

THE PERENNIAL SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY KARL JASPERS



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for Hannah Arendt,  
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# THE PERENNIAL SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY

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## WHAT IS PHILOSOPHICAL FAITH?

tion of philosophy must either be a nihilist or an illusionist. And if we do not live up to the preconceived picture, we are reproached with shallowness, inconsistency, trivial rationalism, unworldliness; we are attacked from both sides, by the proponents of an exclusive revealed faith and of a "science" that has developed into superstition.

We shall take up this challenge. We shall attempt to keep open the horizons of humanity in our philosophical thinking. Philosophy must not abdicate. Least of all today.

We live in the awareness of perils that were unknown to past centuries; our communication with the men of other ages may be broken off; we may heedlessly deprive ourselves of tradition; human consciousness may decline; there may be an end to open communication among men. In view of the dangers with which we are faced, we must in our philosophizing prepare for every eventuality, in order that our thinking may help humanity to preserve its highest potentialities. Precisely because of the catastrophe that has overtaken the Western world, philosophical thought can regain full independence only by discovering its relation to the primal source of humanity.

I wish to speak to you of philosophical faith, which underlies all these ideas. The subject is vast. In order to stress certain simple principles, I shall divide our inquiry into six lectures:

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1. What is philosophical faith? 2. Contents of philosophical faith. 3. Man. 4. Philosophy and religion. 5. Philosophy and antiphilosophy (demonology, deification of man, nihilism). 6. The philosophy of the future.

Faith is a different thing from knowledge. Giordano Bruno believed and Galileo knew. Outwardly they were both in the same situation. An inquisitorial court demanded of them both a retraction on threat of death. Bruno was willing to retract certain of his propositions, but not those which he regarded as essential; he died a martyr's death. Galileo retracted his theory that the earth revolved around the sun, and according to the apt but apocryphal anecdote later remarked: *Eppur si muove*. Here is the difference: On the one hand we have a truth that suffers by retraction, and on the other a truth which retraction leaves intact. Both men acted in keeping with the truth they stood for. A truth by which I live stands only if I become identical with it; it is historical in form; as an objective statement it is not universally valid, but it is absolute. A truth which I can prove, stands without me; it is universally valid, unhistorical, timeless, but not absolute; rather it depends on finite premises and methods of attaining knowledge of the finite. It would be unfitting to die for a truth that is susceptible to proof. But at what point the thinker who believes he has plumbed the depths, cannot retract his statements



some way justify everything. The apprehension of the absolute has, in the historicity of our here and now, an infinite character; although it is elucidated in universal propositions, it cannot be adequately defined and derived through any universal.

The absolute imperative confronts me as the command of my authentic self to my empirical existence, as the command as it were of what I am eternally in the face of the transcendent, to the temporality of my present life. If my will is grounded in the absolute, I apprehend it as that which I myself authentically am, and to which my empirical existence should correspond.

The Absolute itself does not become temporal. Wherever it is, it cuts straight across time. It erupts from the Transcendent into this world by way of our freedom.

3. *The reality of the world subsists ephemerally between God and existence:* The indeterminate character of all modes of known reality, the interpretive character of all cognition, the fact that we apprehend all being in the dichotomy of subject and object—these essential characteristics of the knowledge that is possible for us mean that all objects are mere phenomena, that no being that is the object of cognition is being in itself and the whole of being. The phenomenality of the empirical world is a basic insight of philosophical thought. This insight is not empirical; it can be attained only by an

act of transcendence; on the other hand, it imposes itself on every intellect that is capable of transcendence. It does not add a new particular item of knowledge to previous knowledge, but effects a shift in the whole consciousness of being. Hence the sudden but permanent light that dawns upon one after a more or less prolonged study of Kant. The student of Kant who fails to experience this revelation has not understood his teachings, has bogged down in a doctrine of which he does not realize the ultimate implication.

The world as a whole does not become an object for us. Every object is in the world, none is the world. Any definition or judgment of the world, whether it be an optimistic affirmation or a pessimistic negation of the universal harmony, leads to generalizations which give preference to some realities at the expense of others. If we reject such generalizations, we realize that the world is not self-contained, that it is not grounded in itself, and we become willing to open ourselves permanently to all the modes of the world's being, to what happens outside ourselves and to what we ourselves have done in the temporal course of life. Such willingness is bound up with:

first: recognition of the absolute transcendence of God in relation to the world: the *deus absconditus* recedes into the distance when I seek to fathom him, he is infinitely near in the absolute historicity of



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also to nothingness, as it were, and so nothing is left.

3. The *meeting with* God is interpreted in a selfish or sentimental sense. This religion of prayer holds the danger of an egocentric importuning of God.

Another danger is the tendency to imagine that God's will can be known with certainty; this becomes a source of fanaticism. Many of the horrible things done in the world have been justified by God's will. Fanatics fail to hear the many meanings inherent in every experience of God's voice. Anyone who knows for certain what God says and wants, makes God into a being in the world, over which he disposes, and is thus on the road to superstition. But no worldly claim or justification can be based upon the voice of God. What is solid certainty in the individual and sometimes can become so for a community, cannot be concretely formulated in terms of universal validity.

4. *God's commandments* are transformed from simple foundations of morality into abstract juridical propositions and develop into an infinity of particular rulings.

5. The sense of *historicity* is perverted into a conception of history as a process independent of man. Then man imagines that he is the master of history, whether intellectually in a knowledge of the whole, or actively, in the conviction that he is familiar with the divine plan and is carrying it out. Or there



to apprehend every possible harmony.

But then again reason strives to effect the necessary break-through in every totality. It forbids definitive harmony. It goes to the extreme to apprehend authentic being.

Its root is not a destructive will, such as is manifested in the relativism of intellectual sophistry, but openness to the infinity of meaningful contents. To doubt is imperative to it, but it doubts in order to gain pure truth. The understanding, as unanchored thought, is nihilistic; reason, as grounded in existence, is salvation from nihilism, because it preserves the confidence that through its movement in conjunction with the understanding, it will, amid the conflicts, divisions, and abysses of the concrete world, regain in the end its certitude of transcendence.

Reason is the Comprehensive in us; it does not flow from the primal source of being, but is an instrument of existence. It is the existential absolute that serves to actualize the primal source and bring it to the widest manifestation.

