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"VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV:
HIS RESTATEMENTS OF A TRADITIONAL COSMOLOGY"

Thesis submitted by Jonathan Sutton
for a Ph.D. Degree in the
Department of Russian,
University of Durham

1983

-5. DEC. 1983

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* * * * * * * *

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should be acknowledged.

DEDICATION

To the memory of

Ananda Coomaraswamy

(1877-1947)

NOTES ON ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLITERATION

Throughout our Study we denote references to pages in the Collected Works of Vladimir Solovyov by the abbreviation 'Sob.Soch.', (Sobranie Sochineniy, Collected Works) . References to the 4 volumes of Solovyov's collected letters are indicated, in our foot-notes, by the Russian word Pis'ma ,(Letters).

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The philosopher's family name may be spelt Solovyov, Soloviev, Solov'ev, or Solovieff. We have kept to the most widely accepted spelling of his name, that is, 'Solovyov'. However, where we cite critical works that give an alternative spelling, we provide the spelling used in those works. We have also kept to the most widely accepted spelling of the names Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, even though this means a slight departure from the transliteration used in our Study. We also use the most common form of the name Mikhail and of the patronymic Mikhailovich rather than using the English letter 'y' to denote the 'Й' in those names.

We use the English letter 'y' to denote both the 'Й' and the 'ы' . The only exception to this usage occurs in the Masculine nominative singular of hard adjectives, where we transliterate the '-ЫЙ' ending as '-iy' rather than '-yy' .

ERRATA

* Two consecutive pages in the thesis are marked p. 127.

* 'The Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' should read 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview': pp. 264 and 268.

Numbers in square brackets preceded by the letter 'B' denote the item number in our Bibliography of books and articles referred to in the footnotes.

VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV:
HIS RESTATEMENTS OF A TRADITIONAL COSMOLOGY

THESIS ABSTRACT

We have undertaken a reassessment of the religious philosophy of Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov (1853-1900). We treat the central terms of Solovyov's religious philosophy individually (Chapter V), we indicate the major themes in his works on religion (Chapter IV), and we provide a brief account of his life and scholarly career (Chapter III).

Taking due account of Solovyov's stated aims in the fields of philosophy and of theology (his endeavour to 'justify the faith of [his] fathers, raising it to a new level of rational consciousness', see Chapter II), we examine the arguments he employed to establish the truth and the worth of Christ's teachings. We hold that Ernest Radlov is largely correct in describing Solovyov as first and foremost a moral philosopher (Chapter VI), and we draw attention to Solovyov's preoccupation with values. This preoccupation became very marked in the last decade of the philosopher's life, 1890 to 1900, and it is consistently expressed in his writings of that period. In the previous decade he had envisaged Russia (and the Russian people) as the eminent defender of authentic Christian values and culture. We set his celebrated poem 'Panmongolism' (1894) in the context of other writings which belong to the 1890's. These writings, especially the essay 'China and Europe' (Kitay i Evropa, 1890), have received minimal critical attention to date, but they cast valuable light on the central theme of the poem 'Panmongolism'. They also reveal the extent of Solovyov's reliance upon historical argument and upon cultural comparisons in his treatment of religious questions.

We aim to show the strengths and the defects of his comparative method, (Chapters VIII and IX). A close examination of Solovyov's writings on the non-Christian religions reveals considerable discrepancies in his treatment of, and in his criteria for the evaluation of, the religions belonging to Judaeo-Christian culture, on the one hand, and the religions of India and Asia, on the other hand.

Our examination of Solovyov's essays 'China and Europe', (1890), 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview', (1891), 'Byzantinism and Russia' (1896), and of 'The Drama of Plato's Life' (1898), is also intended to clarify Solovyov's stance towards contemplative spirituality, active spirituality and towards quietism. An informed and clear understanding of his position, here, greatly assists the task of reassessing his religious philosophy as a whole. We argue that Solovyov found complete renunciation of the secular world to be incompatible with true Christian faith and practice. He adhered consistently to the view that the Christian Gospels present man with an ideal of 'community' that serves his needs better than any secular ideal can serve. He also believed that the whole collective humanity needs to work for the transformation and gradual perfection of the created order. We examine Solovyov's views on the theocratic organisation of society and on the Priest, King and Prophet as spiritual types, as figures charged with responsibility for guiding men towards Christian goals, (Chapters V and VI).

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS OF ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY IN THE STUDY OF MYSTICISM AND OF MYSTICAL LITERATURE

A considerable number of problematic issues beset any attempt to examine the writings of a religious philosopher with an acknowledged reputation as a 'mystic' or in whose works and thought 'mystical apprehension' is assigned a central or at least prominent function.

Especially over the past fifteen or twenty years it has been the case that fashionable interest in the subject of mystical religion has created a climate of thought in which it seems acceptable to investigate 'mystical' ideas and teachings without submitting oneself to the disciplines they properly entail, or else to appropriate random ideas and terminology from mysticism for more or less irresponsible use in other, obviously secular contexts. The effects of this contemporary phenomenon are sufficiently wide-spread to cause general concern; but if we address ourselves just to the matter of investigating one or other aspect of mysticism, one thing is clear. A serious result of this extensive misapplication of non-secular ideas is that a host of unfortunate associations now attaches to them, and this aggravates the difficulties already inherent in any attempt to delineate the nature and true levels of reference that belong to the terms we employ.

A proper awareness of the scope and the various degrees of intentional or unwitting distortion that are possible here will induce the researcher to exercise the very greatest caution and discernment with regard to all his materials. The temptation wholly to withdraw from the attempt to investigate the subject will be considerable, and the arguments in favour of such withdrawal are persuasive and not without substance.

A close reading of the relevant literature can leave one in no doubt

that the spiritual endeavour is highly exacting - as a discipline and as a science (in the sense of 'Wissenschaft'.) Writers on the 'mystical' aspect of religion tend to be starkly realistic when they mention the difficulties to be encountered prior to attainment of any beatific or grace-given perception of 'the real'.

Before we submit our findings on the religious philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), a number of general points must be clarified. In the first place, our references to a 'Traditional Cosmology' throughout this Study rest upon an understanding that all cosmological accounts of our world, its origins and of man's place in it, which may be characterised adequate or duly comprehensive are intimately linked with an ideal of spiritual attainment (See next Section).

Points which require preliminary discussion are these:

i) the experiential basis of our subject matter;

ii) the motivation of the aspirant;

iii) the question whether or not certain philosophical accounts of our experience and knowledge are soteriological;

iv) the question regarding the deficiencies of language which make adequate description of mystical experience notoriously difficult.

* * * * *

i) The experiential basis of our subject matter:

In one sense, all writings which record direct perceptions of the Divine and the Real are closed to anyone who has been denied those same perceptions and who, consequently, has no means whereby

he can verify for himself what is treated in such writings.[1] Their basis is experiential.

However, awareness of these points does not oblige one to entirely forego concern with this order of perceptions.

If we consider that, in the Christian Tradition, all perceptions and experiences that the aspirant may have are 'tested' by reference to Christ's experiences (recorded in the Gospels) and are 'validated' or 'verified' in terms of greater or lesser conformity to those experiences, this procedure still allows the aspirant to continue in his quest, regardless how low his actual level of attainment and understanding. The Christian Tradition allows one to speak quite legitimately of a 'Via Crucis' even in the case of those not very far advanced in spiritual understanding, and such references do not in the least degree distort or debase Christ's original experiences, nor deprive them of their spiritual import.

ii) <u>The motivation of the aspirant</u>

The motives which underlie the spiritual aspirant's submission to a discipline or course of studies may be varied and complex. Indeed, it is likely that not all of those motives will be apparent to the aspirant himself at the time he chooses to take up his discipline. (If that particular form of spiritual training comprises an ascetic element, the aspirant will be required closely to examine the purity of his motives as part of a more general purificatory stage of training, described, in the literature on this subject, as the initial stage of

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1. See '<u>Religious Traditions</u>', (Univ. of La Trobe, Austral.) Vol.4, No. 1, (1981), where Dr. Karel Werner reviews some contemporary discussions of religious experience and problems regarding its describability. (pp. 65-71).

training, the Via Purgativa which must precede any progress in the subsequent stages, the Via Illuminativa and Via Unitiva respectively).

First, it is evident that the aspirant would not be permitted to pursue his training if it were found that his primary thought was to evade the problems of secular living. His spiritual adviser would be obliged to warn him that his training, if pursued with the appropriate degree of commitment, would entail problems and difficulties substantially greater than those he might encounter in secular life. He would impress upon the aspirant that the order of attainments for which the discipline is specifically designed requires - inavoidably - a moral preparation. C.A. Bennett assigns particular importance to this element of spiritual training, in the context of mysticism; noting that the mystic's endeavour should not be viewed too exclusively in terms of restoring health to a sick man, Bennett writes, in 'A Philosophical Study of Mysticism':

> 'The mystic does not think of God as a physician, for he is undertaking to earn the solution of his problems, so far as that is possible... We miss the essence of the mystic's preparation unless we see that it is a moral preparation.[2.]

As do other writers on the subject, Bennett establishes the connection between this form of preparation and the capacity to perceive reality:

> 'The [mystic's] long and arduous spiritual journey has its origins in the perception that if reality seems evil, this is caused not by anything in the nature of the things themselves, but by some defect

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2. 'A Philosophical Study of Mysticism', C.A. Bennett, Yale University Press, 1923, p.27. [B.317]

> in the mystic's vision. What work there is to be done must be done on his own soul, for it is his soul which excludes him from the vision of reality as divine.'[3].

And further, the mystic

> ' endeavours to clarify his vision not that he may escape the discomforts of blindness or defective vision, but in order to see reality as it really is.' [4].

The themes of moral preparation and the capacity to perceive reality are central to Solovyov's philosophy, as subsequent chapters will show.

As yet, we have mentioned only one instance of impure or insufficient motive that would disqualify the spiritual aspirant from significant attainments - namely, the misapprehension that his training affords an escape from the problems of the secular world.[5].

Another instance of impure motive that may in one or other way hinder the aspirant is this: a too exclusive concern with <u>acquiring merit</u>. (Such concern may arise from a combination of petitionary prayer and a sense that one has conscientiously performed all the religious duties required of one). An undue concern with <u>acquiring</u> merit colours numerous accounts of the spiritual life, and this concern seems also to prevail quite widely when discussion of religion arises among laity. The tendency to associate religion specifically with the

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3. Ibid., p.23

4. Ibid., p.24

5. It is quite noteworthy that at least in his younger years Vladimir Solovyov himself regarded adoption of the monastic life as a <u>flight</u> from the world's problems. Pis'ma,III, 89. (Solovyov was aged 20 when he wrote the letter in which this idea occurs). [B.14]

acquisition of merit is, surely, reinforced by a number of factors. Prominent among these is the supposition that rigorous performance of one's 'duty' (however conceived, whatever the form it may take) somehow ensures recognition of virtuous behaviour and the consequent award of spiritual 'merit'.[6.] The recognition sought is, in most cases, almost immediate recognition. Those who hold to this view of matters appear to have overlooked the very explicit warnings in the Christian Gospels about observing only the 'letter' of the Law, not the 'Spirit' in which religious duties were intended to be performed. Also, they appear to have overlooked the equally explicit warning that to expect immediate recognition of one's spiritual worth was the practice of the Pharisees, not the code for Christians.

The possibility of becoming acquisitive with regard to merit (or, indeed, with regard to spiritual wisdom) is real, and this is no less undesirable than an acquisitive attitude towards material wealth. A corrective to this tendency is to be found in the Indian spiritual literature, which provides extensive references to the dangers inherent in seeking or becoming attached to the fruits of one's actions. Numerous European students of this spiritual Tradition have been too ready to dismiss these references as the quietist's call to 'inaction', whereas these were intended to remind the aspirant of the caution and discernment necessary for a 'disinterested' recognition of 'the real'.

It is regrettable that the ideal of detachment tends to be equated, in many people's minds, with indifference and inaction, though in its proper application this ideal promotes neither indifference, nor inaction. This point will be taken up again in our subsequent discussion

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6. An explicit criticism of those who follow the good life for the sake of rewards may be found, among other places, in Gregory of Nyssa's 'The Life of Moses' II, 320. (Paulist Press, NY, 1978 , p.137.)

of contemplation and action.

* * * * *

The centrally important text which the committed Christian aspires to honour through his practice is to be found in St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2, xx:

> 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.'

This Scriptural text from the New Testament provides, in the first place, a succinct affirmation of the wholly Christocentric viewpoint. Secondly, it represents a summit of attainment in the task of self-transcendence. In the third place, this dictum inspired the whole theology of 'poverty of spirit' that animated the monastic ideal in the Catholic and Orthodox worlds, and, in turn, the ideal of the secular layman.

In the Leclercq, Vandenbrouke, Bouyer 'History of Christian Spirituality', François Vandenbrouke writes of the ideal of actual poverty that the Franciscan and Dominican orders re-affirmed in the 13th-Century, and of the subsequent change of emphasis in spirituality when Germany (and the Netherlands) became new centres for the interpretation of Christian teaching:

> '...The shift of the spiritual centre towards the Germanic regions was paralleled by a change in the problem under discussion: what was at issue was no longer poverty, but contemplation. The problem was to know what constituted its essential element, how to define it, and so to determine in practice how to obtain it. In one sense poverty was involved in this debate.

> Eckhart and his disciples continued to preach the necessity of detachment as a basis for the return to the image of God; they even did so with some intransigence. But in fact this was something different from Franciscan poverty; what they had in mind was an interior condition rather than an exterior realization, though the latter was not excluded.'[7.]

Vandenbrouke's observations serve as a useful reminder that contemplation and concern with the believer's interior condition were central to Christian thought in critical periods of its growth and development. These matters were not, as is sometimes supposed, solely the province of a numerically small group of elect souls, divorced from the large and mostly unenlightened body of religious and laity.

Our own view of religious philosophy accords with the belief that contemplation has always had, and rightly has, a centrally important part to play in spiritual life and understanding. There may have been considerable periods of time when that importance was obscured, but this does not ultimately diminish the extent to which contemplation is operative and, indeed, efficacious.

Contemplation and action are to be taken together, for their relationship is a reciprocal one. The person who chooses to take up the contemplative life need not lose sight of the fact that there are times and circumstances when action is the appropriate response. Far from taking contemplation and action to be mutually exclusive responses, the contemplative can be aware of the imperative to act, and he founds his own practice on the principle that his contemplation

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7. 'History of Christian Spirituality', Part II, Ch.VI: 'German Spirituality in the 14th Century', pp. 373-374. (Burns Oates, London, 1968), (pp.448-449 in the original French Edition of 1961), [B.340]

is actually the source of the most efficacious action and help. The radical reorientation (μετάνοια) of values and way of life, which ascesis entails, affords the aspirant a freer kind of response than could be available to the person who, though generally benevolent and prepared to act, has motives that are still to some degree self-referrent.

* * * * *

We will come to see the particular significance for Vladimir Solovyov of self-denial or self-renunciation (samootritsanie, samootrechenie) in our examination of works such as his 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' (Dukhovnye Osnovy Zhizni), and 'Justification of the Good', (Opravdanie Dobra).

We will also set this term 'self-denial', in the context of his other major religious conceptions.

* * * * *

iii) Soteriology

It is necessary to draw attention to a distinction that sets apart soteriological from other accounts of experience and knowledge.

An account of human experience and knowledge is said to be 'soteriological' if it is 'conducive to salvation'. If the adoption of that account or scheme, and adherence to it, in some degree enhances the enquirer's perception of an ultimate redemptive goal, and of the need to act in a certain manner to ensure attainment of that goal, then this answers the test: 'Is this particular account soteriological?' Precisely how the enquirer envisages that 'ultimate goal' is at this point less significant than the consideration that

a) an ultimate goal <u>is</u> posited, a goal not confined simply to assent to one or other set of rational propositions;

b) in a soteriological account, the very terms of that account presuppose a <u>modification in behaviour</u> on the part of the enquirer who accepts those terms.

A clearer understanding of the central issue involved here may be gained by reference to an article by E. Conze[8.] on certain questions of valid and invalid methodology in the comparative study of philosophies. Conze makes the valuable observation that certain philosophical accounts of reality that are actually 'soteriological' differ to a very minimal degree from non-soteriological accounts, if one judges both groups on the basis of their literal expression alone. But Conze rules out the validity of comparisons that rest solely upon literal resemblances in the texts examined, and he warns that negative statements (negative in either form or content) tend to be particularly misleading:

> '... David Hume's denial of a 'self' seems literally to agree with the anattā doctrine. Buddhists are certainly at one with him when he rejects the notion of a permanent self-identical substance in favour of a succession of impermanent states and events... He understood our personality after the image of inanimate objects, which also have no 'self', or true inwardness of any kind...'[9.]

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8. 'Spurious Parallels to Buddhist Philosophy': See pp 229-242 of E. Conze's 'Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies', Oxford 1967, [B.320]

9. Ibid., 239-240.

Strikingly close though the 'Humean' and the Pali Buddhist accounts of the personality may seem, on initial inspection, Conze underlines the critically important point that the Buddhists - quite unlike Hume - do not intend or advocate that the comparison between the 'self' and inanimate objects be regarded a legitimate inference from their doctrine:

> ' Whereas Hume reduced selfhood to the level of the subpersonal, the Buddhist doctrine of anattā invites us to search for the super-personal.' [10.]

Conze's discussion reinforces the point regarding the essential difference between the soteriological and non-soteriological philosophies by adducing evidence to explain why for Hume the very enterprise of 'searching for the super-personal' lacked meaning.

