some formal similarity between the fundamental structure of Platonic thought and that of Christianity. Hence, they began to articulate Christian truths in Platonic terms—not without fundamentally and seriously transforming them. Thus, St. Augustine of Tagaste became and remained a Platonic scholar over time, even after his conversion.—Within a Christian framework, the ideas are ideas of the Holy Trinity.

Note-- O. Willmann, *Gesch.d.Idealismus, III (Der Idealismus der Neuzeit)*, Braunschweig, 1907-2, 66, mentions the Pythagorean Platonism of Johannes Kepler (1571/1630), known for his “Kepler’s laws” regarding planetary orbits.

“Ubi materia, ibi geometria” (Where there is matter, there is spatial mathematics) was his motto. The essential form of matter is captured by mathematics.

Our soul is attuned to this (Platon's 'noble yoke'). -- It is even more: it is “*imago Dei*”, an image of God.

In particular: the light of God's spirit in our soul, built in a created manner, grasps, as it were, together with God, the essence of the material data.

What he calls “the laws of planetary orbits” has, according to him, already been present in God’s mind as an idea from all eternity. When God created our souls, He planted an image of His creation models (ideas) in our souls.

Conclusion. -- One form of Christian Platonism.

4. -- Soloviev's theory of ideas regarding the evolution of creation.

Soloviev proclaims something analogous, but in the evolutionary realm.

4.1. -- The phenomenal foundation.

Soloviev is explicit: there are facts—'phenomena' in Platonic language—which are understandable if and only if something like the evolution of being forms (inorganic and biological) is presupposed. “Evolution in that sense cannot be denied.”

4.2. -- The interpretation of ideas.

We provide an overview.

A. *Biologically*, the higher life forms appear out of and after the lower forms. But ontologically, they exist beforehand.

In particular: the appearance from and after the lower forms of being does not imply at all that the lower forms of being create or produce the higher ones. -- Ontological reason: the higher ones are more complete, 'richer' in valuable reality.

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That which is not or less real cannot possibly produce that which is real or more real -- let alone 'create' (in the Biblical sense, for example).

Note: Many materialists circumvent this objection by stating that the lower forms of matter already contain the higher ones within themselves in a 'germ-like' or in one way or another 'potential' (= in rudimentary form).

Agreed, but then they are no longer purely lower, but lower and higher at the same time. -- Cf. Sol. Kosm. 47ff. (Soloviev's reasoning).

B. -- *The role of the lower forms of being.*

This is limited to providing material conditions, i.e., a favorable means of living.

Note: This amounts to the concept of 'biotope' (suitable habitat).

Thus, natural humanity is the appropriate means of living, after minimal deification, of pneumatic humanity.

C. -- *New and/or eternal.*

a. The evolution of the cosmos shows us new forms of being. In that sense, Soloviev truly assumes 'new' things.

b. Viewed from the Trinity, however, the idea that takes on material and created form in the course of the evolution of the cosmos is 'eternal' just as the Trinity itself is eternal.

God—with His ideas, which He possesses within Himself from all eternity—exists from all eternity (without beginning).

What appears to us as 'new' is merely the manifestation of something 'eternal' in God's spirit.

Note: The biblical idea of creation encompasses all forms of being: the idea of 'evolution' is also in God's spirit from all eternity. It guides Him in His work of creation.

One can still hear people say: “I don’t believe in God, because I am an evolutionist.” Such a person misunderstands the concept of a “creating God.” That is all.

Moreover: if God can create unchangeable things, why should He also be able to create unchangeable things? No one gives serious proof of that impossibility.

Final note. -- The reception.

During his lifetime, Soloviev was little accepted. But after his death, his influence was enormous.

H. Isuolski, Soul of Russia, 136f., states that **a.** the Russian Symbolists (Alexander Block, Andrei Biely), **b.** N. Berdiaev, S. Boulgakov, Neo-Orthodox theology (God-manhood as the central idea), **c.** a Russian Catholic movement (especially in Moscow) followed in Soloviev's footsteps.

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Study notes. (66)

Goal: to become acquainted with typical Eastern Russian Christian realism. 'Realism' is seeing “words/concepts” as actual representations.

I. -- Episodes from Soloviev's life (01/07). -- Crisis of faith. Survival of it. Crisis of Western philosophy (= Postmodernity). Resistance from Originalists and Slavophiles. Brutal elimination. The magic of Soloviev's personality. Mysticism.

II. -- Soloviev's Christian realism (07/16). -- The Eastern - Greek Church Fathers, from the Bible. -- **Appl. model** . -- The haimo.roöusa in the three evangelical accounts. Further explanation (Three synoptic Gospels. - Healing/incantation. Different method/same result. Automatic or not. Practical Fideism. Synergy. Trinitarian life.) -- Realism (textual (dogmatic, text-critical, literatological, -- hermeneutical). Interpretationism.

III. -- Soloviev's philosophical realism (17/23). —

1. The pure Nominalist (mere sounds).
2. The symbol-fideistic Nominalist (sounds filled with our experience).
3. The Realist (cited facts, eyewitnesses, relevant texts are reliable - real, actual - until further notice). Assessment problem.

4 . The Eastern Russian Realist (Liturgical ideation, -- veneration of the Gospel book; dramaturgical aspect).

IV. -- Soloviev's earthboundness (24/32). -- Sidereal world. Earth Mother belief. Plant nature. -- The Jesus Prayer: Jesus as the risen one omnipresent. His 'name' is the 'name' of all that the cosmos encompasses since his incarnation in the womb of Mary.

Note - Regarding Rom. 8:19/24. -- The animal nature. The human nature (Mystical body).

V. -- Thinkers before Soloviev (33/40). -- Westernization. Russian 'intelligentsia'. Influences Soloviev underwent. -- Russian - Christian Realists: Skovoroda, Chadaev, Khomiakov, Belinsky. - Soloviev (Humanism).

VI. -- Soloviev's cosmology (41/44). -- The five realms: inorganic, plant, animal, human (natural), human (pneumatic).

VII. -- Soloviev's cosmology (explanations) (45/65).

Note-- The theological idealism of Soloviev (63/65). -- The rich correspond to just as many ideas of the Holy Trinity.