There is something like a climate of reason. The passion for the open works in cool clarity. The rational man lives resolutely out of the root of his own historical soil, and at the same time he gives himself to every mode of historicity which he encounters, in order to penetrate to the depth of the world's historicity, through which alone a sympathetic un-

derstanding of everything becomes possible. From this develops what was also the motive force from the outset—the love of being, of everything existent as existent in its transparency, thanks to which its relations to the primal source become visible. Reason enriches man by sharpening his hearing, increases his capacity for communication, makes him capable of change through new experience, but while doing all this it remains essentially one, unswerving in its faith, living in actually efficacious memory of everything that was once real to it.

He who engages in philosophy cannot sufficiently praise reason, to which he owes all his achievements. Reason is the bond that unites all the modes of the Comprehensive. It allows no existent to separate itself absolutely, to sink into isolation, to be reduced to nothingness by fragmentation. Nothing must be lost. Where reason is effective, that which is strives for unification. A universal fellowship arises, in which men are open to all things and everything concerns them. Reason quickens dormant springs, frees what is hidden, makes possible authentic struggles. It presses toward the One that is all, it does away with the delusions that fixate the One prematurely, incompletely, in partisanship.

Reason demands boundless *communication*, it is itself the total will to communicate. Because, in time, we cannot have objective possession of a truth that is the eternal truth, and because being-there is



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possible only with other being-there, and existence can come into its own only with other existence, communication is the form in which truth is revealed in time.

The great seductions are: through belief in God to withdraw from men; through supposed knowledge of the absolute truth to justify one's isolation; through supposed possession of being itself to fall into a state of complacency that is in truth lovelessness. And to these may be added the assertion that every man is a self-contained monad, that no one can emerge from himself, that communication is a delusion.

In opposition to these stands philosophical faith, which may also be called faith in communication. For it upholds these two propositions: Truth is what joins us together; and, truth has its origin in communication. The only reality with which man can reliably and in self-understanding ally himself in the world, is his fellow man. At all the levels of communication among men, companions in fate lovingly find the road to the truth. This road is lost to the man who shuts himself off from others in stubborn self-will, who lives in a shell of solitude.



the likeness of the godhead: God created man in His image. Man fell from God and now embodies both the likeness to God, and sin.

The Christians continued on this road. So definite was their knowledge of man's limitation that they found it even in the man-god: In the deepest torment Jesus experienced what he expressed on the Cross in the words of the Psalm: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Man cannot stand on himself.

This candid view of man's limitation permits the Christians in their legends to look upon even the holiest of men as capable of despair and guilt. Peter, questioned by the maid and in fear of the executioners, thrice denied Jesus. Rembrandt painted this man (the painting, now in Leningrad, was for a time on exhibit in Holland): Peter's face at the moment of his denial, unforgettably revealing a basic trait of our human nature; the menacing executioners; the furious, triumphant maid; the mild gaze of Jesus in the background.

St. Paul and St. Augustine understood the impossibility of the good man being really good. Why can he not be really good? When he does a good deed, he must know that he is doing a good deed; but this very knowledge is self-satisfaction and therefore pride. Without self-reflection there can be no human goodness, with self-reflection the goodness cannot be blameless and pure.

of life in general. The progress of knowledge increases our nonknowledge of the fundamental questions and thus suggests the existence of limits and the need to draw upon sources other than cognition.

Thirty years ago a geologist asked me to deliver a lecture on the origin of life. I replied: The greatness of biology is revealed by the fact that in contrast to earlier unclear conceptions of transitions, it is coming to an increasingly definite realization that this origin is unfathomable. The geologist: But either life must have originated on earth, that is, from the inorganic, or its germs must have flown in from the cosmos. Myself: This looks like a perfect disjunctive proposition, but obviously both alternatives are impossible. The geologist: Then you take refuge in miracles? Myself: No, but in knowledge I seek to gain only the essential nonknowledge. The geologist: That I do not understand. You are pursuing something negative. The world is after all understandable, otherwise our whole science would be meaningless. Myself: But perhaps what gives it meaning is precisely and solely that through understanding it comes up against that which is authentically ununderstandable. And perhaps it is meaningful to express the ununderstandable through the play of thought at the limit of cognition. To conceive of life germs in the cosmos, flying everywhere, creating life, seems just such a play of thought, because life of this kind has always been. But that is a



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attempt to investigate anything more than aspects of his nature.

Science, it is true, shows us remarkable and highly surprising things about man, but as it attains greater clarity, the more evident it becomes that man as a whole can never become the object of scientific investigation. Man is always more than he knows about himself. This is true both of man in general and of the individual man. We can never draw up a balance sheet and know the answer, either concerning man in general, or concerning any individual man.

To absolutize knowledge that is always particular into a whole knowledge of man leads to the utter neglect of the human image of man. And a neglect of the image of man leads to a neglect of man himself. For the image of man that we hold to be true is itself a factor in our life. It influences our behavior toward ourselves and others, our vital attitude, and our choice of tasks.

Each of us for himself is certain of what man is, in a way that precedes scientific research and also comes after it. This is the prerogative of our freedom, which knows itself bound up with cogent knowledge, but is not included in it as an object of cognition. For in so far as we make ourselves the object of scientific inquiry, we see no freedom, but factuality, finiteness, form, relation, causal necessity. But it is by our freedom that we have awareness of



and in the natural sciences—does indeed encompass something universal, but never reality as a whole.

But it would be a new fallacy to effect a leap within knowledge to other knowledge. To imagine, for instance, that at the limit of the knowable there is a creator of the world, and to suppose that this creator intervenes in the course of the world. As far as knowledge is concerned, these are merely metaphoric tautologies for nonknowledge.

The world is disclosed as having no foundation in itself. But in himself man finds what he finds nowhere else in the world: something unknowable, undemonstrable, something that is never object, that evades all scientific inquiry: he finds freedom and what goes with it. In this sphere I have experience not through knowledge of something, but through action. Here the road leads through the world and ourselves to transcendence.

To those who deny it freedom cannot be proved like things that occur in the world. But since the primal source of our action and our consciousness of being lies in freedom, what man is, is not merely the object of knowledge, but also of *faith*. Man's certainty as to his humanity is one of the basic elements of philosophical faith.

But man's freedom is inseparable from his *consciousness of his finite nature*.

Let us briefly outline the main points: Man's finiteness is first of all the finiteness of all living

things. He is dependent upon his environment, upon nourishment and sensory contents; he is inexorably exposed to the mute and blind natural process; he must die.