We accept Conze's observations on valid methodology[11.] and we endeavour to avoid confusion between soteriological and non-soteriological philosophies in our own study of Vladimir Solovyov's ideas on religion. We also take due note of Conze's warning (in this same discussion) about the scope for error in comparing negative statements that appear similar but that actually belong to different contexts. However, discussion of that matter comes under the next heading.

We should add, here, that even when two spiritual disciplines are being compared, disciplines that both posit an ultimate goal of 'redemption' for man, caution must be exercised by the researcher. For instance, a study of the religious symbolism of these Traditions

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10. Ibid., 241.

11. Ibid., 239-242

may all too easily lead to considerable error unless the context and background of each Tradition is sufficiently appreciated. One example will suffice to illustrate our point: the symbol of the house or home represents entirely opposed notions in Judaism and Buddhism. In Judaism return to the 'home' signifies spiritual attainment, the end of a spiritual journey and of 'exile' in the wilderness. However, in the Buddhist context, being at 'home' or in the house signifies the starting-point of the spiritual life, the position of the layman before he has given up the various forms of attachment to the secular life. Leaving the house represents considerable commitment to the spiritual life, also the adoption of the monk's mendicant or hermitic way of life. The 'house' and world are forsaken in favour of the forest.

* * * * *

iv) Deficiencies of language in the description of mystical religious experience and in the affirmation of notions about the Divine:

As indicated above, it is exceedingly difficult to verify for oneself what is recorded in mystics' accounts of their experiences and insights. The order of perceptions with which they are concerned resists transmission and even description.[12.] These perceptions and

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12. See George Steiner's essay 'The Retreat from the Word':

> ' The Apostle tells us that in the beginning was the Word. He gives us no assurance as to the end. It is appropriate that he should have used the Greek language to express the Hellenistic conception of the Logos, for it is to the fact of its Greco-Judaic inheritance that Western civilization owes its essentially verbal character. We take this for granted. It is the root and bark of our experience and we cannot readily transpose our imaginings outside it. We live inside the act of discourse. But we should not assume that a verbal matrix is the only one in which the articulations of the mind are conceivable. There are modes of intellectual

experiences have sometimes been called experiences of 'the Numinous', and Rudolf Otto[13.] deals with problems of description in Chapter IX of his celebrated study 'The Idea of the Holy' (Das Heilige).

First, at the end of Chapter I, Otto writes:

> '... And so it is salutary that we should be incited to notice that religion is not exclusively contained and exhaustively comprised in any series of 'rational' assertions.'[14.]

In attempting to characterise the content of the 'numinous experience', Otto claims, at the beginning of Chapter VI, that as well as being 'awesome', the Numinous also 'shows itself as something uniquely attractive and fascinating' (author's italics).[15.] That aspect of

---

> and sensuous reality founded not on language, but on other communicative energies such as the icon or the musical note. And there are actions of the spirit rooted in silence ...(p.31). The primacy of the word, of that which can be spoken and communicated in discourse, was characteristic of the Greek and Judaic genius and carried over into Christianity. The classic and Christian sense of the world strive to order reality within the governance of language.' (p.32). Language and Silence (Essays), 1961. G. Steiner. Peregrine Books, 1979 Reprint.

13. On Rudolf Otto:
'R. Otto was well trained in 'rational theology', yet he was also singularly aware of the 'non or suprarational' in the depth of the divine nature which can be apprehended as 'the feeling which remains where the concept fails' and which he could express only by introducing 'a terminology which is not more loose or indeterminate for having necessarily to make use of symbols'.
After Otto it is hardly possible to exclude from religious studies the preoccupation with the nature of religious experience as going beyond the senses and rational thought.'.
K. Werner, 'Religion', Vol VII, Autumn 1977, p.195.

14. 'The Idea of the Holy', Rudolf Otto, 1917, Oxford Univ. Press 1st English Ed., 1923), 1980 Reprint, p. 4. [B.333]

15. Ibid. p.31.

the Numinous is not, strictly, susceptible to description, and a variety of ascetic practices have been developed to afford perception of this 'mysterious' element in the Numinous:

> '... In them [various spiritual states partly induced by ascetic practices] the mysterium is experienced in its essential, positive, and specific character, as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but one whose real nature he can neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought, but may know only by a direct and living experience.' [16.]

The problems posed by transmission and expression of the 'numinous experience' are taken up again by Otto in Chapter IX of his study:

> 'There is, of course, no 'transmission' of it in the proper sense of the word; it cannot be 'taught' it must be 'awakened' from the spirit. And this could not justly be asserted, as it often is, of religion as a whole and in general, for in religion there <u>is</u> very much that can be taught - that is, handed down in concepts and passed on in school instruction. What is incapable of being so handed down is this numinous basis and background to religion, which can only be induced, incited and aroused. This is least of all possible by mere verbal phrase or external symbol.' [17.]

One procedure to which mystics have commonly resorted, in their attempts to convey their perceptions to others, is that of

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16. Ibid., p.33.

17. Ibid., p.60.

providing analogies[18.] with perceptions or experiences familiar to the listener or reader. Such analogies will not fully convey the nature of the experience, but they may be employed as one means to refine our very indistinct grasp of these matters. An analogy frequently used to convey the intensity of the mystic's love for God (and the intensity of the feeling that this love was being returned, reciprocated) is the analogy of the love experienced by bride and groom. This imagery was of considerable importance in the Rhineland during the 13th Century, for Mechtilde of Magdeburg (born in 1207) in particular, and this form of spirituality is known as the Brautmystik.[19.] The closeness of man's relations to the Divine has also been indicated by the analogy of filial devotion, and this was significant for Solovyov. The philosopher explains this 'filial' aspect of Divine-human relations in Part I of his 'Justification of the Good', (Chapter IV).

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18. Analogies: With reference to analogies and models, see Pratima Bowes's discussion of models in science and models in religion, pp. 283-285 of her book 'The Hindu Religious Tradition' (CH.VIII: 'Truth and the Hindu Religious Tradition'):

> '.. The ultimate aim of science is to dispense with models and metaphors at some stage of progress of inquiry into a certain field ...The purpose of using models is to make them unncesssary by so familiarising ourselves with the new field of discovery that it can be described by means of its own language without comparison with something more familiar. (p.283)
>
> .. The greatest difficulty in talking about religious reality is that it has no language specific to itself, except a few terms that indicate this reality, but do not describe it, such as God, Brahman, the Infinite, or the Absolute'. (pp. 283-284)
>
> '.. Religious models remain metaphorical, and there is no help for it.' (p. 284).
>
> (Our italics). Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977. [B.319]

19. Brautmystik: See Leclercq, Vandenbrouke, Bouyer 'History of Christian Spirituality', Part II, 374-376, et al. [B. 340]

Apart from the mystics' very extensive use of analogy in their writings, there has also been a tendency among these figures to employ a negative terminology rather than a positive one. This phenomenon is itself so extensive that one may speak of a whole Negative Theology, an apophatic theology as distinct from the Positive Theology (cataphatic theology).

For Positive Theology it is a valid approach to learn of God through consideration of His attributes, attributes such as Good, Merciful, Just, Loving, Wise, and so forth. The approach characteristic of Negative Theology relies on a rather different view of how knowledge of God may be obtained. The exponent of the Negative Theology holds that our understanding of 'good' and our human criteria for judging 'good' or other virtues are so critically limited that it is inappropriate for us to assign such positive attributes to God. It would be preferable to conceive of God as being wholly free of all names, attributes, forms and definitions, than to be misled by positive terms that we cannot invest with the absolute value they require if applied to the Divine. Jean Leclercq expresses the matter succinctly when he writes that this negation

> 'denies to God every limitation inherent in creation and in all that can be said or thought about creatures.' [20.]

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20. Ibid., p.93 (p.120 in the French Edition, 1961).
Vladimir Lossky writes that the apophatic approach (the Negative Theology)
'... forbids us to follow natural ways of thought and to form concepts which would usurp the place of spiritual realities'.
'The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church', Vladimir Lossky, (publ. by James Clarke, Cambridge, 1957), Reprint 1973,p.42.
See also: pp 38-39, 43. [B.329]

In his outstanding work 'Negative Theology and the Knowledge of God according to Master Eckhart' (1960), Vladimir Lossky explains the limitations of the Positive Theology:

> ' In saying that God is eminently Being, Goodness, Wisdom, one remains still attached to concepts found down here [on earth], one does not leave behind creatures so as to seek to know their Cause [as It is] in Itself'.[21.]

The seeming denial of 'goodness' to God caused grave problems for figures such as Master Eckhart, and the paradoxical nature of many of their statements (especially when cited out of their proper context)[22.] allowed for misconceptions that still require correction today. No outright denial of 'goodness' in God was involved, rather an attempt to establish the radical distinction between Divine goodness and 'creaturely' goodness.[23.]

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21. 'Théologie Negative et Connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart; Vladimir Lossky, Etudes de Philosophie Mediévale, No. 48, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1960. [B. 330]
V. Lossky, p. 199:
'En disant que Dieu est éminemment Être, Bonté, Sagesse, on reste encore attaché aux concepts trouvés ici-bas, on n'abandonne pas les créatures pour chercher à connaître leur Cause en elle-même.'

22. The proper context in which many of these statements were made is that of a dispute between Master Eckhart and certain Franciscan scholars over the primacy of the Will (to which view the Franciscans subscribed); See Lossky, Théologie Negative, pp. 212-213.

23. Lossky, Théologie Negative, p.315.
Also see: 'The Divine Names', Dionysius the Areopagite, Chap.IV, (SPCK Edition, 1979) pp. 89-90: 'All the Attributes of the Good we express in a transcendent manner by negative images'.
See also, Ch.V., p.140. [B. 324]

That the question of assigning or not assigning attributes to the Godhead posed problems not just in the Christian Tradition may be seen in Surendranath Dasgupta's History of Indian Philosophy', Chapter XXVI, Vol IV. The debate arose between defenders and opponents of Sankara's absolute monism (pp.125-127):

> '... Another question of importance arises in connection with the attribution of the epithets 'truth', 'knowledge', 'infinite' to Brahman. Is Brahman, to whom all these qualities are attributed, a simple unity in Himself, or is He a complex of many qualities, truth, knowledge, infinite etc. which have different connotations and are not synonymous? Pure intelligence (caitanya) is one, but these epithets are many. How can we conceive the one caitanya to coexist in itself with the many attributes which are said to belong to it? How is the plurality of these attributes to be implied in the unity of the one?'[24].

We can appreciate that here the assigning or non-assigning of attributes to God is invoked for rather different reasons than those put forward by the Franciscan scholars who opposed Master Eckhart and sought to establish the primacy of the Will. However, it should be noted that the matter of assigning attributes to God does have a direct bearing on the debate cited above, and on the outcome of that debate. The assigning or non-assigning of attributes clearly does have certain important consequences for philosophy and theology. It is not a matter of a random choice between two views or approaches

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24. 'History of Indian Philosophy', Surendranath Dasgupta, Vol IV, p.126. (publ. by Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, 1st Edition, Cambridge 1922).

[B.313]

that are inter-changeable.[25.]

The difference in viewpoint that the assigning of attributes and, respectively, the non-assigning of attributes represent is well conveyed by T.M.P. Mahadevan (again in the context of Vedāntic philosophy) in a Paper entitled 'Vedāntic Meditation and its Relation to Action'[26.] :

> 'There is meditation on Brahman with attributes (saguṇa); there is also meditation on Brahman without attributes, without qualifications (nirguṇa)...Brahman is the same, as nirguṇa (attributeless) and as saguṇa (with attributes). There are not two Brahmans, as wrongly alleged by some critics. Even when God is referred to as the lower (apara) Brahman, what is meant is not that Brahman has become lower in status as God, but that God is Brahman looked at from the lower level of relative experience. There are two forms (dvirūpa) of Brahman and not two Brahmans: Brahman as-it-is-in-itself and Brahman as-it-is-in-relation-to-the-world. The former is the unconditioned Brahman; the latter is Brahman as conditioned by nomenclature, configuration and change.'

It would be premature, at this point, to extend our account of the lines of argument by which the Negative Theology normally proceeds. We have indicated that this specific approach to obtaining and expressing 'knowledge of God' answered the requirements of numerous

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25. Vladimir Lossky stresses that the Negative Theology
> 'is not a branch of theology, a chapter, or an inevitable introduction on the incomprehensibility of God from which one passes unruffled to a doctrinal exposition in the usual terminology of human reason and philosophy in general'.

The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, p.42. [B.329]

26. See 'Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action'. (A Colloquium, 1973) pp. 349-359. Edited by Y. Ibish, Imperial Univ. of Teheran, 1976. Publ. in Britain by George Allen and Unwin. The above quotation appears on pp. 354-355. [B.326]

mystics more exactly than did Positive Theology when these men and women attempted to communicate their insights to others. However, this is not at all to say that the Negative Theology replaces or excludes the Positive Theology; nor does the Negative Theology diminish the worth of prayer and practices associated with invocation of the Divine Names, or with devotion to the Divine in Its personal aspect.

Our own reading and study of this subject convinces us that a specific and wholly serious study of Vladimir Solovyov's religious philosophy leads naturally to a consideration of the Negative Theology and of 'the contemplative knowledge of God'.

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In the foregoing pages we have identified some features of mysticism, and of philosophies centred upon mystical apprehension, that resist analysis and reduction into categories of thought that are operative and valid in normal, intelligible discourse. The fixity of designations, names and concepts upon which normal discourse depends, if the participants are to understand one another, is seemingly undermined by the application to the Divine of terms, qualities and concepts that are mutually exclusive in all other contexts. The fact that we are obliged to use terms and concepts in such fundamentally different ways would seem to militate against precision and consistency. If scholarly analysis has to be conducted without any guarantees of precision, or without any means of establishing what value attaches to concepts in particular instances - whether absolute value, or relative value - then, in that case, the analytical procedure cannot

serve our investigation of the subject.

We have here sought to indicate that the attempt to examine writings on one or other aspect of mysticism, and to arrive at trustworthy and revealing conclusions regarding their content, can be greatly assisted by attentive recollection of certain distinctions that must be observed in one's methodological approach. We have cited, for instance, the important distinction between soteriological and non-soteriological accounts of the human personality; we have also drawn attention to the use of models and analogies characteristic of science and that characteristic of religion, referring to Pratima Bowes's illuminating discussion of their similarities and differences. Here we have confined ourselves to two principal tasks:

i) to mentioning four areas of difficulty in the accurate analysis of mystical writings and thought;

ii) to setting down methodological principles that we observe in our own Study of Vladimir Solovyov's 'Religious Philosophy'.

The following section of our Study includes a statement of Solovyov's specific aims in the fields of philosophy and theology, and provides initial observations regarding the predominant trends of thought among educated Russians at the beginning of Solovyov's writing career (the early 1870's). We also clarify terms in our thesis title and define what we understand by '<u>Traditional Cosmology</u>'. In addition to this, we set out arguments for and against extensive use of biographical materials in judging Solovyov's religious philosophy, and give our criteria for the limited use of biographical data that we have found necessary for this Study.

CHAPTER II

VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV: HIS RESTATEMENTS OF A TRADITIONAL COSMOLOGY

The writings of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov belong to the later years of the 19th Century, to the period from 1873 to 1900. Two editions of his Collected Works were compiled, and appeared in print between 1901 and 1913, under the direction of Ernest L. Radlov and later also of Sergey M. Solovyov, the philosopher's nephew. Radlov also collected all the available correspondence of Vladimir Solovyov, four volumes of which appeared between 1908 and 1923 (Pis'ma, 1-1V). There were seven separate editions of Solovyov's poetry between 1891 and 1921 (as cited in our Bibliography), and an edition of his comic plays was published in Moscow in 1922.

A modern, revised and more comprehensive edition of the Collected Works has become available in Belgium (Foyer Oriental Chrétien) bringing together the philosophical and theological works, the poetry and correspondence (including some previously unpublished letters). This is a revision of the 2nd Edition of the Collected Works (edited by E.L. Radlov and S.M. Solovyov) which appeared in 10 volumes.

In the case of Solovyov's three works written in French, namely his Paris lecture of 1888 entitled '<u>L'Idée Russe</u>', his book '<u>La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle</u>', and thirdly, his '<u>Saint Vladimir et l'Etat Chrétien</u>', only the last of these was unavailable to us in the original French text. G.A. Rachinsky's Russian translation of '<u>Saint Vladimir et l'Etat Chrétien</u>' is provided in the modern edition (Sob.Soch., Vol.XI, 119-138), under the title '<u>Vladimir Svyatoy i</u>

Khristianskoe Gosudarstvo'. For 'L'Idée Russe' we used the 1888 edition (Librairie Academique Didier, Paris); for 'La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle' (five editions) we used the 3rd edition, that of 1922 (Delamain, Boutelleau et Cie., Paris).

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It is necessary to explain our choice of a title for this Study of Vladimir Solovyov's ideas, and also to define precisely what the words 'Traditional Cosmology' here signify.

There is an obvious danger that the words 'Traditional Cosmology' could be taken by ourselves or by the reader in such a generalised sense that no area of speculation could be considered extraneous to our Study. Although a large number of subject areas would prove, upon investigation, to be worthwhile and interesting in their own right, the very wealth of material for consideration would make the task of formulating conclusions of any substance and value a virtual impossibility. Ours is a specific study of Vladimir Solovyov's religious philosophy, and also a study of the typology of religions that he provided in his works. First, it should be said that he endeavoured to evolve a philosophical system able to accommodate traditional Christian teaching at its centre. In putting forward his own system, he undertook a wide-ranging survey of religious and philosophical teachings, and produced what is in effect a typology of religions. He examined the framework of theological beliefs of particular religions, and also their impact (whether favourable or detrimental) on the societies and nations that adopted them. Solovyov employed philosophical and cultural-cum-historical criteria in his

evaluation of a religious system. It is part of our purpose to show that he employed these criteria in a way that is quite distinctive, in a way that marks out Vladimir Solovyov's worldview for the attention of scholars.

