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Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik. 1929
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EXISTENCE AND BEING

by

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With an introduction by
WERNER BROCK DR. PHIL

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Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?
— Das Nichts als das Andere zum Seienden ist der Schleier des Seins.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER
This human origin of untruth merely confirms by contrast the essential nature of truth "as such" which holds sway "over" man and which metaphysics regard as something imperishable and eternal, something that can never be founded on the transitoriness and fragility of, humankind. How then can the essence of truth possibly have a stable basis in human freedom?

Resistance to the proposition that the essence of truth is freedom is rooted in prejudices, the most obstinate of which contends that freedom is a property of man and that the nature of freedom neither needs nor allows of further questioning. As for man, we all know what he is.

4. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF FREEDOM

The indication, however, of the essential connection between truth as righteousness, and freedom, shatters these preconceived notions, provided of course that we are prepared to change our way of thinking. Consideration of the natural affinity between truth and freedom induces us to pursue the question as to the nature of man in one of its aspects—an aspect vouched for by our experience of a hidden ground in man's nature and being, so that we are transported in advance into the original living realm of truth. But at this point it also becomes evident that freedom is the basis of the inner possibility of righteousness only because it receives its own essence from that thing of earlier origin: the uniquely essential truth.

Freedom was initially defined as freedom for the revelation of something already overt. How are we to think of the essence of freedom so conceived? The Manifest (das Offenbare), to which a representative statement approximates in its rightness, is that which obviously "is" all the time and has some manifest form of behaviour. The freedom to reveal something overt lets whatever "is" at the moment be what it is. Freedom reveals itself as the "letting-be" of what is.

We usually talk of "letting be" when, for instance, we stand off from some undertaking we have planned. "We let it be" means: not touching it again, not having anything more to do with it. "Letting be" here has the negative sense of disregarding something, renouncing something, of indifference and even neglect.

The phrase we are now using, namely the "letting-be" of what-is, does not, however, refer to indifference and neglect, but to the very opposite of them. To let something be (Seinlassen) is in fact to have something to do with it (sich einlassen auf). This is not to be taken merely in the sense of pursuing, conserving, cultivating and planning some actuality casually met with or sought out. To let what-is be what it is means participating in something overt and its overtness, in which everything that "is" takes up its position and which entails such overtness. Western thought at its outset conceived this overtness as τά ἐλεημένα, the Unconcealed. If we translate ἐλεημένα...