Man's finiteness is secondly his dependence on other men, and on the historical world produced by the human collectivity. He can rely on nothing in this world. The fruits of fortune come and go. The human order is ruled not only by justice, but also by the power of the moment, that declares its arbitrary will to be the organ of justice, and hence is always based partly upon untruth. State and national community can destroy men who work for them all their lives. Reliance can be placed only on the loyalty of man in existential communication, but this cannot be calculated. For what one relies on here is not an objective, demonstrable reality. And the man closest to one can at any time fall sick, go mad, die.

Man's finiteness lies thirdly in the nature of his cognition, in his dependence on the experience that is given him, especially on direct perception. My intellect can apprehend nothing but the matter of direct perception that fills in my concept.

Man becomes conscious of his finiteness by comparison with something that is not finite, with the absolute and the infinite:

The *absolute* becomes actual for him in his decision, the fulfillment of which directs him to an



origin other than that which science makes intelligible to him in his finite existence.

The *infinite* is touched, though not apprehended, first in the idea of infinity, then in the conception of a divine knowledge essentially different from man's finite knowledge, finally in thoughts of immortality. The infinite which though unfathomable does enter into man's consciousness, causes man to transcend his finiteness by becoming aware of it.

Through the presence of the absolute and the infinite, man's finiteness does not remain merely the unconscious datum of his empirical existence; but through the light of transcendence it becomes the basic trait in his consciousness of his created nature. Thus though man cannot annul his finiteness, he does break through it.

But if in the absoluteness of his decision in the face of everything finite in the world, he becomes through his independence, certain of his infinity as his authentic selfhood, this infinity also reveals a new mode of his finiteness. This finiteness as existence means that even as himself man cannot ascribe himself to himself. It is not through himself that he is originally himself. And just as he does not owe his empirical existence in the world to his own will, his self is a free gift to him by transcendence. He must be given to himself over and over again, if he is not to lose himself. If man maintains his inner integrity in the face of fate and even of death, he

cannot do so by himself alone. What helps him here is of a different kind than any help in the world. Transcendent help reveals itself to him solely in the fact that he can be himself. That he can stand by himself, he owes to an intangible hand, extended to him from transcendence, a hand whose presence he can feel only in his freedom.

Man as object of investigation and man as freedom are known to us from radically different sources. The former is a content of knowledge, the latter a fundamental trait of our faith. But if freedom for its part becomes a content of knowledge and an object of investigation, a special form of superstition arises:

*Faith* stands on the road to freedom that is not an absolute and not an empty freedom, but that is experienced as the possibility of being given or not given to oneself. It is only through freedom that I become certain of transcendence. By freedom, to be sure, I attain to a point of independence from the world, but precisely through the consciousness of my radical attachment to transcendence. For it is not through myself that I am.

*Superstition* on the other hand arises by way of a something that is the express content of faith, and thus also through a supposed knowledge of freedom. A modern form of superstition for example is psychoanalysis taken as a philosophy, and the pseudo-medicine that makes man's freedom a supposed ob-



aware of his task and potentialities. He finds himself in the most desperate situation, but in such a way, that from it issues the strongest appeal to raise himself up through his freedom. And that is why man has again and again been represented as the most astoundingly contradictory of creatures, the most wretched and the most magnificent.

The proposition that man is finite and unfulfillable has an ambivalent character. It is an insight, it derives from demonstrable knowledge of the finite. But in its universality it points to a faith content, in which the freedom of human tasks is generated. In the fundamental experience of his nature, transcending the plane of knowledge, he is aware of both his unfulfillment and his infinite potentiality, his bondage and his freedom that breaks through this bondage.

Conscious of his freedom, man desires to become what he can and should be. He conceives an *ideal* of his nature. As on the plane of cognition, the idea of man as an object of scientific inquiry may lead to a falsely definitive image of him, so on the plane of freedom he may falsely choose a path leading to an absolute ideal. From helpless questioning and bewilderment, he thus aspires to take refuge in a universal that he can imitate in its concrete forms.

There are numerous images of man that have served as ideals with which we wished to identify



can in a sense be schemata of ideas, road signs. That is the truth in the great philosophical conceptions of the Noble Man in China, or of the Stoic Wise Man. They are not images of fulfillment, they only stimulate man's desire to rise above himself.

Something else again is orientation by the honored and beloved historical figure. We may ask: What would he say in this case, how would he act? And we enter into a living discussion with him, though without regarding him as the absolutely true model to be imitated unconditionally. For each man is a man, and therefore lives in finiteness and imperfection, and also in error.

All ideals of man are impossible, because man's potentialities are infinite. There can be no perfect man. This has important philosophical consequences.

1. The true value of man lies not in the species or type that he approximates, but in the historical individual, for whom no substitution or replacement is possible. The value of each individual man can be regarded as unassailable only when men cease to be regarded as expendable material, to be stamped by a universal. The social and professional types that we approximate have bearing only on our role in the world.

2. The idea that all men are equal is obviously false, in so far as psychological aptitudes and talents are concerned,—it is also untrue considered as the



2 reality of a social order, in which at best there can be equal opportunities and equity before the law.

2 The essential equality of all men lies alone in those depths, where to each man the road is opened by freedom to attain to God by leading an ethical life. It is the equality of a value that no human knowledge can ascertain or objectify, of the individual as an eternal soul. It is the equality of rights, and of the eternal judgment according to which a man merits a place in heaven or hell. This equality means: a respect for every man which forbids that any man should be treated only as a means and not at the same time as an end in himself.

The danger facing man is the self-assurance which tells him that he already is what he is capable of becoming. The faith by which he finds the road of his potentialities, becomes then a possession that concludes his road, whether it take the form of moral self-complacency or of pride in his innate gifts.

From the Stoic view that man should live so as to be pleasing to himself, to the harmony with himself that Kant ascribes to the man who acts in an ethical way, there has prevailed an arbitrary self-complacency, to which St. Paul and St. Augustine, indeed Kant himself opposed the idea of man corrupted in the root.

The essential is that man as existence in his freedom should experience the fact of being given to himself by transcendence. Then human freedom is



the entire destinies of the West: what is the future of Biblical religion?

*Against the claim to exclusivity.*

The substance of faith is regarded not merely as absolute truth, but also as exclusive truth. The Christian does not say: this is my way, but, this is the way; and he quotes Christ, the son of God, as saying: I am the way, the truth, and the life. The believer in Christ is permitted to think of himself: Ye are the salt of the earth: ye are the light of the world.