The merits and shortcomings of Solovyov's examination of religious ideas constitute the specific subject matter of our Study.

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The Oxford English Dictionary defines Cosmology in the following terms:

> 'The science or theory of the Universe as an ordered whole, and of the general laws which govern it.'

This definition applies equally to the body of premises and truth-claims upon which entire thought systems such as Christianity, Islām or Gnosticism rest, and to the views formulated and expounded by individual philosophers. Christianity and Islām, for instance, present a picture of the universe as an eminently ordered whole, whose general laws can be discerned by men and are laws that are said to afford insights into the nature of the Creator. Individual philosophers, like Plato, Aristotle, or Vladimir Solovyov himself, have also contributed explanations to account for regularly observable and other features of our existence that inspire awe and speculative curiosity.

We submit that while the above definition shows the meaning of 'Cosmology' generally, the distinctive attribute of a 'Traditional Cosmology' is this, that it affords a view of an ordered universe which is intimately linked with an ideal of spiritual attainment.

This is the sense in which we employ the words 'Traditional Cosmology' in our Study. We take Judaism, Christianity, Islām, Hinduism and Buddhism to be instances of a 'traditional' system in that sense. These religious systems each depict the universe in some sort of order (to a greater or lesser extent hierarchical), and each of these systems undoubtedly posits an ideal of spiritual attainment. Furthermore, each of the above religious systems provides a code of practical precepts for living, and a range of means of grace, and means of instruction, all directed towards the deepening of insight, towards efficacious action and spiritual attainment.

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To avoid any possible confusion that might arise from the use of the words 'Traditional Cosmology' in the title of our Study, we hereby categorically dissociate ourselves from any preoccupation with paths of Occult knowledge or with the acquisition of Occult powers, with secret formulae or rites, or with any power-enhancing methods that come under the generally-accepted heading of the Occult.

As far as we have been able to judge the matter, authentic spiritual disciplines entail <u>not</u> the acquisition of powers, but the significantly more difficult, radical dismissal of any 'gaining' or acquisitive idea.

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The Introduction to Solovyov's work 'The History and Future of Theocracy' (Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii, 1885-1887) provides a quite explicit statement on the author's view of his aims:

> 'To justify the faith of our fathers, raising it to a new level of rational consciousness...here is the general task of my labour'.[1]

With reference to the context in which Solovyov stated this aim, we briefly observe the following.

At the time when his early philosophical works appeared in print (the period from 1874 to 1880) and in the subsequent decades of the 1880's and 1890's, there was, among educated Russians, a marked lack of concern for traditional Christian teachings, and more particularly for the viewpoint and pronouncements of the established Russian Orthodox Church. There was, indeed, a strong sense of disaffection, a very evident lack of common ground between the representatives of the Church and the Russian intelligentsia, as, for instance, A.F. Koni observes in his lecture 'To the Memory of Vladimir Solovyov'.[2] In the eyes of educated Russians the Church lacked credibility, and its views were more readily associated with superstition and obscurantism than with cogent, realistic thought about the important issues and problems that face man. Partly the Church was discredited on account of its very close official association with the autocratic state. But it may be truer to say that the influence of the Church,

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[1] Sob. Soch. IV,243.

[2] 'Pamyati Vladimira Solovyova', A.F. Koni (A commemorative speech delivered in January 1901; published 1903), pp. 8,15. [B.134]

and of Christian thought generally, was eclipsed by Büchner's materialism and subsequently Auguste Comte's Positivism, West European ideas that were accepted too uncritically in the Capitals of Moscow and Petersburg.

The opening words of Solovyov's 1898 commemorative lecture on Auguste Comte[3] leave one in no doubt as regards the way Positivism itself became a form of 'orthodoxy', and in time a form of idolatry (idolopoklonstvo) for Russians. Solovyov explicitly states, here, that he considered opposition to this idolatry to be an obligatory step for him to take, as a philosopher trying to establish his seriousness of purpose. Elsewhere, and much earlier, in his private correspondence of the years 1872 and 1873,[4] Solovyov mentioned the poverty of form and expression of much Christian teaching:'...Ves'ma odnostoronnee i nedostatochnoe vyrazhenie'.[5] He argues that while Christian teaching remains in this inadequate form, the disaffection of educated people is both understandable and justified. Solovyov was convinced that a significantly more comprehensive, articulate and rationally sound expression of traditional Christian teaching could be formulated, and he envisaged his own life's work as a reformulation, or restatement of the tenets of Christian faith, 'the faith of our fathers'.

Critics of Solovyov's account of Christian beliefs charge him with varying degrees of misrepresentation, or with misconception of

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[3]Sob. Soch. IX, 172.

[4]Pis'ma III, 88-89.

[5]See also Sob. Soch. III, 4.

some elements of Christianity. But there can be virtually no doubt that Solovyov personally conceived of his work as a task of restatement rather than innovation. We reflect that idea in the title of our Study, and actually specifically mention 'His restatements' because in his various books Solovyov approached his central subject from rather different points of departure, as their very titles indicate: 'The History and Future of Theocracy', 'Russian and the Universal Church', 'The Meaning of Love', 'Justification of the Good', and so forth. Thus, the corpus of his works provides a series of restatements of Christian belief, where different subjects such as the Universal Church, love, or the Good were prominent.

Naturally, our study is not confined solely to the expression of Solovyov's ideas as found in the Collected Works; we take due account of instances where Solovyov's subject matter reflects specific preoccupations connected with events in his own life and career, though ours is not primarily a biographical study. Two instances of a connection between the writings and biography may be cited here. In the first place, many articles and books written by Solovyov during the 1880's were intended to clarify the misunderstandings that prevented reconciliation between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, the reconciliation that he himself so earnestly sought to effect through the help of the Croatian Archbishop Strossmayer. The energy which Solovyov expended on this project was tremendous, for he subsequently referred to it as the cause to which he devoted 'the best years' of his life.[6] The effects of the work that Solovyov

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[6]Sob. Soch. XII, 360.

engaged in during the 1880's influenced the course of his career and of his thought in the remaining years of his life: a number of commentators, and notably Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy, hold that the philosopher's acute disappointment regarding the likelihood of imminent reconciliation between the Churches accounts for his return to predominantly theoretical work in philosophy and contributes to a quite significant change in his views between 1898 and 1900, the year of his death. This change entailed Solovyov's abandoning the view that the Christian ideal of true unanimity and fellowship (sobornost') could be realized within the scope of human history, and his adopting the pessimistic idea that the course of human history was at an end, that the vital forces of the prominent nationa were spent, and that only a numerically very small group of men and women would remain true to the ideals embodied in the Christian religion.

The second instance of proximity between philosophical or religious ideas and events in Solovyov's own life that we cite at this point relates to the subject of erotic love. In Solovyov's philosophical scheme erotic love occupies an important place, for he recognised that for the majority of men and women erotic love provides the one means to transcend the narrow confines of the 'self', that transcendence which is so critically important in the spiritual life. Furthermore, the erotic expression of love represents not only a temporary loss of one's own self, but a consequent recognition of, and <u>affirmation</u> of, the 'absolute' value of the other person, the object of one's love. The fact that Solovyov assigned this very special significance to erotic love is not simply the reflection of an intellectually argued philosophical outlook on the mystery of love.

As biographical sources make clear, this is also rather closely associated with particular years in his own life, 1892 to 1894, when Solovyov personally experienced a certain intensity of erotic passion; it is a period of the philosopher's life that biographers have referred to as 'the erotic period' (See E. Trubetskoy, S. Solovyov, K. Mochulsky et al.) A long and eventually unfruitful attachment to Sophia Khitrovo, which is supposed to have lasted as long as ten years, and shorter-lasting attachments to women who inspired some of his lyrical poems, can be taken to have provided some substance for his meditations on the nature of love.

In approaching the ideas of Solovyov we supplement biographical observations with quotations from his own correspondence and with references to the memoirs written by his contemporaries. It will be seen that, both with regard to his religious outlook and his character, the figure of Solovyov poses formidable questions of interpretation, especially in cases where one is faced with conflicting opinions expressed by those who knew the philosopher at first hand. Solovyov's statement in a celebrated letter to V.V. Rozanov that he professes 'the religion of the Holy Spirit'[7] has led to a degree of confusion among critics, and to charges of unorthodoxy, but this type of uncertainty is open to solution (by reference to Solovyov's oeuvre) in a way that complexities of character cannot now be. It should be noted that one and the same characteristic in Vladimir Solovyov's personality could and did evoke extremely different responses in

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[7] Pis'ma III,44.

people. One may cite this example: it is recorded that Solovyov had a very distinctive laugh. Some thought that laugh to be indicative of good-natured, childlike naivety, and others (notably V.V. Rozanov) felt it to be a 'hysterical, manic' laughter, bordering on despair, and indicative of a profound loss of faith. Similarly, the philosopher's tendency to indulge in puns, jokes and parody (typically in his correspondence and in short plays like 'The White Lily', Belaya Liliya), is portrayed, in a positive light, as an expression of simple pleasure in living, (a viewpoint shared by the poet Alexander Blok and N.O. Lossky.)[8] Alternatively, those who subscribe to the negative view claimed that this was no more than a means of self-defence with which the disillusioned Solovyov might keep despair at bay.

In cases where such completely contradictory impressions of the philosopher's character are recorded, we provide both the positive and the negative viewpoints.

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Previous studies of the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov are of two kinds: on the one hand, the kind of study which traces intellectual influences on Solovyov's teaching, which illustrates the influence that he in turn has exerted on others, which outlines his philosophical system, comments on that system, and confines itself to those tasks; on the other hand there is the kind of study that

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8, 'The History of Russian Philosophy', N.O. Lossky (London, 1952), Chap. VIII. For a negative view, see T. Masaryk 'Spirit of Russia', Vol. II, 282. (London 1955). [B.268 & 307]

undertakes some or all of the above tasks, but that also recognises the importance of the biography of Solovyov for the appraisal of his ideas. Each approach has something to be said in its favour. Accounts of Solovyov's ideas as a coherent system of thought plainly serve a need, and are necessary as part of the history of Russian 19th-Century thought. Further, accounts such as these, which exclude interpretation on the basis of the writer's biography, avoid the excesses and misconceptions to which uncritical use of biographical materials can give rise. A certain type of literary hagiography exists, which is misleading in its use of biographical data or that, on the other hand, accords unsubstantiated hypotheses the status of documented facts. An example of this type of unfounded statement regarding Solovyov may be found in Michel d'Herbigny's 1911 study: this is the claim that the philosopher swore an oath of celibacy, an unfounded claim that the author appears to have introduced so as to establish Solovyov's credentials as an ascetic.

A further powerful argument for excluding biography from our study as the basis of interpretation of Solovyov's philosophical system is this: the general climate of thought and our current interest in psychology are such that 'personalities' hold a particular interest for most of us. Many events in the philosopher's life are noteworthy: the impressive defence of his Master's Thesis '<u>The Crisis of Western Philosophy</u>' at the age of 21; his three mystical visions; his outspoken plea to Tsar Alexander III to forgive his father's assassins. One knows in addition to this (from memoirs of his contemporaries) that he exerted a personal influence which was out of the ordinary, an influence of a properly so-called 'charismatic' type. The eventfulness of his life, and the complexity and intensity of

Solovyov's character, arouse a natural interest; but there are sufficient aspects of his life and his character to provoke a cult following. For this very reason the researcher who turns his or her attention to biographical materials ought not to lose sight of the danger of trivialization of their subject. Concern with the personality of this figure could conceivably distract one from evaluation of the spiritual teaching that he expounded.

The two strongest arguments in favour of using Solovyov's biography as a guide to his religious system are these:

First, Solovyov's concern with the wholeness of man, his requirement that man should use all his faculties in his service of the truth - these strongly suggest that any valid conclusions about Solovyov's achievements in the intellectual sphere require balanced reference to other aspects of his life.

In the second place, Solovyov was so insistent on the application of Christian teaching to the life of the individual and to his relations with other men, that he would have expected the bringing together of personal life and professed religious beliefs to serve as the criterion in others' assessment of his life.

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Whatever their fundamental premises may be (monotheistic, Deist, mechanistic or pantheistic), cosmological accounts of our world at some point assign a certain status to man, indicative of his place in the overall pattern of events and growth-processes. These accounts vary widely, since they depend on differing conceptions of man, but in particular they vary according to the degree of active participation that they envisage for man in the 'world process'.

The course of religious and philosophical thought, from the earliest Judaic speculation and from the Vedic period in India to the present day, reflects the whole range of possible interpretations of man's role, from extreme passivity to extreme mastery of his environment and self-determination. Between these poles of passivity and self-determination belong the many and varied cosmological accounts that assign to man a mediatory role between higher and lower 'worlds', or between higher and lower beings. (Such pictures of man in a 'mediatory' role tend to be founded upon a conception of him as a complex, composite being, partaking of two or more distinct natures, e.g. animal/spiritual, animal/human/angelic, physical/psychic/spiritual, irrational/rational/suprarational, and so forth). Vladimir Solovyov saw man's status as a 'moral being', his ethics and obligations, the nature of his activity, his capacity for awareness of self and his other faculties as all deriving from his 'mediatory' position between the Divine Absolute and material nature.

While the earliest cosmological accounts tend towards expression in mythic terms, some exponents of cosmological theory have endeavoured to establish an intimate connection between universal laws and the motive forces of history, in many instances providing references to clearly identifiable points in chronological, historically-recorded time. The concern to establish that connection is very largely confined to the Judaeo-Christian world, and is most associated with European writers coming in the wake of Hegel and Schelling. Such endeavours to link cosmology and history or historiography may have a religious basis (as for Solovyov), finding their evidence in the said 'historical' religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islām, or on the other hand these endeavours may be avowedly secular and

anthropocentric.

Vladimir Solovyov became celebrated (even in his own life-time) on account of his long-standing commitment to the view that man may establish an ideally-regulated society within the scope of historical time. This commitment, his views on theocracy (as contained in his uncompleted work '<u>The History and Future of Theocracy</u>') and his eventual disillusion regarding these matters are already well-documented, and they comprise part of the history of Russian religious and intell-ectual thought in the 19th Century.

We believe that there remains considerable scope for a reappraisal of Solovyov's conception of a theocratic society, and consequently we approach this subject in our Study.

In our view the very notion of theocracy is susceptible to misrepresentation and to use in reductionist, and often anti-religious, arguments. (Even Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy's major two-volume study of Solovyov's religious philosophy provides an explicit anti-theocratic viewpoint). To argue that the case for organising states along theo-cratic lines was put forward by priests solely so as to increase their status and influence (and privileges) in society is, in our view, simplistic, and it represents a type of reductionist argument frequently put forward when the validity of the theocratic ideal is being considered. Besides this, there is also a general tendency to overlook the value that the notion of theocracy has as a means of direct reference to 'the inner life' of the spirit.

For Vladimir Solovyov the theocratic idea represented not only the optimum arrangement for Christian government, but also a point of focus for meditation on the question: What most truly constitutes a 'spiritual community'?

In his philosophical and religious writings (and notably in 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', 1882-1884, and 'Justification of the Good', 1897), Solovyov sought to determine a reliable and adequate foundation for an ethical system, and to establish which qualities or attributes are most central and indispensable to the notion of morality itself. As he argues in 'Justification of the Good' , we must ascertain what kind of action is required of us in relation to:

i) what is below us (i.e. purely physical, material nature)

ii) what is on our own level (i.e. other living, conscious beings)

iii) what is above us (i.e. Divine Being).

He argues against founding morality upon one principle alone (and he criticised Schopenhauer's ethical system based on Sympathy, Mitleid); the three central moral feelings in the Solovyovian scheme (shame,[9] pity and piety, respectively) are determined by an argument that is to some extent empirical in approach. (This will be illustrated in our Thesis).

Further, Solovyov's treatment of morality and the criteria for moral actions derives a significant amount from Kant's treatment of these matters. Following Kant, the Russian philosopher points out

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9 Shame, the first of these three 'bases' of morality, is stressed by Dom C. Butler, OSB in his account of Solovyov's philosophy, See 'Soloviev', Downside Review, 1932, p.53: '...Solaviev's thought is plainly that the evidence of the validity of moral obligation is not based upon but detected in the psychological fact of shame. (Note) ...Not only is shame the first data of morality, but the whole of morality is implicit in it.' 'We observe, then, that morality is homogeneous throughout, from its seed in shame to its flower and fruit in the reception of the Kingdom of God within man.' [B. 243]

that a moral code may be defined, in the first place, in negative terms:

> 'Refrain from doing harm' (or, according to the fuller definition of the Categorical Imperative: Refrain from regarding others as means only, not ends).

Then morality may be positively defined:

> 'Actively help others.'

Solovyov's conception of morality was not wholly derivative from Kant and Schopenhauer. The third important respect in which he undertook to treat moral questions was to investigate both the subjective ethic for the individual, and the objective ethic which has a bearing on society and on men's inter-relations in society. This aspect of his work was of paramount importance: Solovyov's entire view of Christianity was informed by the idea that the principle of love which it preached, if it is indeed efficacious, transformative and - ultimately - redemptive, must be realized in practical terms in the very organisation of man's society. We cannot be sincere in our professions of Christian faith, held Solovyov, if we allow society to be regulated by secular values, or if we tolerate disregard for social justice, disregard for the protection of weak minority groups, and so on. (As will be seen in our subsequent argument, a manifest failure to abide by Christian precepts was the basis for Solovyov's criticism of Christians in Byzantine society, and subsequently for his criticism of Russian society in the last decade of the 19th-Century.)