Such objections as the following may be raised: If God can have men as children, it seems more likely that all men, and not just a few, or certain individuals, should be his children.—The claim that only those who believe in Christ will have eternal life, is not convincing. For noble men and pure in soul are quite discernible outside of Christianity; it would be absurd for them to be lost, particularly if we compare them to certain among the most conspicuous Christians in history, who have been none too lovable or admirable in any human sense.—The inner conversion of man from his own self-will to boundless self-sacrifice and devotion is not found solely among Christians.—But all these arguments fail to strike the core.

Wherever in the world men are struck by a religious truth, this truth has absolute validity for them. Yet—outside the Biblical world—they do not



thereby exclude the possibility of another truth for other men. From a philosophical point of view, this general attitude of men is also the sound one. And here we must clarify certain fundamental differences in the meaning of truth (which we had in mind in our discussion of Bruno and Galileo).

When I act absolutely because I believe absolutely, there is no sufficient reason and no goal on the basis of which my action is purposeful, that is, rationally intelligible. The absolute is not universal, but is historical in the impenetrable, self-illuminated dynamism of the present act. It is profoundly unknown, much as can be known and said through it. Nothing can take its place, it is always unique and yet it may serve others not only as an orientation, but as a prototype by which to recognize something of their own, which differs from it in its historical manifestation and yet coincides with it in the light of eternity. That which is historically, existentially true is indeed absolute, but this does not mean that the expression or manifestation of it is a truth for all.

Conversely: what is universally valid for all (like scientific and other logically true propositions), is for that very reason not absolute, is universally valid for all from a specific standpoint and on the basis of a definite method, hence under certain conditions and not absolutely. This kind of true proposition is cogent for all whose intelligence can grasp it. But

it is relative to the standpoint and method by which it is disclosed. It is existentially indifferent, because it is finite, particular, objectively cogent,—no man can or should die for it.

In short: The absoluteness of historical truth implies the relativity of every formulation of it, and of all its historically finite manifestations. Universally valid statements can be based only upon relative standpoints and methods. Formulable faith contents must not be treated like universally true propositions; the absolute awareness of truth in faith is something fundamentally different from the comprehension of the universal validity of scientifically true propositions, which are always particular. Historical absoluteness does not carry with it the universal validity of its manifestations in word, dogma, cult, ritual, institutions. It is the confusion of the two that makes it possible to claim exclusivity for a religious truth.

It is in itself a fallacy to treat the universally valid in scientific knowledge as an absolute by which one might live, to expect of science what it can never achieve. True, my devotion to truth forbids me to overlook anything that is intellectually cogent, and enjoins me on the contrary to allow it full scope. But to claim for its content what only metaphysical meanings can provide, that is, a sense of contentment with being, of repose in being, is a deception that offers not fulfillment but ultimate emptiness.



Thus the will to power became a basic factor in this religion, which originally had nothing to do with power. The claim to world domination is a consequence of the claim to exclusive truth. In the great process of secularization—that is, the movement to retain Biblical values while casting off their religious form—even the fanaticism of unbelief shows the influence of its Biblical origin. The secularized philosophical positions within the Western civilizations have frequently revealed this trait of absolutism, this persecution of other beliefs, this aggressive profession of faith, this inquisitorial attitude towards other faiths, always in consequence of absolute claims to a truth which each one believes he possesses.

In view of all this, philosophical faith must reluctantly recognize that where discussion is broken off and reason countenanced only under certain conditions, the best intentions of maintaining open communication are doomed to failure.

I do not understand how anyone can maintain an attitude of neutrality toward the claim to exclusivity. That would be possible if intolerance could be regarded as a strange and harmless anomaly. But this is by no means the case with the claim to exclusivity that is rooted in the Bible. By its very nature it tends to assert itself through powerful institutions that keep constantly arising, and it stands forever in readiness to kindle new fires in which to

burn heretics. This lies in the very nature of the claim to exclusivity in all forms of the Biblical religion, regardless how many believers have personally not the slightest leaning toward violence, let alone toward the annihilation of those whom they regard as unbelievers.

Because intolerance against intolerance (but only against intolerance) is indispensable, intolerance against the exclusivist claim is necessary when it not only propounds a doctrine for consideration by others, but strives to force it on others by law, by compulsory schools, etc.

Quite different is the Christian faith that frees itself from the exclusivist claim and its consequences. Our era confronts us with the question whether the declining belief in Christ—which would by no means mean the end of Christianity as a Biblical religion—is only a temporary decline or whether it is the consequence of a definitive historical transformation. Today it appears that fewer and fewer people believe in Christ as the only begotten son of God, as the unique mediator sent by God. The truth of this is hard to test. Men of high personal stature still seem to be imbued with faith. No one can say in advance whether a transformed faith in Christ can be captured and made into the motive force of a Biblical religion freed from the stigma of exclusivity. And what this faith would mean, is a question to be decided within the framework of the



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Biblical religion after it has succeeded by virtue of its own profound dynamism, in reintegrating this absolutized form of it, which is abjuring its true origin.

The claim to exclusivity is present in the Christian faith, in the Jewish doctrine of the law, in the various forms of national religion, in Islam. Biblical religion is the inclusive historical area from which, if we overlook other contents, each denomination derives its particular emphasis. The whole Bible, including the Old and the New Testament, is the sacred book only of the Christian denominations. For the Jews the New Testament, which was produced by Jews, is not regarded as part of the Bible; but in its ethical and monotheistic content it is no less important for the Jewish religion than for the Christian. Islam does not regard the Bible as sacred, although Islam sprang from the same religious foundation under the influence of Jews and Christians.

The Bible and Biblical religion have from a philosophical point of view this essential characteristic: they form no total doctrine and offer nothing definitive. The claim to exclusivity does not belong to Biblical religion as a whole, but only to certain forms that mark fixations of the historical movement of this religion. The claim to exclusivity is the work of man and not built on God, who provided man with many roads to himself.



once more the God of Israel,—but at the same time in his role of creator, he becomes the universal God, who lives for all peoples and even takes pity on the heathen of Nineveh as against the small-hearted Jonah.

4. Jesus becomes the Christ God. But contrary to this from the outset are the words of Jesus himself: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." (Mark 10:18).