Solovyov's cosmological views, and his intuitive vision of the unity (or Pan-Unity, Vseedinstvo) and inter-relatedness of all beings, led him to determine an ideal framework for the society of men, which

he conceived of as being essentially a 'spiritual community'.

According to Pauline teaching and the accepted symbolism of Christianity, this community is designated as 'the mystical Body of Christ' (Telo Khristovo). It is a symbol that Solovyov wholly accepts, one that evidently inspired him personally and that is centrally important in his religious writings.

Solovyov was aware that men had not as yet achieved the degree of unanimity of purpose and action requisite for a community rightly called 'spiritual'. In his writings he refers constantly to the discrepancy between that which is (to,chto est') and that which ought to be (to,chto dolzhno byt').[10]

His private correspondence during the years 1872 and 1873, the years immediately prior to the publication of his Master's Thesis 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' (Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii) in 1874, is noteworthy for its clear and lengthy passages expressing his preoccupation with the imperfect state of the created world, with the undesirable and deficient nature of phenomenal, time-bound existence.[11] Reflection on this theme proved immensely fruitful for Solovyov, for it led him to the celebrated affirmation in the second of his 'Lectures on Godmanhood' (Chteniya o Bogochelovechestve), the affirmation stating man is such, that he cannot rest satisfied with limited existence, that he strives to attain complete freedom and 'the plenitude of being' (polnota bytiya).[12] (The lectures that followed this bold assertion provide a closely argued case for a recognition of the Divine Absolute

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[10] Sob. Soch. II, 116-121 (A Critique of Abstract Principles; Chap. XII)
[11] Pis'ma III, 56-106.
[12] Sob. Soch.III, 25.

and of Its direct bearing on our existence).

On Solovyov's account (and this was a view he maintained right up to his death in 1900), the imperfect nature of our existence is most clearly manifest in the condition of alienation (otchuzhdenie), in the mutual opposition and exclusion of beings. This notion is very plainly stated in his 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life'.[13]

One form of constraint that we encounter, Solovyov argues in the 'Lectures on Godmanhood',[14] is the conflicting will of other beings: submission to the will of others entails constraint of our own freedom, at least under the conditions of our present, finite existence. This mutual constraint and opposition of wills is reflected, on a more rudimentary level of existence, in the impenetrability (nepronitsaemost') of physical matter: two physical bodies may not occupy one and the same space at the same time, and the presence of one excludes the possibility of the other body occupying that particular space. However, in an argument that it would be premature to state fully in these introductory observations, Solovyov takes openness and receptivity (vospriimmost') to be the counterparts of the impenetrability of matter, and expresses the conviction that conscious, reflective man, using his unique faculty of self-awareness (samosoznatel'nost'), can make himself receptive to the action of the Divine, Absolute Principle and thereby serve as a channel for Divine grace for the ultimate redemption and spiritualisation of all created matter.

The biographies written by Ernest Radlov, Sergey Solovyov,

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[13] Ibid., 353.

[14] Ibid., 42-44. (Lectures on Godmanhood).

Konstantin Mochulsky and others draw our attention to the intensity and depth of the young Russian philosopher's study of the West European philosophical tradition. It should be noted here that while Solovyov acknowledged his indebtedness to Kant, Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann, and while he was acutely aware of the contribution made to philosophy by Kant's critical method, his own work reflects certain Russian preoccupations. This point is affirmed by N.O. Lossky in his '<u>History of Russian Philosophy</u>'[15]:

> 'The characteristic features of Russian philosophical thought - the search for an exhaustive knowledge of reality as a whole and the concreteness of metaphysical conceptions - find a particularly clear expression in Soloviev's work and are quite definitely formulated even in his early books, 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy', 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' and 'The Critique of Abstract Principles'.

Solovyov's study of West European philosophy impressed upon him that philosophy, considered as a subject in isolation from the insights of positive religion and from science, provided man with an abstract and unsatisfying picture of the world. From the very outset, Solovyov sought to show that a true recognition of positive religion, philosophy and science, and a recognition of their inter-relation, would help man, and would help him specifically to make the transition from abstract knowledge to <u>integral</u>, unifying knowledge.[16]

Solovyov's ambitious project of synthesis included evaluation of the relative merit of certain influential contemporary philosophies, and included, where possible, analogies and comparisons between these

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15 Chap. VIII, p. 95.

16 Sob. Soch.I, 316.

and traditional Christian views.[17] By means of this approach he tried to get beyond the one-sidedness of the commonly studied theologians and philosophers. One can respect both Solovyov's recognition of the very real need for comprehensiveness and his readiness to work for this end.

It may be taken as a measure of his success that the emphasis on the wholeness of man in Russian thought, and more particularly the teaching on All-Unity (or Pan-Unity, Vseedinstvo), are directly associated with Vladimir Solovyov's name.

In his life's work Solovyov was concerned to show good and reliable grounds for recognition of, and assent to, the truths of positive religion, and primarily of Christian teaching. He believed that essential Christian teaching is concerned with the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth (osushchestvlenie Tsarstviya Bozhiya na zemle), which, effectively, entails salvation on a universal scale. His exposition of Christian ideas is distinctive for the emphasis he places upon their eminently practical nature.[18]

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[17] See, for instance, his 1898 lecture 'The idea of Humanity according to Auguste Comte' (Ideya Chelovechestva u Avgusta Konta), Sob. Soch. IX, 172-193.

[18] See Sob. Soch.III, 228; Sob.Soch.VI,28,30-31,32.

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV (1853-1900)

Vladimir Solovyov was born in January 1853, the second son of the historian, Professor Sergey Mikhailovich Solovyov (1820-1879). He was brought up in Moscow, where his father lectured at the University, and he attended the 1st Gymnasia and later the 5th Gymnasia in the city. His grandfather, Mikhail Vasil'evich, and other figures on the paternal side of his family were members of the clergy, and Professor Solovyov, though not inclined to follow that family tradition himself, remained a practising member of the Russian Orthodox Church, firm in his Christian convictions.[1] The Solovyov children were brought up to follow the observances of the Orthodox Church, and Vladimir accepted his father's guidance in these matters and in his reading.[2] The philosopher's mother, Poliksena Vladimirovna (née Romanova, d.1909), was absorbed in the welfare of her husband and her

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1 'Sergey Mikhailovich Solovyov', Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, VII, 355-356 (1896). Here the philosopher describes his father as 'unshakably convinced of the positive truths of Christianity' and as greatly attached to the Church's forms and expressions of piety. At the same time, he observes that Sergey Solovyov never sought to impose his faith on others:

'Nepokolebimo uverenniy v polozhitel'nykh istinakh khristianstva, neizmenno i otkryto privyazanniy k sushchestvùyushchim formam tserkovnogo blagochestiya, on nikogda ne podchërkival svoey religioznosti, ne stavil eë rebrom i nikogo ne khotel stesnyat'ey.'

2 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov',(Zhizn' i Tvorcheskaya Evolyutsiya Vladimira Solovyova), Sergey Solovyov (the younger), p.51. [B.43]

large family. She bore 12 children, of whom three died in infancy and one died at the age of seven years. Biographers have commented on one particular feature of her Christian faith and her temperament, recording that Poliksena Vladimirovna tended towards perception of the irrational, mysterious aspects of life; in one account she is portrayed as feeling a 'constant unease' and as having 'mysterious premonitions'.[3] She is viewed, then, as one source of the philosopher's own prophetic powers, and his quest to penetrate the hidden forces of nature and of the spirit is associated with that side of his mother's character. Through his mother's side of the family Vladimir Solovyov was related to another, earlier religious philosopher, the Ukrainian Grigoriy Savvich Skovoroda (1722-1794).[4]

Solovyov's poem 'Three Meetings' (Tri Svidaniya).[5] records that in his early childhood he believed in God firmly, and that he experienced heightened and intense religious feelings. The earliest of three mystical visions that he experienced occurred in 1862, during a service in church, when he was aged nine. The three visions that are the subject of this celebrated poem will require further consideration

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[3] Ibid.,38.
'Fantastichnost' do kontsa dney skazyvalas' v Poliksene Vladimirovne kakoy-to postoyannoy trevozhnost'yu i suetlivost'yu i tainstvennymi predchuvstviyami.'
See also p.33:
'Vsë misticheskoe, poeticheskoe i demonicheskoe vospriyal on so storony svoey materi.'

[4] Collected Works of Grigoriy S. Skovoroda: published in Kharkov, 1894, edited by D.E. Bagaley.
'The Ukrainian Philosopher Grigoriy Savvich Skovoroda',(Ukraynskiy Filosof Grigoriy Savvich Skovoroda), S. Lavretsky, 1894.
'Grigoriy Savvich Skovoroda: His Life and Teaching' (Grigoriy Savvich Skovoroda: Zhizn' i Uchenie) Vladimir Ern 1912.

[5] Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, XII, 80-86. See Appendix for the full Russian text of this poem.

in our Study, for they form one of the important elements in his biography. The biographer Konstantin Mochulsky provides an extensive account of this early and intense period in the philosopher's life, and then traces how the boy's religious convictions gave way to an equally intense commitment[6] to the nihilist and materialist creeds, whose new prominence marked the decade of the 1860's in Russia. The utilitarian ethics propounded by Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pisarev, the direct questioning of the values cherished by the generation of the 1840's, reached as far as the school classrooms, and found favour with Solovyov and his contemporaries. L.M. Lopatin was a slightly younger childhood friend of Solovyov's. He was in a lower class at school, but was nevertheless conscious of the admiration that his older friend's preoccupation with nihilist ideas elicited among the boys.

Solovyov succeeded in his school studies, and gained admission to the University of Moscow in 1869. A record of the philosophers with whose work he was familiar, even in his school days, shows him

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[6] L.M. Lopatin expressed the following view:

> 'Solovyov experienced (the influence of) materialism and Positivism upon him so deeply, he was so passionately attracted by the one and the other, he invested so much of his own soul in them, that if there had not occurred that upheaval (in his ideas) which I mentioned earlier [the return to religious beliefs and values] , he certainly would have emerged as one of the most brilliant and penetrating apostles of the new philosophical movement.'

(From an article in the journal 'Questions of Philosophy and Psychology' - Voprosy Filosofii i Psykhologii, No.I, 1901, p.90, our translation. Special obituary issue in honour of Vladimir Solovyov),

[B 143]

to have been a particularly precocious student, with an unusually great capacity for serious work. He appears to have assimilated, admired, and then found wanting a succession of prominent West European philosophies in extremely rapid sequence.[7] Eventually, feeling an increasingly strong need for a philosophy that offered 'positive content' (rather than simply a critique of other systems), he adopted Spinoza's pantheism, and from that stance he found it possible to regain his religious faith and to reaffirm the worth of Christian thought.

After his University studies (first in the Natural Sciences Faculty, and then in the Philosophy Faculty), Solovyov took an exceedingly unusual step, and he moved to the Moscow Theological Academy in the Summer of 1873, so that he could attend theology lectures there during the next academic year. Given the mutual mistrust with which the clergy and the Russian intelligentsia viewed each other at this period, Solovyov's chosen course of study appeared unaccountable. Professor Solovyov regretted his son's decision,[8] and indeed, the young graduate's new hosts and the lecturers at the Theological Academy themselves felt unsure how to interpret his intentions.[9]

Solovyov's biographer Mochulsky writes that this decision to study theology seriously in effect constituted a direct challenge to

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[7] 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', Sergey Solovyov (the younger), p.58. [B.46]

[8] 'On V.S. Solovyov in His Young Years' (O VI.S. Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody), S.M. Lukyanov (Petrograd, 1916), Vol.I, p.313. [B45]

[9] Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova, III, 105. (A letter to E.K. Selevina, née Romanova).

society[10]: at this period Empiricism, Positivism, and the natural sciences were regarded as intellectually respectable, while theology bore negative associations and failed to stimulate general interest in educated circles. Although the young man's move to the Theological Academy at Sergiev-Posad seemed to be a self-imposed isolation and a severance from the life of Moscow and its university, his thoughts were actually directed to the contribution he meant to make in the field of philosophy. He availed himself of the opportunity to read extensively in the subject, (and also studied Patristic theology), and he prepared himself for future work. The deep confidence he felt with regard to the eventual fruitfulness of these studies finds expression in his private correspondence.[11] Solovyov's friend and biographer V. Velichko also refers to this sense of confidence.[12]

The young philosopher wrote a Master's Thesis entitled 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' (Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii),[13] and his extremely able defence of the thesis in November 1874, at the age of twenty-one, won him great scholarly recognition. He was offered a

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10 'Vladimir Solovyov: His Life and Teaching' (Vladimir Solovyov: Zhizn' i Uchenie), Konstantin Mochulsky, YMCA Press, Paris 1936, p.42. [B46]

11 Op.cit., 91 (A letter to E.K. Selevina).

12 'Vladimir Solovyov: Life and Works' (Vladimir Solovyov: Zhizn' i Tvoreniya), V. Velichko, Petersburg, 1902, p.181. [B44]

13 Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, I, 27-151.

lectureship in Moscow University's Philosophy Faculty (a post sought by another possible candidate, the philosopher M.M. Troitsky), and in the Spring of 1875 (January to March) Solovyov delivered a course of lectures on the history of philosophy. In the early Summer of that year he applied for leave to study in England, at the British Museum. Permission was granted, and at the beginning of June 1875 Solovyov left Russia. From July until late October he worked very intensively indeed, reading Cabbalistic and other mystical literature at the British Museum. He paid minimal attention to his surroundings in England, and also tended to keep his distance from other Russians staying in London. While there, he did investigate spiritualism, for he knew of the established reputation of spiritualists and mediums in England. However, his experiences at séances disappointed him, and he felt the spiritualists whom he met to be fraududent.[14]

The second of Solovyov's three visions of the Divine Sophia, feminine embodiment of Wisdom (Bozhestvennaya Premudrost'), took place in the Reading Room of the British Museum, after the young man prayed, asking her to reveal herself to him as she had done in his childhood (1862). On this occasion he saw only the face of Sophia, and he heard a command to go to Egypt in the hope of being granted a fuller vision there. Solovyov prepared his departure immediately, informing his parents of his new destination, but not really clarifying the purpose of his journey. He was granted one more vision, out in the

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[14] Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova,I,31 (to N.N. Strakhov, 9 March 1887): Some years later the philosopher stated that he did not regard spiritualism as a path to religious truth - 'putëm spiritizma religioznoy istiny dobyt' nel'zya.'

Solovyov's interest in spiritualism during his early years, and especially his deep study of Cabbalistic teachings, are best covered by K.Mochulsky [Bibl. 46] and D.Stremoukhov [Bibl.78]

Sahara Desert, and although one knows comparatively little about the way in which Solovyov spent his time in Egypt (between November 1875 and March 1876), it is extremely likely that his preoccupation with, and knowledge of, religious matters deepened during those months following his intensive studies in London.[15] Whether he successfully located any mystics or any guardians of secret Cabbalistic teachings, and whether anyone imparted such secret teachings to him, is not possible to establish with any certainty. However, the timeless vision of universal harmony, granted in the desert, bore a very great value for the philosopher's later thought.

Solovyov returned to Russia to resume his lecturing and further writing. He delivered his twelve celebrated 'Lectures on Godmanhood' (Chteniya o Bogochelovechestve),[16] 1877-1881. The philosophical stance he adopted in those lectures, his known opposition to the Positivists against whom his Master's Thesis was directed, his youth and his very considerable reputation as a stimulating speaker, caused many to attend. At this same period (1877-1881) Vladimir Solovyov and Fyodor Dostoevsky were drawn together in friendship, and together they visited the staretz Amvrosiy at the monastery of Optina Pustyn'.[17]

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15 'On VI.S. Solovyov in His Young Years',(O. VI.S. Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody) S.M. Lukyanov, Vol.III,143. [8.45]

Lukyanov affirms that the three Russian visitors to London who saw most of Vladimir Solovyov noticed how seriously he devoted himself to religious matters:

'Vse tri svidetelya kak-by v odin golos vnushayut nam,chto v Solovyove kroyutsya isklyuchitel'nye dukhovnye zadatki, chto interesy religiozno-filosofskoy mysli stoyat u nego, bessporno, na pervom plane...'.

16 Sob.Soch.Vladimira Solovyova,III,3-181.

17 Letters of F.M. Dostoevsky, Vol.IV, 27,29,33. (Moscow ed.1959) Here Dostoevsky mentions the visit to Optina Pustyn with Solovyov, but does not elaborate on what happened in the two days spent there (2 letters to his wife, June 1878, and one to L.V. Grigoriev, July 1878).

Sergey Solovyov (the younger), and later Lev Shestov,[18] argue that there was less of a true affinity between the philosopher and the novelist than is sometimes assumed; however, even if one accepts the point made by Sergey Solovyov and Shestov, there must still have been wide and very important areas of agreement between them, a shared recognition and acceptance of Christian goals, and, for both writers, a strong emphasis upon the responsibilities and the freedom of man.

At the end of the 1870's Solovyov worked simultaneously on two of his early, but important books, namely on 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' (Filosofskie Nachala Tsel'nogo Znaniya) and 'A Critique of Abstract Principles' (Kritika Otvlechennykh Nachal),[19] and he was to submit one of these as a Doctoral Thesis at the University of Petersburg. He was advised to submit 'A Critique of Abstract Principles' as his thesis, and submitted the work in 1880. The thesis was accepted (April 1880) and subsequently published.

Solovyov moved from Moscow to Petersburg, where he gave lectures on the history of philosophy for the 'Higher Education Courses for Women' (Vysshie Zhenskie Kursy) in 1880 and 1881.[20]

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18 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', Sergey Solovyov (the younger), (1923), p.40. [B48]
'Thought and Apocalypse' (Umozrenie i Apokalipsis), 1927, Lev Shestov, an essay in his collection of essays 'Thought and Revelation', (Umozrenie i Otkrovenie), Paris 1964, p.29. [B 234]

19 Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, I, 250-406; Sob. Soch., II,3-397.

20 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov',Sergey Solovyov, 192-193. Solovyov also taught a similar course for women in Moscow, in the academic year 1874-1875.
'On Vladimir Solovyov in his young Years' (O VI.S. Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody), S.M. Lukyanov (Petrograd, 1916), Vol.II,140. [B 45]

But his livelihood as a lecturer came in jeopardy in 1881: at the end of a public lecture Solovyov proposed that the new Tsar, Alexander III, should, as a Christian monarch, abide by Christian principles and show clemency towards his father's assassins. This statement was viewed in a bad light in official circles - the young lecturer wrote to the Tsar so as to clarify possible misunderstandings,[21] and although he was not obliged to resign his lecturing post he did offer his resignation and it was accepted (November 1881).

From this point in his career the philosopher earned his livelihood by his writing alone. The beginning of the 1880's marks a new direction in Solovyov's ideas and activities. The need to reconcile East and West, the two great but conflict-ridden cultures, assumed primary importance for him. His concern with this reconciliation was reflected in his writings: he devoted increasing energy and time to publicistic articles for the journals (the 'tolstye zhurnaly') and sought practical means to enhance the reconciliation of the divided Christian cultures. He was a very early advocate of the reunion of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches, and his oecumenical spirit offended significant numbers of his Russian Orthodox readers, while winning great favour with many.

Solovyov's reflection upon the causes of the rift between Eastern and Western Christendom led naturally to a reassessment of the Slavophiles' and Westernizers' dispute. Although the prominent figures who engaged in this dispute during the 1840's - Ivan Kireevsky,

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[21] Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova, Vol.IV, 149-150.

Alexey Khomyakov, Alexander Herzen and others - were now dead, others perpetuated the conflict. Solovyov was much dismayed by the emergence of a crude nationalism among the new generation of Slavophiles,[22] and he severely criticised this new phenomenon. His writings on the Slavophile-Westernizer dispute are wide-ranging and lengthy: they appear under the collective title 'The National Question in Russia' (Natsional'niy Vopros v Rossii),[23] the first set of these articles belonging to the years 1883 to 1888, and the second set to the years 1888 to 1891.

Solovyov, who, like Ivan Kireevsky and Alexey Khomyakov, took a religious approach to historical and cultural questions and viewed the Russians as a religious people, felt entirely justified in criticising the Slavophiles of the 1880's. Indeed, he considered himself obliged to expose their nationalism,[24] and to underline the differences between such men as N. Danilevsky and the much more enlightened Alexey Khomyakov. Solovyov's writings on this dispute were not always interpreted in the best light, and a seeming change of allegiance from the Slavophile camp to the Westernizers' camp evoked a hostile response from people on both sides.[25]

By 1886 Solovyov's ideas on reunion between the Churches had

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22 See Sob. Soch.V, 132,133,137-138,148. Here Solovyov criticises the views expressed by N. Danilevsky in his book 'Russia and Europe' , (Rossiya i Evropa), 1871 (2nd ed., revised by the author).
See ibid., p.3,13,24-25,43,47,53,56,71-72,103. (Solovyov's views on the national question, and his criticism of exclusive nationalism).
See 'To the Memory of Vladimir Solovyov' (Pamyati Vladimira Solovyova), A.F. Koni (1903), p.25. [B.134]

23 Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, V, 3-401.

24 Ibid., 158,159.

25 A.F. Koni, p.3.

developed to the point where he read and studied Catholic historians and theologians with increasing sympathy. He established contact with Jesuit priests who assured him that his ideas on the reunion of the Churches (and on other matters) would be well received in Europe.[26] He also came to know the Croatian Archbishop Strossmayer and spent several weeks at his residence in the Summer of 1886. The two men agreed on many matters, and they sought practically to advance the cause of reunion. Solovyov's hopes of success in this project proved to be premature; however, the good will of his Croatian hosts served him when he could not have 'The History and Future of Theocracy' (Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii)[27] published in Russia. With their assistance Solovyov arranged for its publication (Part I only) in Zagreb in 1887. This work dismayed many Russian readers, and was unacceptable to the official government authorities, even in its incomplete form.[28]

In 1888 the philosopher travelled to Paris, where, in May, he delivered a lecture in French entitled 'The Russian Idea' (L'Idée Russe).[29] In the following year Solovyov published an entire book in French so that West Europeans might become familiar with his ideas. This book, called 'Russia and the Universal Church' (La Russie et

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26 Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova,III,138. (A letter to Fr. P. Pierling).

27 Sob. Soch. Vladimira Solovyova,IV, 243-633.

28 Among Russians who found this work valuable and interesting was the author N. Leskov:
'L.N. Tolstoy: Correspondence with Russian Writers' (L.N. Tolstoy: Perepiska s russkimi Pisatelyami), Moscow 1962.
N. Leskov, Letter to L.N. Tolstoy 20 January, 1891, p.531.

29 'L'Idée Russe' Vladimir Solovyov, (Librairie Academique Didier, Paris, 1888). Russian trans. by G.A. Rachinsky, See Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova XI, 89-118 (Foyer Oriental Chrétien, Belgium, 1969), [b.20]

l'Eglise Universelle),[30] contained some of the principal ideas intended for inclusion in 'The History and Future of Theocracy', and it also included an explicit recognition of the Pope's special status among the Bishops of the Church. Numerous Orthodox believers took such statements to be a betrayal of the Orthodox Tradition and as evidence of Solovyov's personal conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. In effect, Solovyov's position was an increasingly isolated one: he did not advocate that individual members of the Orthodox Church should profess belief in the Catholic faith,[31] for, despite the rift between the Churches that took full effect in 1054, Solovyov believed that there were no substantial reasons for the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox Churches' continued separation. With sufficient good will on either side, and mutual respect, the ideal of Christian unity and unanimity could, according to Solovyov, be made a reality. This viewpoint was not fully appreciated in Russia or Europe at that time. Some of the philosopher's Catholic hosts and correspondents in Europe had hoped that he would accept the Catholic faith, and they were disconcerted not only by his resistance to their suggestions, but also by some of the mystical and apparently heterodox interpretations of Trinitarian theology in 'Russia and the Universal Church'. Solovyov, for his part, was not wholly in accord with these Catholics, and at this period, the end of the 1880's, time spent in Europe caused him to feel and to miss his 'Russian' roots, (Letters III, 189).

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30 'La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle', Vladimir Solovyov (3rd edition, Librarie Stock, - Delamain Boutelleau et Cie, Paris, 1922), [8.21] Russian trans. by G.A. Rachinsky, Sob.Soch,XI,139-348.

31 Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova,III,172. (A letter to the editors of the 'Novoe Vremya' newspaper.)

The decade of 1890 to 1900 saw a second major change of emphasis in Solovyov's activities, but that period was marked by the same intense preoccupation with work and writing that he showed in the previous decade. He depended entirely on his writing, on the royalties from his books and on the fees from his journalistic articles. His position was made more precarious due to the limitations imposed on him by the ecclesiastical and the political censors.[32] He was for many years forbidden the right to publish articles on theology, and after 1881 he did not lecture publicly for ten years, nor did he hold any university post in the later years of his career. He moved mainly between the cities of Moscow and Petersburg, staying at the Hotel d'Angleterre in Petersburg and spending some of the Summer months on the estate of friends, where he could work in peaceful seclusion, or in Finland. His books and few possessions were spread among the homes of the various friends who gave him lodgings. Records and memoirs left by Solovyov's contemporaries say that this way of life was appropriate to his character, and that it indicated a certain aspect of his spirituality: he was, according to this view, a 'strannik', a wandering pilgrim, with no fixed home or roots in this earthly world, a man whose sights and energies were wholly directed to the world of the spirit.[33]

The years 1890 to 1900 saw the publication of his 'The Meaning of Love' (Smysl Lyubvi), 'Justification of the Good'(Opravdanie Dobra), 'The Drama of Plato's Life' (Zhiznennaya Drama Platona) and 'Three

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[32] Ibid., 138 (A letter to Fr. P. Pierling). See also 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov' Sergey Solovyov, p.217.

[33] A.F. Koni, p.5.

Conversations' (Tri Razgovora),[34] besides the first chapters of a work on theoretical philosophy, articles on aesthetic theory, literary reviews, translations of some Platonic dialogues, and his own lyrical poetry (1st edition, 1891).

The titles and subject matter of these books reveal that Solovyov pursued theoretical work in philosophy at this time, as he had done in the first stage of his career, between 1873 and 1880. The devotion to theoretical aspects of philosophy did not, however, exclude cultural and political concerns. During these last ten years of his life he consistently wrote of his fears that the Christian culture of Russia was threatened by imminent subjection to, and possible destruction at the hands of, the Chinese people. (We examine these developments in the philosopher's thought in our chapter on the poem 'Panmongolism' and the essay 'China and Europe', Kitay i Evropa, Chapter IX).

Solovyov's return to theoretical philosophy may be interpreted in positive or negative terms. He was certainly disappointed that the leading representatives of the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches had not found sufficient common ground to bring about their reconciliation. His theocratic schemes were praised at the Vatican, but considered impractical. In Russia the conception of Christian rule to which Tsar Alexander III and Pobedonostsev subscribed was very different from the view of Christian rule that Solovyov

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34 See respectively: Sob.Soch.VII,3-60; Sob.Soch.VIII,3-516; Sob. Soch.IX,194-241; Sob.Soch.X,83-221.

presented in 'The History and Future of Theocracy'. The Russian government's resistance to innovation rendered official sanction and adoption of Solovyov's ideas on Church-State relations extremely improbable.

It was not disappointment alone that prompted Solovyov to resume his theoretical work and to relegate practical enterprises to a secondary place. In certain respects the work which he undertook between 1890 and 1900 constitutes an important reaffirmation of a Christian scheme of values. In the early years of the decade this reaffirmation took the form of a work on 'the meaning of love'. Later he was concerned with a large-scale revision and reformulation of his moral philosophy, and he gave this work the significant title 'Justification of the Good', (Opravdanie Dobra). Some writers hold this to be his greatest contribution to philosophy, while others particularly admire his last work, entitled 'Three Conversations', (Tri Razgovora). Both works were intended to affirm the Good and to show that assent to the Good really entailed more than a passive resistance to evil. Without specifically naming his opponent, Solovyov engaged in a lengthy polemical argument to show the deficiencies of the Tolstoyan precept 'non-resistance to evil', (neprotivlenie zlu).[35]

In 1898 the philosopher travelled through Europe again and

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35 See 'From the History of the Polemics involving Lev Tolstoy: L. Tolstoy and Vl. Solovyov' (Iz Istorii Polemiki vokrug L'va Tolstogo: L. Tolstoy i Vl. Solovyov), Zinaida Minz. Trudy po Russkoy i Slavyanskoy Filologii. Univ. Tartu, 1966, [8.154]

briefly returned to Egypt.[36] The views that he expressed in public during the last two years of his life, between 1898 and 1900, concerned the imminent conflict between Russia and China, of which he had written throughout the preceding eight years, and which he now interpreted in pessimistic, apocalyptic terms. His earlier confidence that the Christian social ideal would be realized within the course of human history was replaced by a conviction that the majority of Christian believers would be tragically misled by an Antichrist offering false promises about unity among men and an attractive, but false, scheme for the organisation of human society. In Solovyov's vision of the future, expressed in 'A Short Story about Antichrist' (Kratkaya Povest' ob Antikhriste) at the very end of 'Three Conversations', only a very small number of Christians discern the fraudulent nature of the Antichrist's promised Utopia, and these few categorically reject what he offers them. Comparison of this story with Dostoevsky's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' yields interesting ideas, but the reception given to Solovyov's apocalyptic tale when he read it to select audiences was largely unfavourable. In some quarters the philosopher was now dismissed as eccentric or wholly mad, while even several of his friends felt his preoccupation with apocalypse and the Yellow Peril to be unhealthy, a regrettable development in his thought.

Solovyov, whose health had for some years been poor, became quite ill in July 1900, while travelling to the estate of his friend Prince Sergey Trubetskoy at Uzkoe, near Moscow. He confessed to a Russian

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36 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', "Zhizn' i Tvorcheskaya Evolyutsiya Vladimira Solovyova), Sergey Solovyov, pp.364-366, [illegible]

Orthodox priest who was summoned to his bedside at Uzkoe, and he died on July 31st, at the age of forty-seven.

In the above summary of Vladimir Solovyov's life we observed that the development of his ideas may be divided into three major phases. For clarity and convenience we may list these phases in the following form:

i) Initial criticism of West European philosophy, and concentrated work in the theoretical field, especially in epistemology;

1873-1880

ii) Promotion of the theocratic idea; plans for the reunion of the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches; Solovyov's own attraction to Roman Catholicism; the writing of many publicistic articles, especially in connection with Slavophile beliefs;

1880-1890

iii) Apparent disenchantment with practical ideas on the reunion of Churches; return to theoretical philosophy; an increasing preoccupation with apocalyptic visions and the prospect of an imminent end to the course of the world history, these latter ideas taking very strong hold in the last two years of the philosopher's life, that is, from 1898 to 1900.

1890-1900

CHAPTER IV

VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S CENTRAL TEACHINGS - I

In this and the following section of our Study, we provide a general exposition of the central ideas and terms in Vladimir Solovyov's religious thought. As we have already indicated,[1] Solovyov aimed to restate traditional Christian teaching in a form accessible and appealing to the educated Orthodox laity of his time. Wide-ranging though his writings on Christianity are, it is plain that he could not give equal emphasis to all branches of Christian thought and tradition. His understanding of the New Testament was valuable in many senses and his works stress some centrally important features of Christian spirituality. He stressed, for instance, that Christ preached a message of universal salvation and of freedom for man; he taught that Christian values should be implemented throughout society, but in such a way as to preserve the 'absolute' worth and the autonomy of the individual; he further taught that Christian teaching is concerned with active love (deyatel'naya lyubov') and with awakening in man the aspiration to 'be perfect'. It is our purpose, here, to clarify the central terms in Solovyov's religious vocabulary, and also to mention those questions which most preoccupied him and led him to his affirmation of spiritual values.

Solovyov's earliest reflections on religious themes that he committed to writing (available in his collected Correspondence)

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[1] Chapter II.

concern the imperfect state of the created world and man's dissatisfaction with time-bound, death-bound natural existence. In his early letters, and elsewhere,[2] he describes man as a conscious being, able to perceive and experience natural life as deficient and essentially unsatisfying. Man requires satisfaction of his various needs, and if, in acting to fulfil these, he is restrained by the conflicting will and actions of others who seek to fulfil their own needs, he experiences that restraint as a form of suffering.[3] His scope for action and for assertion of his will is limited by the activity of others. Solovyov stresses that man can only rectify his position (and attain true satisfaction) if he finds a point of reference and support (opora) outside the natural order.[4]

In the animal kingdom an existence which is confined to satisfaction of physiological needs and instincts and to conflict over the limited resources of food, living space, etc., is the given and inalterable 'norm'.[5] There is no impulse to deviate from such a 'norm' or pattern of existence - it is the 'given' condition in which animals live. Solovyov argues that conscious, rational man cannot, by his very nature, remain content to live on this rudimentary level:

> 'While an animal strives only to <u>live</u>, in man there appears the will to live <u>in the way duty requires</u>.'[6]

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[2] Sob. Soch,III,301 (The Spiritual Foundations of Life, 1882-1884).

[3] Sob. Soch.III,42-44 (Lectures on Godmanhood, 1877-1881).

[4] Op. cit.

[5] Sob. Soch.III,310 (See also 306-310). (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

[6] Ibid.
'V to vremya kak zhivotnoe stremitsya tol'ko <u>zhit'</u>, v cheloveke yavlyaetsya volya zhit' <u>kak dolzhno</u>'. (Author's italics). (Our own translation).

If his will and activity are restrained by others, if this condition causes him to suffer, then he will use his rational and other faculties to terminate or reduce that suffering as far as possible, and to find a manner of living more conducive to satisfaction. Even if rational man proves unable to effect a complete end to his suffering, or a removal of conflict and of all that causes him to suffer, his very consciousness that these features of his existence are unacceptable places him above the level of beings that passively accept this condition and cannot do otherwise.[7]

A survey of man's activities shows that he has resorted to, and experimented with, a wide range of remedies to alleviate the ills

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7 Sob.Soch.III,44, 309-310.

Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy, who was in so many respects a quite severe critic of Solovyov's ideas, entirely endorsed the Solovyovian view of this subject in his insufficiently recognised book 'Thought in colours - Three Essays on the Russian Icon', (Umozrenie v kraskakh - Tri Ocherka o russkoy ikone):

> 'I remember four years ago I visited a [cinema] in Berlin, where there was presented the bottom of an aquarium, and [there were shown] scenes from the life of a preying water-beetle. In front of us there came pictures of the mutual devouring of living beings - clear illustrations of that general, merciless struggle for existence that fills the life of nature... Such has been the life of nature for the duration of successive centuries, such it is and such it will be for the indefinable future. If this spectacle disturbs us, if at the sight of the scenes in the aquarium described here there arises the feeling of moral nausea (nravstvennoy toshnoty), this proves that in man there are the rudiments of another world, of another level of being. Indeed, our human indignation would itself not have been possible if this type of animal life appeared to us the only possibility in the world and if we did not feel in ourselves the calling to realize something other [prizvanie osushchestvit' drugoe...]'.