Such examples can be multiplied. One might venture the assertion that in the Bible seen as a whole, everything occurs in polarities. For every formulation one will ultimately find the opposite formulation. Nowhere is the whole, full, pure truth—because it cannot exist in any sentence of human speech or in any living human figure. In our limited view of things, we are always losing sight of the other pole. We touch upon the truth only when, in clear consciousness of the polarities, we approach it through them.

Thus we find opposed to one another: the religion of the cult and the prophetic religion of the pure ethos; the religion of the law and the religion of love; the locking of religion into rigid forms (in order to preserve the precious heritage of faith down through the generations) and its opening up for the man who only believes in God and loves him; the religion of the priests and the free religion of prayer that is carried on by individuals; the national God



Except for a very few rudiments, the Bible is lacking in philosophical self-consciousness. Hence the power of the speaking existence, the source of revealed truth—but hence also the persistent excesses in opposite directions. The guidance of critical thought is lacking. Passion is corrected by passion.

The Bible is the deposit of a thousand years of human borderline experience. Through these experiences the mind of man was illumined, he achieved certainty of God and thus of himself. And this is what creates the unique atmosphere of the Bible.

In the Bible we see man in his fundamental modes of failure. But in such a way that existential experience, and realization, are manifested precisely in his failure.

In our approach to the Bible the essential is always to regain from the deviations the truth that is always the same, though it is never objectively, definitively present. True transformation is a return to the primal source. Garments that have grown old must be cast off, garments suited to the present must be found. But the primal source is not what was in the beginning, but what is eternally present and authentic. On the other hand, to formulate the primal truth is to dress it in a temporal garment. Yet in time, this garment corresponds to the temporal form of faith.

But it is not only old clothes that must be cast



churches.

We must abandon the religion of Christ, that sees God in Christ and bases the doctrine of salvation on an idea of sacrifice found in Deutero-Isaiah and applied to Christ.

Each of these three forms of religion becomes narrow, though they all originated in an element of truth. But the national religion as such cannot be the absolute religion and can only express a surface aspect of the truth. The religion of the law formalizes the profound idea of law, dissipates it in absurdities of all kinds.

The religion of Christ contains the truth that God speaks to man through man. But God speaks through many men, in the Bible through the successive prophets of whom Jesus is the last. No man can be God; God speaks exclusively through no man, and what is more, his speech through every man has many meanings.

The religion of Christ furthermore embodies the truth of referring the individual to himself. The spirit of Christ belongs to every man. It is the *pneuma*, i.e. the spirit of an enthusiasm surging upward to the supra-sensory. It is also the openness to one's own suffering as a road to transcendence; he who has taken the cross upon himself can ascertain the authentic in failure. The spirit of Christ is finally a bond with the God-given *nobilitas ingenita* which I follow or which I betray, the actuality of the di-



vine in man. But if the religion of Christ means that I should apprehend in faith the redeeming Christ outside me by realizing the spirit of Christ within me, then a twofold conclusion is inescapable for philosophical thought: the Christ within me is not exclusively bound up with the historical Jesus Christ; and Jesus as Christ, as the God-man, is a myth. The process of demythicization must not arbitrarily halt at this point. Even the profoundly meaningful myth remains a myth and a fancy, and becomes an objective guaranty only through a religious truth (that philosophy cannot see) or through deception.

2. *The re-establishment of the polar tensions:* In order to appropriate the truth that is manifested in the Bible, we must be fully conscious of the contradictions that occur in it. Contradictions have diverse meanings. Rational contradictions lead to alternatives only one term of which can be formally true. Opposing forces always constitute a polar whole, through which the truth manifests itself. Dialectic contradictions constitute a movement of thought, through which the truth that is not accessible to direct statement speaks.

Biblical religion is distinguished by its abundance of contradiction, polar tension, dialectic. It is not by will alone, but by constant openness to the contradictory, that we can retain the dynamic energy of tension, or retrieve it where it has been lost. Ration-

alism and the desire for repose, as well as the destructive will to fight, strive to do away with the polarities, in order to establish the rule of the definitive and onesided.

We can recognize in the Scriptures the fundamental tensions which up until now have kept the Western world in motion: God and the world, church and state, religion and philosophy, religion of the law and prophetic religion, cult and ethos.

The eternal truth can accordingly be apprehended only if we are open to the insoluble problems inherent in empirical existence, if we continuously question all our achievements, if we do not lose sight of extreme situations, of our absolute failures.

3. *Clarification and enhancement of the eternal truth:* By our experience of the tensions, the dialectic and the contradictions striving toward a decision, we can positively apprehend what words can express only abstractly—the truth that we outlined in formulating the basic characteristics of Biblical religion. Let us restate the elements of this truth, which constitutes philosophical faith. They are:

- the idea of the one God;
- the realization of the absolute nature of the decision between good and evil in finite man;
- love as the fundamental actualization of the eternal in man;
- the act—both inward and external—as the test of



man;

types of moral world order which are always historically absolute, although none of their manifestations is absolute or exclusive;

the incompleteness of the created world, the fact that it does not stand by itself, the inapplicability of all types of order to borderline cases, the experience of the extreme;

the idea that the ultimate and only refuge is with God.

How pale does all we have said seem beside the religious reality. As soon as we set out to discuss the question, we enter upon the plane of philosophical faith. We are thus led automatically to interpret renewal of religious faith as a return to the primal source, as a renewal of the philosophical faith that is implicit in the religious, as a transformation of religion into philosophy (or philosophical religion). But this, though perhaps it will be the road of a minority, will certainly not be that of mankind.

The philosopher cannot possibly tell the theologians and the churches what to do. The philosopher can only hope to help create the preliminary requirements. He would like to help prepare the ground and to help produce awareness of the intellectual situation necessary for the growth of what he himself cannot create.

What more and more people have been saying for half a century continues to be quickly forgotten,

though nearly everyone has been saying it: a new era is arising, in which man, down to the very last individual, is subject to a process of transformation more radical than ever before in history. But since the transformation in our objective living conditions goes so deep, the transformation in our forms of religious belief must go correspondingly deeper in order to mould the new, to fructify and spiritualize it. A change is to be expected in what we have called the matter, the dress, the manifestation, the language of faith, a change as far-reaching as all the other changes that have taken place in our era—or else the eternal truth of Biblical religion will recede beyond the horizon of man; he will no longer experience this truth, and it is impossible to say what might take its place. Hence it is in order, that we do everything in our power to restore the eternal truth; we must plumb its very depths and, unconcerned over what is transient and historical, utter this truth in a new language.