YMCA Press Edition, 1965 (Our translation.) An English translation of this work has now become available, under the title 'Icons: Theology in Colour', (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York),

[B.301]

of natural existence, remedies as various as hedonism, intoxication, the acquisition and exercise of power, suicide, resignation to the limits of this existence, and so forth. In his 'Justification of the Good' (1897) Solovyov examines the viability of some of these as solutions to man's present, undesirable state. Their efficacy for the individual has to be taken into account - that is, whether they really remove the root causes of individuals' suffering, or whether, by somehow obscuring the root causes, they offer only temporary satisfaction and a further re-subjection to suffering. These various 'solutions' available to man require evaluation not solely on the basis of their suitability (or supposed suitability) for the individual; accordingly, Solovyov considers how viable they are when given universal application. For Solovyov, just as for Kant, courses of action derive validity from their possible universal application: that is, if a certain course of action or a certain way of proceeding, when elevated into a principle or imperative binding upon all men everywhere, yields desirable results, then that course of action could rightly be approved. Suicide may at times appeal to individuals as an extreme solution to their problems, yet it would not occur to a reasonable man to elevate this action into a universally applicable imperative for all men. Solovyov actually criticises the philosophies, such as Schopenhauer's, which provide a rationale for pessimism and which elevate a personal, individual attitude of mind into a universal principle or a 'moral' response to the unsatisfactory nature of phenomenal existence.[8] While

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[8] Sob.Soch.I, 147-148 (Crisis of Western Philosophy); Sob.Soch VIII, 86 (Justification of the Good).

Solovyov rejects suicide as a viable or appropriate course of action even for the individual (a judgement that one would naturally expect from a Christian), he refrains from outright condemnation of those attracted to suicide, for the following reason.[9] Regrettable as an individual's decision to take his own life may be, it is the case, argues Solovyov, that the prospective suicide's dissatisfaction with his present circumstances depends, at least in part, upon an awareness (however slight and obscure) that a qualitatively better existence <u>is</u> possible, and that therefore one should not resign oneself to the present, unsatisfactory conditions of one's life. Even if this awareness is not consciously or coherently formulated, it is nevertheless a significant element in the complex of motives that impel someone to take his own life.

Solovyov attached paramount importance to the consistent application of Christian ethics to all spheres of men's activities, for he took the precepts of the Gospels to be our most adequate and efficacious means of ensuring the welfare of all, safeguarding the autonomy of individuals (whose 'absolute' worth Christian teaching affirms), and balancing this with the needs of the collective, the need for social cohesion, justly administered law, and so forth. These are all central considerations in Solovyov's delineation of his religious philosophy. He taught, in his writings, that Christianity presented man with an ideal of unanimity that is quite distinct in essence.

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[9] Sob. Soch.VIII, 10.

So as to highlight the uniqueness and the merits of the Christian social ideal, he contrasts the Christian approach to the welfare of collective humanity with important, historically influential secular approaches. He cites at least three examples of peoples or movements that have offered and tried out secular criteria for the ordering of man's society. The three groups considered by Solovyov were the Romans, the French revolutionaries of 1789, and thirdly, the advocates of Socialism and other more or less radical social theorists. Solovyov was careful to acknowledge the positive insights and the achievements of these groups, but he also drew his readers' attention to the weaknesses in their views and their practical approaches. It was his view that they could not, through <u>their</u> chosen means of government, attain the positive results which adherence to a true Christian model of government could bring about. More specifically, Solovyov wrote that the Romans elaborated their own secular code of <u>Justice</u>,[10] which had considerable merits; the Roman ideal of justice was not, in Solovyov's view, as beneficial or desirable as the Christian principles of <u>mercy</u> (miloserdie), charity and love, but he conceded that through the Romans' emphasis on the <u>universal</u> application of their code of justice they had achieved impressively high standards of social order.[11] The leading spirits of the French Revolution of 1789 stressed the value of civic rights, the need for freedom and equality,[12] though, on Solovyov's account, the new rule they inaugurated could not ensure men's welfare. The revolutionaries' exclusive reliance on purely secular

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10 In '<u>Russia and the Universal Church</u>' Solovyov stresses that the Romans imposed order primarily by <u>force</u>. Sob.Soch.XI,244. He intended a contrast between <u>force</u> and Christian <u>love.</u> [B.21]

11 Sob.Soch.XI,243-244 (Russia and the Universal Church);3rd French ed. see pp.136-140.

12 Sob.Soch.III,5-7. '(Lectures on Godmanhood).'

principles, the imbalance of their views and practical goals, spoilt their enterprise. Thirdly, advocates of Socialism and other social theorists have offered schemes for the organisation of society,[13] but Solovyov showed that their claims to bring about a just distribution of property were not as firmly founded on 'moral' principles as they themselves supposed. Solovyov's discussion of the Roman, the revolutionary and the Socialist viewpoints was intended to show how these were fundamentally different from the Christian conception of society and 'community'.

The imbalance evident in the schemes of the secular social theorists (such as Proudhon, Fourier and the various advocates of Socialism) was, for Solovyov, but one instance of man's general tendency to give credence to - and act upon - one-sided, exclusive views. This tendency operates in all spheres of activity, in philosophy no less than in politics or religious observance; and in his various works the Russian philosopher exposed to view the negative effects that adoption of exclusive viewpoints cause. It hardly needs to be pointed out that, in the interests of objectivity, he aspired to gain as comprehensive an outlook as possible on philosophical and other problems. But in addition to this wholly natural desire for objectivity, the special emphasis that he put upon <u>comprehensiveness</u> of viewpoint is a distinctive feature of his philosophical thought.

Both during and since his life-time, a general appreciation of Solovyov's

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[13] Ibid., 7-9.

insistence upon this comprehensiveness of viewpoint has significantly helped in winning a lasting recognition for his achievements in philosophy.

For the purposes of further clarification, to show how he underlined the need for comprehensiveness, we take certain examples from his critical examination of some familiar theological and philosophical views and, secondly, from his criticism of historical movements that adopted extreme religious or political positions.

In his 'Lectures on Godmanhood' (Chteniya o Bogochelovechestve) Solovyov juxtaposes the viewpoints of Deism and Pantheism,[14] and criticises both of these as one-sided and deficient accounts of the nature of God. The Deists stress the transcendent aspect of God, and their account wholly excludes God's immanence in the created world; the Pantheists perceive God's immanence in the world, but deny his transcendent aspect. The Deist and Pantheist views are, then, mutually exclusive, each valuable in what they perceive about the nature of God, but misleading in their exclusive affirmation of what they have perceived. Solovyov asks:

> 'Is there a necessity to understand God either as only a separate being or as only the general substance of worldly phenomena? On the contrary, the very conception of God as a whole and complete (absolute) eliminates both one-sided definitions and opens the way to another viewpoint...'[15]

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[14] Ibid., 164

[15] Ibid.

We provide further examples of Solovyov's criticism of one-sided and extreme positions in the field of religious perception and in accounts of Divine-human relations:

His critique of absolute dualism

(a) Solovyov specifically objected to the Islāmic interpretation of the world order (and to the similarly dualistic Zoroastrian viewpoint) on the grounds that these conceived of God's transcendence exclusively, stressing the separation between God and His creatures. Though reflection upon the transcendent aspect of God may be very salutary for the believer's spiritual life (instilling in him a due sense of awe and veneration), if the believer has little hope of redemption from his 'creaturely' condition, then the motivation to adhere to spiritual precepts is much diminished. Solovyov held that Islām, lacking the doctrine of 'Godmanhood' (Bogochelovechestvo), could not offer believers in that religion such assurances of spiritual salvation as Christianity can offer.[16] Because of the Incarnation of the God-man, Jesus Christ, among men, Christianity is not obliged to assert a rigid and extreme separation of the sacred and the mundane, nor of the Divine Creator and Creaturely beings.

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[16] Sob.Soch.IV, 42-43. (The Great Controversy and Christian Politics, Pt. III).

(b) Solovyov also criticised Plato's idealist philosophy on account of a too rigid separation of the ideal and the phenomenal spheres. (See our treatment of this subject in Chapter VIII).

(c) In Solovyov's view, the major spiritual teachings originating in India, Hinduism and Buddhism, served men well in that they expressed in very clear and powerful terms the essentially unsatisfying quality of natural, earthly existence.[17] They stressed man's susceptibility to disease, sorrow, death, the pain of being parted from pleasurable but transient experiences, and so forth. To this extent, argues Solovyov, they showed a penetrating understanding of the human condition, and the teachers of the various Indian faiths were correct in their premise that awareness of the undesirability of earthly existence could give a powerful impetus to men to make progress in spiritual life.

But it is Solovyov's thesis that this was as far as the Indians' positive, beneficial insights went. He conceded that they diagnosed men's ills and that they offered a variety of ascetic or other disciplines to assist men in overcoming suffering. However, Solovyov judged that the 'remedies' offered by the Indian spiritual philosophies and the disciplines founded on them yielded only pantheistic contemplation, or concentration on the Void or on 'non-being',[18] and that ultimately they

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[17] Sob.Soch.III,41-44 (Lectures on Godmanhood).

[18] Ibid., 48; Sob.Soch.VIII,68,256-266.

entailed an irresponsible and non-compassionate, selfish, renunciation of one's responsibilities towards 'the world'. This was, in his view, another form of absolute dualism, a separation of the spheres of 'the spiritual' and 'the secular'; men who took up these philosophies were electing to pursue their own personal salvation and were ruling out the chance to transform, qualitatively improve, secular society.

The following example is from philosophy. One of Solovyov's most widely known works, 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' (Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii), is devoted to criticism of the extreme forms of Empiricism and Rationalism, the two major directions in which West European philosophy was developing. The Empiricists' claim that all knowledge was founded on sensation, and Hegel's claim that knowledge was founded solely on the forms of Reason, are untenable; Solovyov argues this case, stressing that Hegel's elevation of Reason is neither legitimate, nor does it yield philosophically acceptable results. The Empiricists' elevation of sensation is similarly illegitimate and unrewarding from the philosophical point of view.[19] The former system, which Solovyov called 'pan-logism' (pan-logizm), offers pure thought without a thinking subject or any specific content of thought; the latter system offers pure sensation without a sensing subject, and devoid of specific content.[20] These conclusions

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[19] Sob.Soch.I, 48-49,110,121-122,135,140. (The Crisis of Western Philosophy, 1874).

[20] Ibid., 60-61,107,135.

are, as the author says, 'inconceivable' (nemyslimy), hence West European philosophy, in adopting the premises of these two speculative systems, could be demonstrated to be pursuing a fundamentally unrewarding direction. It was an argument and conclusion extremely congenial to the Slavophiles.

The examples cited above come from the fields of theology and philosophy. Our further examples of Solovyov's arguments regarding exclusive viewpoints are instances where the philosopher examines religious movements that have appeared in the course of history and whose fortunes have been connected with the application of, and adherence to, one or other extreme, exclusive viewpoint. One might distinguish the two forms of exclusivity that Solovyov criticises in the following way:

i) exclusive elevation of a theoretical viewpoint or principle, (e.g. in Hegel's 'pan-logism');

ii) exclusive <u>practical</u> application of a theoretical principle that is in itself acceptable.

In line with conventional interpretations of the emergence of Protestantism, Solovyov believed there to be very substantial grounds justifying a stand against the central 'authority' of the Roman Catholic Church, a stand that was, moreover, in the name of the individual's spiritual integrity and freedom. The temptations of the Catholic hierarchy to abuse the authority which it bore were significantly checked after the Protestants successfully established the principles of individualism and personal responsibility in interpretation of the Scriptures.[21]

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[21] Sob.Soch.IV,78,79,97-98,99. (The Great Controversy and Christian Politics, 1883).

The Protestants' corrective to the undue emphasis on central ecclesiastical authority in the Church of Rome was both necessary and welcome, and important ground was gained by the Protestants' affirmation of the worth of personal faith.

Solovyov was generous in his estimation of what Protestantism achieved, but he came to think that the Protestants elevated their individualism and their right to express their personal faith into 'absolute' principles.[22] Their rejection of central Church 'authority' became correspondingly extreme and 'absolute', and in this Solovyov felt them to be fundamentally misguided and duly subject to criticism.

He developed his observations on the significance of Protestantism in an interesting manner, by means of a historical parallel between the Protestants of Western Europe and the Old Believers in Russia.[23] Like the Protestants who found fault with the exercise of central authority in the Roman Catholic Church, so, in Russia, those who came to set themselves apart from the Orthodox Church and regarded themselves as Old Believers (starovertsy) had very considerable grounds for objecting to the conduct of the Patriarch Nikon and to the arbitrary way in which his reforms of ritual were imposed and made obligatory for members of the Russian Church. The Old Believers' resistance to Nikon's Greek reforms was in one respect a morally correct response; but their counter-arguments were to some extent themselves arbitrary.[24] Their preference for rites that had only

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22 Ibid.,100.

23 Sob.Soch.III, 252-253. 'About the Schism in the Russian Nation and Society' (O Raskole v Russkom Narode i Obshchestve,1882-1883), Sob. Soch.III,245-280.

24 Ibid.,252.

been officially sanctioned by a decree in the relatively recent historical past,[25] a decree issued in Russia itself, could not be convincingly presented as having superior claims to tradition and authentic Christian practice than the claims made on behalf of Nikon's reforms. As the historical accounts show, the Old Believers were obstinate in their resistance, adhering to the 'Russian' rites: the conflict became an open one, in which significantly large numbers broke away from the Orthodox Church, this movement being called the 'Schism' or 'Raskol'.

Solovyov argued that the Old Believers' Schism bears the same significance in the context of Russia that Protestantism bears in Western Europe. He quite specifically called the Schism ' Russia's Protestantism'.[26] For the sake of clarification, he writes in his article on the Schism that whereas the European Protestants manifested their obstinacy and spiritual pride in the 'absolutisation' of their principles of individualism and personal faith, the Old Believers in Russia showed a similar measure of obstinacy and spiritual pride by placing their 'local' Russian rites above the interests of Church unity, that unity which was preached in the Gospels themselves.[27] The Old Believers, however provoked they were by Nikon's arbitrary and authoritarian ways, could themselves justly be charged with an

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[25] Ibid., 251.

[26] Ibid., 253.
'Having [containing] in itself the seed of Protestantism, the Russian Schism [raskol] cultivated it to its ultimate point'. (Imeya v sebe zarodysh protestantstva, russkiy raskol do kontsa vozrostil ego.)

[27] Ibid., 252; Sob.Soch.IV,71-72.

extreme and exclusive application of the free right to resist ecclesiastical, centralised 'authority' imposed by means of force.

Solovyov's arguments against exclusivity in either theory or practice are striking for their lucidity. This was not merely a subject to which he returned frequently, but was the central theme of two major early works, 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' and the 'Critique of Abstract Principles'.[28] This emphasis characterised his work in epistemology.

It should be noted that the mutual misunderstandings and conflicts between men that arise from their adoption of dogmatic and exclusive views of the world are, in Solovyov's account, an important aspect of men's present earthly condition, the condition of alienation (otchuzhdenie). The Incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ, among men, can alone counteract the effects of this alienation, is alone the eminent means of salvation from creaturely existence. Alienation, and that which promotes alienation, is associated by Solovyov specifically with the principle of evil.

> 'The essence of the world's evil consists in the alienation and discord of all beings, in their mutual opposition and incompatibility.'[29]

In Egypt in 1876 Solovyov personally experienced a foretaste of the universal harmony that awaits creaturely beings 'in the fullness of time'. For reasons that will be mentioned below, he insisted that

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[28] See Sob.Soch.I,250-406; Sob.Soch.II,3-397.

[29] Sob.Soch.III,353. (The Spiritual Foundations of Life). (Sushchnost' mirovogo zla sostoit v otchuzhdenii i razlade vsekh sushchestv, v ikh vzaimnom protivorechii i nesovmestimosti).

this harmonious state is not, and could not rightly be, immediately accessible to man: founding his arguments on central ideas in Friedrich Schelling's historiography and his interpretation of the 'Fall' of man from Eden,[30] Solovyov argues that conscious man cannot be compelled to accept an ideal state of harmony, however desirable that state itself may be, and however much man may eventually aspire to attain it when prompted by his own will. In the Solovyovian scheme (for which Schelling's arguments serve as a critically important model), human history must be permitted to follow its proper course, and conscious man must be given the opportunity to take the initiative freely in affirming the need for harmony in the created order, and then in working actively to attain that harmony. Christian thought is distinctive in that it provides for this voluntary acceptance of ideal harmony - such is Solovyov's view. His references to Christianity as providing both a goal (tsel') and a summation (zavershenie),[31] relate to this provision for the full unfolding and development of the historical process. Isolated individuals may be granted a privileged, but all the same fleeting, foretaste of the universal harmony to come, as was the case for Solovyov himself. This perception of harmony was the subject matter of the poem 'Three Meetings' (Tri Svidaniya) and of certain other poems. The vision in the desert is described not simply as a view of future time, but is, quite specifically, a simultaneous experience of past, present and future times:

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30 See 'Reason and Existence: Schelling's Philosophy of History', by Paul C. Hayner, Publ. by E.J. Brill (Netherlands), 1967. [p. 325]

31 See Sob.Soch.III,406,410,414.

'What is, what was, what will be in ages to come -
One motionless gaze embraced it all...
Beneath me the seas and rivers turn blue,
And the distant forest and the summits of snowy mountains.

I saw all, and all was just one,
Just one image of feminine beauty ...' (see Appendix)

Another very explicit poem 'To Prometheus' (Prometeyu) mentions a beatific state in terms that leave little doubt of Solovyov's first-hand experience of such a state:

'...When you know the blessedness of reconciliation...
Then comes the hour - the final hour of creation...
Barriers are sundered, fetters are melted
By the divine fire,
And the eternal dawn of a new life rises
In all, and all in One.'[32]

Lines such as these not only testify to the nature of his religious perception, but also convey his deep and confident belief in an ultimate triumph of the Good.

In Solovyov's view, affirmations of this kind are grounded in faith, they are a 'feat of faith' (podvig very),[33] and this faculty to believe in the triumph of the apparent Good is essentially associated with the prophetic type of man. While it is open to all men to deepen their own faith and thus to find confidence and affirm the ultimate realization of the Good, Solovyov on various occasions warns that it

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[32] Sob.Soch.XII,88. (Our own translation).
[33] Sob.Soch.III,201. (Three Speeches in Memory of Dostoevsky,1882).

is spiritually dangerous, as well as being also presumptuous, to claim prophetic insight unless one has undergone a serious moral preparation;[34]

> 'According to the authentic Christian as well as the Judaic conception, the prophetic vocation requires a high degree of piety and particular moral accomplishments...'[35]

A fuller consideration of the prophetic type and his vocation belongs to our account of the Russian philosopher's theocratic conception of society, (see next section), for in that scheme the Prophet is one of three figures in whom authority is invested. (The other two figures are the High Priest - pervosvyashchennik - and the temporal ruler - tsar'.[36])

Having alluded briefly to Solovyov's own visionary perception of universal harmony, and to the heightened insights and the faith of the prophet in general, we need to resume our account of Solovyov's work in epistemology. His work focused very greatly on normal perception and on the alternative philosophical and psychological accounts of how we acquire knowledge. His proposition that faith is an element in human knowledge (even in that which is not specifically 'religious', but simply seeks assurances of the very existence of the external world beyond the thinking, sensing subject himself) has not won wide

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[34] See this same point stressed in Gregory of Nyssa's 'The Life of Moses'. II,55 (Paulist Press edition, NY,1967), p.67.

[35] Sob.Soch.IV,168. (Judaism and the Christian Question, 1884).

[36] Ibid., 161.

assent. But aside from this, his lengthy studies of Cartesian, Empiricist and numerous other theories of knowledge are rigorous and scholarly works, commanding authority. He personally wrote an impressively wide range of articles to serve as entries for the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia, the Philosophical Section of which was under his editorial charge.

Solovyov attacked not only the one-sidedness, the exclusivity, of particular philosophical theories, but also the one-sided and defective accounts of existence provided by whole branches of human knowledge. He believed that the insights of the theologian, the philosopher or the natural scientist may be extremely penetrating in their own respective fields and may yet prove deficient and unfruitful, due to their lack of reference to other branches of knowledge. He did not consider it appropriate for the theologian to ignore the findings of the natural scientist or the philosopher, nor that any of these three specialists should regard their work as self-sufficient. If the theologian feared that his account of existence would be negated by the findings of contemporary thought and science, this fear, argued Solovyov, was actually unwarranted. He himself stressed that developments in scientific thought and the views reached by the scientist in effect support the religious viewpoint rather than negate it. In his 'Lectures on Godmanhood' he directly asserted that although a number of prominent philosophies originating from Western Europe were themselves due to fundamental criticism on account of their negative premises, their very appearances allowed men of other cultures (and speicifically in Russia) to perceive the defects of those philosophies, and subsequently to produce their own more positive and well-founded

philosophies.[37] The appearance of negative thought systems in Western Europe served as a necessary impetus, then, for the formulation of philosophies based on positive principles, philosophies that recognised the centrality of religious perception and revealed truth.

It is in the context of these views that Solovyov came to feel the need for a synthesis of major branches of human knowledge, and in particular a synthesis of theology, philosophy and natural science. He came to form a view of knowledge as <u>organic</u> in character, that is to say, he considered the constituent branches of knowledge to be related to one another in an organic sense, that each has defined and particular functions (as do the constituent organs of a living body), and this is the reason why the task of synthesis is especially exacting. If men are really to <u>benefit</u> from the bringing together of theology, philosophy and science, then, insists Solovyov, simply the external ammassing of data from each respective discipline, an eclectic approach, is not acceptable. On the other hand, a true synthesis of knowledge from these fields, a synthesis based upon a recognition of the kind of discourse operative in each respective field, and upon a recognition of the principles and methodology

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[37] Sob.Soch.III,14-15. (Lectures on Godmanhood).

See also Pis'ma,III,89; Here Solovyov affirms that in order to construct a new formulation for traditional Christian teaching one must utilise all the findings of modern science and philosophy. (Dlya etogo nuzhno vospol'zovat'sya vsem,chto vyrabotano za poslednie veka umom chelovecheskim:nuzhno usvoit' sebe vseobshchie resul'taty nauchnogo razvitiya, nuzhno izuchit' vsyu filosofiyu.)

See also Solovyov's definition of synthesis, Sob.Soch.I,341 - 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge'

appropriate to each - this would permit man to end his reliance upon excessively one-sided and abstract accounts of reality. He could, through the means of a properly formulated synthesis, replace the range of abstract, deficient and mutually exclusive accounts of the world order with an integral knowledge, (tsel'noe znanie). Solovyov's attitude to the passing relevance of abstract knowledge is expressed in the clearest terms at the very beginning of his first major work 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' (Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii), 1874:

> 'At the heart of this book lay the conviction that philosophy in the sense of abstract exclusively theoretical knowledge has finished its development and has passed irrevocably into the world of the past.'[38]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

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[38] Sob.Soch.I,27.

NB Good, lucid summaries of Solovyov's religious philosophy are available: those by Lopatin, N.O. Lossky, E. Münzer, E.L. Radlov and N. Zernov (see Bibliography) are among the best.

[See Bibliography:- Items 143, 168, 70, 47 and 92 respectively]

CHAPTER V

VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S CENTRAL TEACHINGS - II

In the foregoing section we have mentioned four aspects of Vladimir Solóvyov's religious thought and experience:

i) his perception of natural, earthly, physical existence as unsatisfying for men;

ii) his view of Christianity as a teaching that offers unique and distinct precepts for organising men's lives and social relations;

iii) his own visions of universal harmony;

iv) his concern with epistemology and with criticism of exclusive philosophies.

Our exposition of his religious thought now requires introductory explanations of the principal terms that he employed. So far as we are aware, this is the first time an attempt has been made to provide this form of systematic explanation of individual terms in Solovyov's religious vocabulary.

Perfectibility - Sovershenstvovanie

Solovyov accepted the worth and importance of what is possibly one of Christ's most paradoxical teachings, that is, his command to men - 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt.5.xlviii). This command or precept from the Gospels has naturally been the subject of much Biblical commentary[1] and of rival interpretations; yet it

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[1] NB. also Dom C. Butler's observations on perfectibility in his article 'Soloviev', Downside Review, 1932, pp.57-59. [B.243].

retains its full paradoxical force and is not, ultimately, reducible to simply human categories of understanding.

The command to 'be perfect' is most normally viewed as a precept relevant for the morality of the individual, as a precept intended to reinforce the individual's aspiration to deepen his spiritual practice and understanding. It also serves to remind the believer that the Christian Gospels posit a spiritual ideal for man. The natural fallibility of man is not denied or overlooked, but the need for man's spiritual aspiration is implicitly affirmed in the command to 'be perfect'.

Solovyov was very conscious of this Christian command or precept: he recognised its animating force and its positive meaning for the individual. The import of the Christian teaching of perfectibility[2] for his own religious philosophy will become more apparent as we explain his terminology.

Solovyov applies the notion of perfectibility as readily and consistently to collective humanity as to individual man. We submit that his account of Christian values is distinctive in its treatment of the theme of 'community', and we illustrate this in subsequent chapters of our Study. He made no claims to be innovative in this respect, for he sought to restate central Christian teaching. He believed, and consistently taught that the Christian teaching which eminently serves the individual's needs merits, and by its very nature

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[2] The aspiration towards perfection is the theme of Gregory of Nyssa's celebrated work 'The Life of Moses'. Gregory of Nyssa's writings were familiar to Solovyov, and were quoted frequently by him as a source of authoritative insights into the spiritual life.

requires, application to society itself.[3] A refusal or omission to apply this teaching to the ordering of society, as well as to the individual's life, was, in his view, tantamount to a denial of its general validity and efficacy.[4] To accept the imperfect condition of men's lives and social relations as 'given' and inalterable, that is, to 'bow down before the facts' of our present existence [5] is, in Solovyov's view, wholly inconsistent with a true profession of Christian faith.

The Christian notion of perfectibility is critically important to man, argued Solovyov. To neglect it is to endanger the very existence of the community, to deprive the community of a critically important source of energy. He affirms this point in his essay 'Byzantinism and Russia':

> 'In an imperfect world only he who frees himself from imperfection is worthy of existence. Byzantium perished because it shunned the very idea of perfection. Any being, single or collective, which rejects this idea inevitably perishes.'[6]

We shall see, in due course (Chapter VIII), how deeply critical a stance he adopted in his evaluation of the nominally Christian society of Byzantium. He described it as a 'nominally' Christian society, as distinct from an authentically Christian society, because, in his view,

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3 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, VI,28-29 (The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it, 1886).

4 Ibid., 29-30. (See Note 28).

5 Sob.Soch.III,201, (2nd Speech in Memory of Dostoevsky). First published in the newspaper 'Novoe Vremya',1882, No.2133.

6 Sob.Soch.VII,299. (Byzantinism and Russia).

the Byzantine clergy attached such inordinate value to external forms of ritual and to dogma, and complacently disgarded the Christian ideal of perfection, which ideal entailed a transformation of society as well as a serious commitment to the Christian principles of love and justice. (An examination of the philosopher's criticisms of Byzantine society helps considerably in clarifying his conception of the Christian ideal of perfection and of its proper application to society.)

In Solovyov's philosophical scheme the notion of perfectibility is intimately connected with the terms spiritualisation (odukhotvorenie) and transformation (preobrazovanie). These terms are central to Christian teaching, argues Solovyov, and they refer to a universal process whereby eventually all material nature is 'redeemed': a 'spiritual' aspect inheres in all forms of material being, and through Divine action and the cooperative agency of conscious man, this spiritual aspect of matter will become fully manifest. In his view, the Jewish people perceived and properly appreciated this spiritual, 'sacred' aspect of matter. They perceived what Solovyov called 'sacred corporeality' (svyataya telesnost'), and the forms of their religion testify to the importance of that perception in their religious outlook. The Jews' very special concern with purification, with setting apart the pure from the impure, is an aspect of this perception.[7] And further than this, the Jews consciously sought to prepare a milieu suitable for the coming of their Messiah,[8] that is, a milieu suitably pure and

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[7] Sob.Soch.IV, 148-149 (Judaism and the Christian Question).

[8] Ibid., 149-150. p.150: '...Thus, the three chief qualities of the (cont.)

spiritual. This, too, derives from their perception of 'sacred corporeality'. Solovyov observes that an awareness of 'sacred corporeality' lies at the very heart of the Christian revelation also.[9] He especially values Christianity's recognition of the 'sacred' aspect of material nature: according to the Christian account, man and the entire material order of being may be perfected.

Conscious man, although himself a part of material nature, is endowed with special faculties, notably with an awareness of self and an awareness of his position in the world order. The process of perfection, argues Solovyov, is made apparent in the course of human history, and man, with his capacity for self-reflection, can act to ensure that his and all society's energies are directed towards attainment of the Divinely-ordained plan. Complete integration and harmony are sought,[10] that is, a condition or state which eludes man at present,

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Jewish people in their combined action corresponded to the high destiny of this people and promoted the fulfilment of God's work in it... Through the purification of material nature, Israel prepared within itself a pure and sacred abode for the incarnation of God the Word.' See how closely these lines correspond with the viewpoint expressed by Friedrich von Huegel in his authoritative 'Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion' (1921, publ. by Dent, 1929):

> '...Now it was most appropriate that the Incarnation, for purposes of religion, should take place in Jewish human nature, since the Jewish people had, already for some thirteen centuries, furnished forth among mankind the purest light and strongest leading in religion. Thus...the Revealer could not but imagine, think, feel and will the deepest truths and facts of His mission with Jewish categories, images, emotions.' (p.126).

9 Sob.Soch.IV, 157.

> '..And for Christianity the higher goal is not (contained) in an ascetical denial of natural life, but in the purification and sanctification of this life.' (Solovyov's italics). (I dlya khristianstva vysshaya tsel' ne v asketicheskom otreshenii ot prirodnoy zhizni, a v ochishchenii i osvyashchenii etoy zhizni).

10 Sob.Soch.III, 302. (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

but which most truly accords with his spiritual nature. Christian teaching affirms that man was made 'after the image of God', and that he must strive to make that image fully apparent.

Solovyov entirely follows the Christian view when he emphasises that man is not self-sufficient,[11] even though his will and his actions may be well-directed. Not only individual man, but the whole collective humanity, requires divine assistance. Solovyov teaches that God must act upon and enter into the historical process itself, in order to 'redeem' that process and allow men to attain the ideal state for which they have been created and destined. It is not difficult to see that this line of argument provides the basis for Solovyov's views on the Incarnation of God in the figure of Christ, nor to see why he considered Christ's mission as bearing so directly upon the historical development of mankind. These views, although overlapping with some of the philosopher's statements about the perfectibility of man and created nature, belong under the heading Godmanhood (Bogochelovechestvo).

The Kingdom of God - Tsarstvo Bozhie

Solovyov went back to first sources and followed the New Testament in associating Christ's mission and teachings directly with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is, as the Gospels affirm, wholly unlike the temporal kingdom of the Roman Caesars; nor is it the form of nationhood that the Jewish people wished to

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[11] Ibid., 312.

realize.[12] Christ affirmed that the Kingdom of God would be made real on earth, and he instructed His followers to pray for the coming of the Kingdom, (Luke,11,ii).

In Solovyov's writings the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth is presented as an ordering of all aspects of life (individual and communal life) according to Christian criteria. Furthermore, this enterprise of conforming earthly life to its heavenly model should be animated by the spirit of Christian love (ἀγάπη , agapé). This ideal, heavenly order is not imposed on man; rather, it is intended to free him from the purely natural level of existence, which itself is restrictive for man. Only with the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth does man attain his full stature, overcoming the natural state of alienation, (otchuzhdenie), and attaining 'plenitude of being' (polnota bytiya). The natural manner of earthly existence, that comprises alienation, mutual hostility, rivalry of interests (individual, class and national interests),[13] harms and diminishes man, obscures 'the image of God' in him.

In Solovyov's view, the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth requires the fulfilment of certain conditions. At the heart of these conditions lie a recognition of the 'absolute' worth of the individual and a recognition of man's need for freedom.

According to this view, government, the Church, and men's other social institutions need to be administered so as to preserve the autonomy of individual members of the community, while legislation must

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12 Sob.Soch.IV, 157. Here Solovyov writes that the Jews are required to overcome their exclusive sense of nationhood, their 'national egotism' (otrechenie ot svoego natsional'nogo egoizma).

13 Sob.Soch.III, 201 (2nd Speech in Memory of Dostoevsky).

be directed to defining the minimal degree of restraint necessary for the general welfare and freedom of all.[14] Solovyov's more detailed specifications regarding the structure of a model Christian society will be summarised under the heading Theocracy (Teokratiya). However, it should be noted, here, that the striving for unity and reconciliation among men, without which the Kingdom of God could not be realized on earth, features as the central idea informing the philosopher's practical schemes for the reunification of the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. In his view, Christian believers could not sincerely profess faith in the Gospel teachings if they wilfully ignored opportunities to bring the divided Churches together, for the Gospels proclaimed the need for unity, while the continued hostility and misunderstandings between the Churches belies the Christian principle of unity.

The foregoing introductory observations regarding Solovyov's conception of the Kingdom of God bear out the words of Ernest Radlov in his biographical study of the philosopher:

> 'The Kingdom of God according to Solovyov consists of people ceasing to be only people, entering onto a new, higher level of existence, on which their purely human tasks become just the means for another, ultimate goal.'[15]

In the very last years of the philosopher's life (1898-1900), with the growing prominence of his apocalyptic views, the likelihood or even the possibility of the realization of the Kingdom of God within

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14 Sob.Soch.II, 153,156. (A Critique of Abstract Principles).

15 'Vl.S.Solovyov: His Life and Teaching' (Vl.S.Solovyov: Zhizn' i Uchenie), Ernest L. Radlov, Petersburg 1913, p.162. [B.47]

human history appeared increasingly remote. But the actual substance of his ideas regarding the Kingdom of God did not change. Ernest Radlov writes:

> 'The views of Vladimir Solovyov on the Kingdom of God remained unchanged throughout all the time of his literary activity.'[16]

Sacred Corporeality - Svyataya Telesnost'

In his 'Lectures on Godmanhood' Solovyov observes that physical matter may be known by its characteristic quality of impenetrability, (Nepronitsaemost').[17] This quality or condition of matter dictates that two physical, material bodies may not occupy one and the same space at the same time: they mutually resist and exclude one another.

Solovyov maintains that the mutual resistance and exclusion that we find on this rudimentary physical level of existence is evident throughout the natural order, including human life.[18] Humans experience

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16 Ibid., 163.

17 See 4th Lecture on Godmanhood, Sob.Soch.III,48-58, esp. pp.52-54.

18 In Chapter I of his 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' (Dukhovnye Osnovy Zhizni, Sob.Soch.III) Solovyov writes of original sin as being the force which makes us 'impenetrable', 'closed' to others, 'exclusive' and isolated:

> 'In the depth of our being, in the very core of our soul, the force of original sin hides - in a way unknown to us, and secretly acts - a dark force, senseless and evil. It is this very force which separates us from everything and from all, locks us in ourselves, makes us impenetrable and non-transparent; it is a senseless force and the principle of senselessness for, separating us from the all, it breaks any bond [between] us and the Divine world, deprives us of contact with the all and closes to us our true relation with the all, which constitutes the rational meaning (ratio) of our life.' (cont.)

this mutual resistance and exclusion in the form of conflicting personal wills, and in restraints upon their assertion of their own will. This is the natural and unsatisfying condition into which men are born, and the continuing self-assertion of individuals only aggravates that condition, for the successful self-assertion of one individual or group of individuals entails the restraint of others. The satisfaction of their separate and respective wills is mutually exclusive. Such is Solovyov's line of argument.