Here the philosopher only becomes involved in questions that he cannot answer, though he knows that the future will assuredly give the answer. Such questions are:

Which dogmas can be dropped because they have actually become alien to modern man and lost their credibility? Even if for the present we say nothing about dropping dogmas, the thinking man must still ask: which dogmas are no longer fully believed



even by the professed communicants of the religions?

What solid religious foundation remains?

Is there an element of absurdity that is tenable or even desirable as a content of faith today? It would seem that the capacity for the crudest absurdities has if anything been astoundingly intensified in modern man. He succumbs so easily to superstition. But where there is superstition, only faith can conquer, not science. What absurdity might today still be the inescapable sign of an authentic faith content?

If all dogmas are to be transformed, by whom will it be done?

Does the fact that the masses of the people continue to attend church services indicate that they gravitate toward an absolute faith? Or must their capacity for devotion to the point of martyrdom be rekindled through new contents that will be found by an uncompromising quest for the truth? Or will it in the end turn out, as Plato thought, that deliberate concealment of the truth by an élite is indispensable in order to educate the masses and preserve even the deepest meanings? Here I believe that the answer is: No. What lies today would be indispensable and effective vehicles of truth? Surely there are no such lies.

Again we realize that with such questions we do not strike at the core of the matter. The religious

essence itself, inaccessible to the philosopher, must be present in advance. It cannot be construed, it cannot be viewed from outside. The significance of the cult, of rites, of festivals, of dogmatic certainty, of priests, is lost in philosophical discussion. Is this a crucial argument against all philosophy? Is the idea of philosophical faith today as in all previous epochs a lifeless illusion? We are told so. But I do not believe it.

What the philosopher has to say of religion is more than inadequate, he does not seem able to touch religion when he discusses it.

Philosophy strives always to broaden its horizon. It extends the scope of its vision from the particular denominational religion to the more comprehensive Biblical religion, and thence to the truth in all religions. But in so doing it loses precisely that which distinguishes actual religion. While philosophers suppose that by broadening their scope to the universal, they can penetrate the depths of religion, they lose sight of the fact that religions are always bound up with the tangible symbols in which they are embodied. Though they see that such tangible embodiments of the collective and traditional faith are the necessary form of religion, religion remains alien to them because they do not have this faith, and thus are indeed unable to understand what they see.

Philosophy, whether it affirms or combats relig-

? What is  
religion  
imposed?



ion, withdraws from religion in fact, and yet is constantly concerned with it.

a) Philosophy takes up the cause of the Biblical religion: Western philosophy cannot hide from itself the fact that none of its great philosophers up to and including Nietzsche approached philosophical thought without a thorough knowledge of the Bible. This is no accident. We repeat:

First: Philosophy cannot give man the same thing as religion. Hence it at least leaves the field open for religion. It does not force itself on mankind as the whole and exclusive truth for all men.

Second: Philosophy can scarcely hold its position in the world if the human collectivity does not live in the people through religious faith. Philosophical communication in thought has no compelling force, but only clarifies for the individual man, what arises from within himself. Philosophy would be dispersed among fewer and fewer individuals and finally disappear, if the human collectivity did not live by what becomes clear in philosophical faith. Philosophy cannot realize the sociologically effective transmission of the contents indispensable to man, which occurs solely through religious tradition assimilated from early childhood, thus becoming the vehicle also of philosophy.

Third: The contents of the Bible can be replaced for us by no other book.

b) Philosophy goes beyond Biblical religion: The

development of communications, which has brought all the things ever produced on earth into contact with one another, and which has created a need for ever closer understanding among men, has in addition to the Bible revealed to us two other great religious areas: India with the Upanishads and Buddhism, China with Confucius and Laotse. The soul of the thoughtful man cannot remain closed to the depth of the truth emanating from these sources. The soul strives to extend its horizons without end.

Here an error is likely to crop up. The Enlightenment sought to find the true religion by assembling the best from all religions. The result however was not the authentic truth, purified of historical accident, but a collection of abstractions watered down by rationalism. The source of this universal faith was in fact only a critical, measuring intelligence. The profound meaning, the poignancy was lost. Trivial generalizations remained.

Since all faith is historical, its truth does not lie in a sum of articles of faith, but in a primal source that is historically manifested in various forms. True, the many religions lead to the one truth, but this truth cannot be attained at one stroke, but only along the roads that were really traveled, roads which cannot be traveled all at once and in the same way.

Hence no rational critique can apprehend this truth. On the contrary, man must, in the context of



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which in that case could be corrected by insight; it is a fundamental error, a complete negation that is thinly disguised as an affirmation by means of substitute constructions. It can be corrected by man self-given and reborn through rediscovering himself in thought. Pseudo-philosophy runs in broad streams through history. Every philosophy must, in transitional phases, succumb to this sham. A philosophically inclined man becomes a philosopher by transcending the anti-philosophy that is always present in himself.

We call unbelief any attitude that asserts absolute immanence and denies transcendence. The question then arises: what is this immanence? Unbelief says: Empirical existence—reality—the world. But empirical existence is only ephemeral presence; unbelief tries to grasp it by affirming becoming and appearance as such.—Reality slowly recedes when I try to know it in itself and as a whole; unbelief tries to get hold of it by absolutizing particular realities.—The world is incomplete, not fully knowable, it is idea; unbelief falsely makes of it an object in a self-contained world system.—In short, unbelief lives in illusion, in isolated realities, in world systems.

Unbelief is never in contact with being, but it cannot avoid admitting in superstitions a substitute for being. It recognizes only immanence, but it cannot avoid asserting a perverted transcendence of this sort.



The numerous varieties of anti-philosophy assume the forms of unbelief. They conceive of themselves as faith or knowledge or intuition. They invoke immediate perceptions and reasons.

I shall choose three examples of philosophical unbelief—demonology, the deification of man, nihilism. We encounter them in both open and concealed forms. They are so closely interrelated that one form of this unbelief will soon call forth another. They are exceedingly hard to grasp, because they evade definite formulation. In their utterances they make use, unconsciously deceiving themselves and others, of the implements of philosophy. In trying to characterize them, we easily arrive at false definitions, for we try to delimit a chaos that in fact is continuously changing, continuously revealing a different face, forever contradicting itself, and always ready to attack philosophy at any point. We are facing no clearcut adversary. In the demonological conception, mystagogy is combined with the idolization of men, to whom the initiates submit, and with nihilism that cancels out all the rest.

The characterizations which I shall attempt are ideal-typical constructions of possibilities that are inherent in us all. But each man is always to a greater degree and primarily the possibility of faith that overcomes these modes of unbelief. And even these modes of unbelief contain some truth, upon which we must finally reflect.

### *Demonology*

We call demonology a conception which makes being reside in powers, in effective, form-constituting forces, constructive and destructive, that is in demons, benevolent and malignant, in many gods; these powers are perceived as directly evident, and the perceptions are translated into ideas and formulated as a doctrine. Good and evil alike are hal-<sup>2</sup>lowed, and the whole is enhanced by a gazing into dark depths that are manifested in images. The immanent itself is experienced as passion, power, vitality, beauty, destruction, cruelty. There is to be sure no transcendence, for in this conception all being is immanent, but this immanence is not exhausted by the reality accessible to abstract consciousness; it is more than this; in Simmel's words, it passes as an immanent transcendence, in so far as its reality does not resolve into the reality that can be apprehended by the senses and the reason. The paradoxical term immanent transcendence no longer refers to things as the possible language of God but as a power and factor in the world, and a power that is necessarily split into many forces.

Where man surrenders to these forces, his experience acquires its enhanced meaning, its radiance, from a sense of mystery. These forces are perceived with horror, emotion, spectral shudders, or ecstasy, and take on a tangible character. The struggle against them places man himself in the world of the



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this was done either by transforming them from forces into symbols, a cipher of transcendence, or by a mythical subordination of the demons as angels, messengers and intermediaries of God and the devil. Demonology vanished or was brought under control.

But when demonology is revived in our present-day world, this mythological mode of thought produces only unreal fantasies. It is an illusion to treat demons as realities, to accept them as facts, to "reckon with" them. There are no demons. Such anti-rational acceptance of so-called experience gives rise to a false interpretation of reality as a sum of forces. This absolutizing of a vague feeling leads to a self-delusion that makes it possible to gain prestige by identifying oneself with demonic forces and, in the confusion of an age made spiritually arid by science, to justify one's actions as dictated by such forces.

If the alternative between demons and God is resolved in no clear decision, a confusion of conception brings confusion into the emotions, the thinking, and the attitude of man.

2. It is quite a different matter when the demonic serves as an expression for something *unfathomable* that is situated at the *limit of reality*, of my will and being, something that though not actually perceived is nevertheless conceived as an effective entity. Here we no longer have to do with demonologism, but



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In so far as the demonic (in this narrower sense) is entirely lucid, it is the Devil. "The Devil is solely mind and therefore absolute consciousness and lucidity" (it is characteristic for Goethe's wholly different interpretation that Mephisto is not demonic, because he is merely total lucidity of intellect, and negative). But in fact, the demonic in man cannot be lucid. Lucidity arises in the self through its absolute relation to God, not through absolute relation to itself as absolute self.

The demonic and the divine are to be sure incomprehensible: "Both are silence. Silence is the artifice of the demon, and the greater the silence, the more terrible becomes the demon, but silence is also the testimony of the divine within the individual"; the demonic, like the religious, places man outside the universal. But submersion in the darkness of the demonic has its opposite in boundless illumination before God. To be lost in the demonic paradox is the opposite of being redeemed in the divine paradox.

The demonic as the stubborn adherence to one's contingent self is a desperate desire to be oneself. "The more consciousness there is in such a man, the more powerful, the more demonic his despair becomes. A man torments himself in some sorrow. He throws his entire passion into this very torment. Now he desires no help. He prefers to rage against everything, he wants to be the man who has been



there is in the area of demonology a kind of urge toward nothingness, a conjuring of forces out of the void.

Where man is hardened to the nothingness and does not despair, life becomes a life without hope. There is either poverty of soul and insensibility, or a pretension of heroism, which, however, since it knows itself and deliberately acts itself out, is only a heroic gesture, not existence.

The deification of man is a kind of escape from nihilism, yet is itself covertly nihilistic. It must lead to disillusionment when the deified man is living and visible, a contemporary. Then the realization that the man is after all nothing but a man, drives one all the more resolutely into nihilism. And from the outset, the deification of one man serves as a means of despising all others. These others are denied all rights, are used as material and expended.

*Truth in each of the three forms:* It is the task of philosophy not only to reject, but at the same time to acknowledge the truth in what has been rejected.

Demonology contains a kernel of truth, namely, that on the empirical plane transcendence cannot be perceived directly but only in signs which need to be decoded. The feeling that sensible reality has a non-sensible substratum, that the face of things and events points to a hidden meaning, is not without justification. Mythological categories contain a truth that strikes us with irresistible evidence when

the chaff is separated from the grain. To ignore this truth, is to impoverish one's soul, to create a vacuum. A man who has lost his ear for such language seems no longer capable of love. For if the transcendent has become entirely nonsensuous, it no longer holds for him an object of love. It may be true that such an abstraction can supply nourishment to a unique love in the empirical world, and that a love so nourished remains pure and is safe from error. But deprived of a tangible, sensuous expression of the transcendent, man also runs the risk of losing himself in the worldless, the inhuman, the alien. Although demonology is untrue, man can and should discern the speech of God in His images and hieroglyphs and should not be deterred by the fact that in objectivizing formulation, this speech is utterly ambiguous. It is not only the weakness of our finite nature, but also our love of the world as the creation of God, that forbids us to root ourselves exclusively in asensual transcendence, except in extreme transitional cases.

The deification of man contains in distorted form the truth that in the world the only authentic thing for man is man. There is something in man that makes it possible to say that God created man in his image; but that man fell away from God and consequently in every man as man the image of God is veiled. Great men are for those who come after them orientation and model, object of veneration and



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possible road to resurgence, even though they remain men with their deficiencies and failures, and hence can never be an object of imitation. It is a free relation of man to man when for the individual there exists a life-sustaining historical bond with certain individuals, grounded in tradition and fulfilled in love.

In *nihilism* something is expressed that the man of integrity cannot overlook. In the reality of the world, despair is inevitable in extreme situations. Every faith must explore the possibility of nothingness. No faith may arrogate to itself a certainty on which objective reliance can be placed. Since faith is always a risk, a gift, it must be constantly aware of the nihilistic threat, lest it succumb to the temptation of pride, to which it so often has succumbed when it has become ossified.

Nihilism differs from the demonology and deification of man into which it escapes: manifest nihilism is irrefutable, just as conversely no faith is demonstrable. Those who, when confronted by the terrible absurdities and injustices of the world, do not acknowledge them in their full reality, but pass over them with an almost automatic matter-of-factness by means of talk about God, sometimes seem less concerned with the truth than the nihilist himself. Dostoyevsky speaks of the torture and murder of innocent children. What kind of being, world, God is it, which makes this possible and permitted? The



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masking of which exposes man to despair, unless all has previously been lost in dull indifference. And this philosophy is no secure possession, it must be achieved each day anew, and abandons one again and again. The result is an intermediary state between nihilism and philosophy—a man who has not entirely succumbed to nihilism but does not yet partake of philosophy. And here frightening situations arise. I shall cite two examples, occurring in the year 1938.

As was then the style, a young man was speaking of the empire that was to be founded. He seemed to be full of enthusiasm. I interrupted him with the question: What meaning has this empire and the war that is expected to lead to it? Answer: Meaning? No meaning at all! Those are just things that are coming. What can have meaning is at most that in a battle I bring my thirsty comrade water at the risk of my life.

On November 9, 1938, a student who was an SA leader, took part in the anti-Jewish pogrom. He told his mother about it. He had carried out the action as mildly as possible. In one house he took up a plate, threw it crashing to the floor, and cried out to his comrades: I hereby state that this house is demolished, and left it without having demolished it. But he went on to relate that the day had made a great and encouraging impression upon him; he had seen what forces lie dormant in the people and



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strange affirmations that remain alien to us. Kierkegaard gave us an interpretation of Christianity as a faith of the absurd, a faith of the negative decision according to which to choose no profession, to conclude no marriage, and to be only a martyr is to be an authentic Christian,—an interpretation which, where adopted, means the end of Christianity. Nietzsche gave us his ideas of the will to power, the superman, and eternal recurrence, which though they have no doubt gone to some people's heads, are as unacceptable as what we might call Kierkegaard's excessive Christianity.

But most of the refutations of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche that have been written up to now, are based on misunderstanding and constitute a kind of invitation to continue sleeping. They contribute trivial commonplaces calculated to remove the thorn that was stuck in our conscience by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. But there can be no authentic development of philosophy in the future, that does not effect a fundamental evaluation of these two great thinkers. For in the decay of their own work and the sacrifice of their own life, they have revealed to us the irreplaceable truths. So long as we continue to indulge in a false peace of mind, they remain an indispensable summons to be alert.

2. *We pass through nihilism to an assimilation of tradition.*



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ment. But if we have done so, nihilism will, by a painful operation, bring us back to the authentic truth.

Out of nihilism there was born a new fundamental approach which teaches us to take a different view of the history of philosophy. Three thousand years of the history of philosophy become as a single present. The diverse philosophical structures contain within themselves the one truth. Hegel was the first who strove to understand the unity of this thought, but he still looked on everything that had gone before as a preliminary stage and partial truth leading up to his own philosophy. But the essential thing is that we assimilate the philosophical attainments of every epoch by remaining in constantly renewed communication with the great achievements of the past, looking upon them not as transcended but as actual.

If we succeed in establishing a loving contact with all philosophical thought, then we know that our present form of philosophy also stems from the primal source, we know how indispensable is the universal tradition, the memory without which we would sink into the nothingness of a mere moment without past and future. In our temporal transience we know the actuality and simultaneity of essential truth, of the *philosophia perennis* which at all times effaces time.

3. *We seek the purity of the sciences as premise*



become an object of its inquiry.

Science is a necessary precondition of philosophy. But the spiritual situation that has arisen as a result of science has presented philosophy with difficult new tasks. Former epochs were not as clearly aware of the urgency of these tasks as we are.

1. Science must be made absolutely *pure*. For in practical operation and average thinking, it is shot through with nonscientific assertions and attitudes. Pure and strict science in its application to the whole sphere of the existent has been magnificently achieved by individual scientists, but on the whole our spiritual life is far removed from it.

2. *Superstitious belief in science* must be exposed to the light of day. In our era of restless unbelief, men have snatched at science as a supposedly firm foundation, set their faith in so-called scientific findings, blindly subjected themselves to supposed experts, believed that the world as a whole could be put in order by scientific planning, expected science to provide life aims, which science can never offer, —and expected a knowledge of being as a whole, which is beyond the scope of science.

3. *Philosophy itself must be methodically re-clarified*. It is science in the age-old and enduring sense of methodical thought, but it is not science in the pure modern sense of an inquiry into things, leading to universally valid, cogent knowledge, identical for all.

The fallacious identification of philosophy and science by Descartes, a misconception in keeping with the spirit of these last centuries, has made science into supposedly total knowledge and has ruined philosophy.

Today the purity of philosophy must be gained along with the purity of science. The two are inseparable, but they are not the same thing; philosophy is neither a specialized science along with others, nor a crowning science resulting from the others, nor a foundation-laying science by which the others are secured.

Philosophy is bound to science and thinks in the medium of all sciences. Without the purity of scientific truth, the truth of philosophy is inaccessible.

Science has its own realm and is guided by philosophical ideas which grow up in all the sciences, though they themselves can never be scientifically justified.

The modern aspiration for consciousness of truth has become possible only on the basis of the sciences of the last century, but it has not yet been achieved. The work required for its realization is among the most urgent needs of the present historical moment.

In opposition to the disintegration of science into unrelated specialties, in opposition to the scientific superstition of the masses, in opposition to the superficiality brought upon philosophy by the confusion of science and philosophy,—scientific research



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and philosophy must join hands to guide us on the path of authentic truth.

4. *Reason becomes the desire for boundless communication.*

Through the secure validity of a common principle that permeated all everyday life, there was, almost until the present time, a cohesion among men which rarely permitted communication to become a special problem. People could content themselves with the saying: we can pray together, but not talk together. Today, when we can not even pray together, we are at length becoming fully aware that humanity implies unreserved communication among men.

Manifested being is fragmented by the multiplicity of our sources of faith, and of the historical form of our communities, each with its own special background. The only things we have identically in common are science and technology as reflected in the general categories of the understanding. These however are united only in an abstract, universal consciousness; in practice they serve both as weapons and media of communication.

Everything real in man is historical. But historicity means also multiple historicity. Hence the postulates of true communication are:

1. to become concerned with the historically different without becoming untrue to one's own his-