In his scheme, the counterparts of resistance and impenetrability are - at all levels of the natural and spiritual order - openness and receptivity (vospriimnost'). Solovyov's various statements about sacred corporeality (svyataya telesnost') are intended to establish that physical, created matter is receptive to spiritual influence.

It is very noteworthy that Solovyov rejected the viewpoint of Gnosticism, according to which material nature is itself a principle of evil. He discerned this negative view of nature in other philosophies also, and he is consistent in his criticism of this view: we find such criticism in works as far apart as the 'Lectures on Godmanhood'[19] of 1877 to 1881, and his 1891 lecture 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview'. In the latter of these he affirms:

18(cont) (V glubine nashego sushchestva, v samoy osnove nashey dushi, inogda dlya nas vpolne nesoznavaemo taitsya i skryto deystvuet sila pervorodnogo grekha,- sila t'emnaya, bezumnaya i zlaya. Eto est' ta samaya sila,kotoraya otdelyaet nas ot vsego i oto vsekh, zamykaet nas v samikh sebe, delaet nas nepronitsaemymi i neprozrachnymi; ona est' sila bessmyslennaya i nachalo vsyakogo bezumiya, ibo, otdelyaya nas ot vsego, ona razryvaet dlya nas vsyakuyu svyaz' s mirom Bozhiim, lishaet nas obshcheniya so vsem, i zakryvaet ot nas to nashe istinnoe otnoshenie ko vsemu,kotoroe sostavlyaet razumniy smysl (ratio) nashey zhizni.) (Sob.Soch.III,323-324).

19 Sob.Soch.III,42-46.

> 'Christianity is <u>the religion of the Divine Incarnation and the resurrection of the flesh</u>; but they have turned it into some kind of Oriental dualism, rejecting material nature as an evil principle.'[20]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

Material nature is to be 'redeemed', holds Solovyov; this positive attitude towards material nature is prominent in his work '<u>The Spiritual Foundations of Life</u>' (Dukhovnye Osnovy Zhizni, 1882-1884). The following two excerpts serve to show man's participatory role in the task of universal redemption:

> 'As the incarnate God saves humanity, so humanity united with God must save all nature.'[21]
>
> 'The true task of our life of the senses is to cultivate the garden of the earth, to convert the dead into the living, to confer on earthly beings a greater intensity and fullness of life - to animate them.'[22]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

This positive acceptance of matter, and of material nature generally, is not a stance that we very readily associate with Christian ascetisicm. But Solovyov urged that men (who are conscious and also free beings) should pursue their spiritual quest with the knowledge that they bear a responsibility for the condition of the natural world.[23] He says men should remain mindful that

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20 Sob.Soch.VI, 391. See also <u>Vladimir Lossky</u>'s observation: 'The body should not be an obstacle in mystical experience. The manichean contempt for our bodily nature is alien to orthodox asceticism', from V.Lossky's '<u>The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church</u>', p.224. [fn. 329]

21 Op.cit., 345-346.

22 Sob.Soch.III, 348.

23 Ibid., 345.

> '...The whole natural world must become the living body of regenerated humanity.[24]

Solovyov did not claim that this insight belongs solely to Christian teaching. It was, in his view, Jewish spirituality which revealed the worth of this positive acceptance of matter. The Jews firmly believed that matter could be sanctified, and they incorporated this belief into the very heart of their religious rituals and life.[25] Their adherence to this principle, the principle which Solovyov calls 'sacred corporeality' (svyataya telesnost'), is especially exemplified by their conscious efforts to create a suitably spiritual milieu in which to receive their Messiah. They perceived the need to prepare for His coming by improving and 'making holy' all aspects of their life and social relations.[26] The Christian view is that the very process of human historical development is 'sanctified' by the Divine Incarnation in the God-man Jesus Christ, the entry of God into the human, historical process so as to redeem natural man, the First Adam: Solovyov attaches utmost importance to this 'sanctification' (also, in effect, a 'justification') of the historical process, as our study will indicate.

In 'Judaism and the Christian Question' (Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros, 1884) Solovyov delineates the religious outlook of the Jews, with special reference to their inability to accept any absolute separation of spirit and matter:

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[24] Ibid., 346.

[25] Sob.Soch.IV, 149. (Judaism and the Christian Question).

[26] Sob.Soch.VI, 6. (The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it).

> 'The Jews, true to their own religion, fully admitting the spiritual aspect of the Divinity and the divine aspect of the human soul, could not and did not want to separate these higher principles from their material expression, from their bodily form and cover, from their ultimate and finite realization. ... [The Jew] believes in the spirit, but only in such [a spirit] which penetrates everything material, which uses matter as its own cover and as its own instrument.'[27]

Solovyov's writings on this theme reveal what great importance he attached to the notion of 'sacred corporeality': it was one of the central terms he employed to convey the intimacy and the directness of relations between God and His creation. These passages also show that Solovyov felt a deep affinity with the Jews and their approach to spiritual matters.[28] He was mindful of the continuity between

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[27] Op.cit., 148/149.

[28] A striking example of Solovyov's appreciation of Jewish spirituality and traditions occurs in his article '<u>The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it</u>': here he provides a whole line of argument with which sincere Jews might answer their Christian critics (see Sob.Soch.VI, 28-32). Not only does the philosopher commend the Jews' observance of their own law (p.30), but he also sharply criticises contemporary Christians' indifference to social justice and to the proper, full application of the Christian code to society as a whole, (see pp.29-31). This passage even contains the germ of an idea that was expressed five years later in his lecture '<u>On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview</u>',(Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya, 1891) - See our Chapter VIII. Here Solovyov suggests tentatively that real and effective social reform in Christian countries coincided with a significant <u>decline</u> in religious belief. That idea, when developed more fully in the 1891 lecture, caused much anger and adverse comment in Russian society and government circles.

Judaic and Christian religious thought, and acknowledged that the Jews' religious perceptions (notably the view of God as Personal, and the notion of 'sacred corporeality') have greatly enriched man.

The extent to which Solovyov accepted 'sacred corporeality' as a valid and, indeed, important religious idea is particularly clear in his 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' and in 'Judaism and the Christian Question'. Here, also, he remains firm in his opposition to philosophies which wholly separate spirit from matter, reject matter as an evil principle, or even devalue the natural faculties of man. This special emphasis in his religious outlook enabled him to provide a general definition of the goal of asceticism which is striking for its avoidance of the common view that the flesh must simply be 'mortified'. Solovyov's definition also brings us to discussion of another term in his religious vocabulary, namely, the term Transfiguration (preobrazovanie, preobrazhenie).

> 'The goal of Christian asceticism is not a weakening of the flesh, but a strengthening of the spirit for a transfiguration of the flesh.'[29]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

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[29] Sob.Soch.IV, 157-158.
(Tsel' khristianskogo asketizma - ne oslablenie ploti, a usilenie dukha dlya preobrazheniya ploti). See 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics; Ed. by James Hastings, (Edinburgh, 1925), Vol.II, p.73:
'The word asceticism when used in the sphere of religion and ethics denotes self-preparation for a virtuous course of conduct, the zealous practice of acts of devotion and morality.
There does appear to be inherent in both the Old Testament and the New Testament stages of revelation an element of asceticism. This consists in the urgent demand for an earnest combating of sin and a complete resignation to the holy will of God.'
It is to be noted that this definition of asceticism includes three notions central to Solovyov's religious thought: namely, the need for moral virtue, the earnest combating of sin and evil (see Chap. VI), and surrender to the will of God.

Transfiguration - Preobrazovanie, Preobrazhenie.[30]

Jesus Christ's mission on earth was a redemptive one, and the various episodes in His life are recounted in such a way, in the Gospels, as to deepen our understanding of one or other aspect of His ministry. Prominent among these was the Transfiguration of Christ, the awesome appearance of Christ's body wholly transfused with light.[31] The three Apostles chosen to witness this Transfiguration were overcome by the intensest feelings of awe and by an awareness of Christ's spiritual power, perceivable in the form of light. According to Vladimir Lossky

> 'This light or effulgence can be defined as the visible quality of the divinity, of the energies or grace in which God makes Himself known.'[32]

Prior to this event the Apostles had seen only the human form of Christ, externally similar to other men. Lossky stresses that the light radiating from Christ's body was quite unlike any created light familiar to men, and that the impact of this vision of Christ transfigured was almost too powerful for the Apostles to bear:

> 'Most of the Fathers who speak of the Transfiguration witness to the divine and uncreated nature of the light which appeared to the apostles...The light seen by the apostles on Mount Tabor is proper to

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30 'The feast of the Transfiguration, so venerated by the Orthodox Church, serves as a key to the understanding of the humanity of Christ in the Eastern Tradition.'
Vladimir Lossky, 'The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church'; p. 149. [8.329]

31 Luke 9, xxviii-xxxvi.

32 Op.cit., p.221.

> God by His nature... a terrifying and unbearable apparition to created beings, because foreign and external to human nature as it was before Christ and outside the Church.'[33]

Lossky stresses that the Divine Light revealed to men is not apprehended solely through the natural faculties, but through properly so-called 'mystical experience', which affects the <u>whole man</u>:

> 'The divine light is not an allegorical or abstract thing: it is given in mystical experience...It is not a reality of the intellectual order, as the illumination of the intellect, taken in its allegorical and abstract sense, sometimes is. Nor is it a reality of the sensible order. This light is a light which fills at the same time both intellect and senses, revealing itself to the whole man, and not only to one of his faculties. The divine light, being given in mystical experience, surpasses at the same time both sense and intellect.'[34]

Vladimir Solovyov assigned very great importance to the Transfiguration of Christ. For him the event bore confirmation of Christ's unique status[35] and His spiritual authority. But also, Solovyov considered that the Transfiguration of Christ anticipated the transfiguration of all material being. First it was necessary for Christ's Apostles to recognise His true, divine nature, to acknowledge that

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33 Lossky, '<u>Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church</u>', pp. 222-223. [E.T.]

34 Ibid., 220/221.

35 This is conveyed, in the episode of the Transfiguration, not solely by the transfusion of Christ's body with uncreated light, but also by the acknowledgement of His status by Moses and Elijah (Luke 9, xxx-xxxi) who speak of His deeds to come.

which wholly set Him apart from the long line of Old Testament prophets and from His immediate precursor, John the Baptist. Christ was not simply a miracle-worker and prophet, but a figure who, with His own coming, heralded a most profound qualitative change in humanity and the whole natural order. For conscious, reflective man He provided an ideal of spiritual perfection towards which to aspire, and a body of teachings (notably the Sermon on the Mount) to serve as a path for the attainment of that ideal. Man, though ultimately dependent on the mercy and grace of God, could be induced to work for his own salvation. And then, if man is duly aware of his close ties with, and his obligations towards, the rest of the created, natural order,[36] he can work for the restoration and eventual 'redemption' or 'spiritualisation' (odukhotvorenie) of the natural order. He can accomplish something positive as regards his own redemption and the 'redemption' of the natural order precisely because he can examine his actions and motives and because he can <u>redirect</u> his energies as he sees appropriate. He is conscious of his 'self', and he is able to modify his behaviour <u>because</u> endowed with consciousness. And furthermore, not only is he

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36 'We are in debt to all that created order which, on account of our sin, groans and is tormented up to this time'. (My v dolgy u vsey toy tvari,kotoraya radi nashego grekha stenaet i muchitsya donyne).
Sob.Soch.III, 345 (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).
'The true task of our life of the senses is to cultivate the garden of the earth - to convert the dead into the living, to confer on earthly beings greater intensity and fullness of life - to <u>animate</u> them.'
(Istinnaya zadacha nashey chuvstvennoy zhizni - vozdelyvat' sad zemli - prevrashchat' mertvoe v zhivoe, soobshchat' zemnym sushchestvam bol'shuyu intensivnost' i polnotu zhizni - <u>zhivotvorit'</u> ikh.')
(Solovyov's italics.) Ibid., 348.

able to reflect on his actions as an individual, but he can examine the activities and aspirations of collective humanity; he can judge whether or not the direction taken by mankind as a whole is desirable and beneficial.

Solovyov emphasised that to help bring about the full reanimation and the transfiguration of the created, natural order man has to retain faith in the ultimate victory of the Good. In other words, man has to believe that good, desirable ends may be achieved by good, morally acceptable means, and that the way of love proclaimed by Christ is, finally, the most efficacious means available to us. (The solution sought by the Grand Inquisitor in Ivan Karamazov's story is essentially unacceptable because the Inquisitor renounces love as a means to achieve his goal of happiness for the mass of mankind, and because by assuming at the very outset that they are unable to bear responsibility and freedom, he thinks of, and treats, them as a herd. He thus deprives them of dignity, and denies them the opportunity to attain the true ideal of 'community' promised in the Christian Gospels.) As we have seen from Lossky's observations, the transfiguration of humanity and all created being could only come in the wake of God's self-Revelation to man. The Apostles on Mount Tabor were granted a most privileged and rare vision, which induced them to see and recognise the authority of Christ. It was an awesome experience that subsequently awakened their faith in the eventual spiritualisation and transfiguration of all creation, in universal salvation.

In the previous section of our Study we mentioned that Solovyov personally experienced visions which conveyed to him an immediate sense or fore-taste of the universal harmony that awaits the created world. It is plain from his writings that he valued these visions

greatly: they particularly appear to have sustained his faith in the eventual triumph of the Good, the triumph which is conveyed by the image of the 'sun of love' (solntse lyubvi) in his lyrical poetry.[37]

The philosopher recognised that he had apprehended something that was not disclosed to most men. In most men's experience matter acts as a barrier or veil, concealing the truest type of beauty and harmony behind it. In the autobiographical poem 'Three Meetings' (Tri svidaniya) Solovyov affirms:

'Beneath the coarse surface of matter
I touched the imperishable purple
And recognised the radiance of deity...'[38]

It was, in Solovyov's view, the prophet who is especially able to perceive the desirable state of harmony and order that mankind and nature are destined to attain. The prophet is granted this vision of future harmony on account of his own moral preparation and accom-lishments[39] and on account of his firm faith in the triumph of the Good. The significance of the prophet as a 'spiritual type' is considered under the heading Theocracy, for the prophet was one of

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[37] Sob.Soch.XII,p.23: The poet writes - 'Death and Time rule on earth, Do not not call them lords, Everything, whirling, disappears in the gloom, Only the sun of love remains motionless' (Smert' i Vremya tsaryat na zemle,Ty vladykami ikh ne zovi; Vse, kruzhas', ischezaet vo mgle, Nepodvizhno lish' solntse lyubvi.') The poem was written in 1887.

[38] 'Pod gruboyu koroyu veshchestva
Ya osyazal netlennuyu porfiru
I uznaval siyanie bozhestva...' Sob.Soch.XII,80 (1898) Trans. by Ralph Koprince, in 'The Silver Age of Russian Culture', C. and E. Proffer, (Ardis, Ann Arbour), p.128. [B.308]

See also a much earlier poem (1874), where Solovyov affirms that the divine fire burns under the cover (guise) of matter:

'...I pod lichinoy veshchestva besstrastnoy
Vezde ogon' bozhestvenniy gorit.' (Sob.Soch.XII,p.24).

[39] Sob.Soch.IV,168. (Judaism and the Christian Question).

three representatives of authority in Solovyov's conception of theocratic government. Here it is his capacity for constant faith in the Good that is noteworthy, the faith which all Christian need to cultivate in themselves, so that they may, in time, recognise (and acknowledge) the spiritual aspect that inheres in all created matter.

All-Unity (Pan-Unity) - Vseedinstvo

Vladimir Solovyov's various statements on All-Unity contain some of his most central beliefs regarding the nature of God. The concept of All-Unity helped him in two particular respects: firstly, he employed this term to clarify and correct what he regarded as unfortunately imbalanced views of the nature of God (e.g. views which exclusively affirmed either the transcendence or the immanence of God); secondly, this term served him in the formulation of arguments affirming the Trinitarian view of God.

Solovyov was anxious to counter the view that the Divinity (or Divine Principle, Bozhestvennoe Nachalo) is characterised purely by an absence of defining qualities. At the beginning of his 4th Lecture on Godmanhood[40] he points out that the term Absolute (Lat. absolutum) signifies two things:

a) that in respect of which all particular definitions are denied

b) that which is complete (zakonchennoe, sovershennoe) - ie. that which possess all, that which contains all within

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[40] Sob.Soch.III, 48-49.

itself.[41]

Solovyov argued that it is misguided to characterise the Divinity only in terms of an absence of defining qualities or of 'freedom from' definitions. He believed that Buddhism adopted this unsatisfactory conception of the Absolute,[42] that it stressed the inapplicability of particular definitions to the Absolute, while failing to affirm that the Absolute contains all within Itself (and is 'free' of particular definitions precisely because It embraces them all).

Having clearly distinguished between the purely negative conception of the Absolute (otritsatel'noe nichto) and the positive conception (polozhitel'noe nichto), and having stressed that these two are by no means synonymous or interchangeable, Solovyov went on to show that when he referred to the positive content of the Divine principle, this could not rightly be taken as 'purely an aggregate of natural phenomena' (Ono ne mozhet byt' tol'ko sovokupnost'yu pri rodnykh yavleniy).[43] Natural phenomena, taken either singly or collectively, cannot be characterised by full, authentic and constant existence, and therefore they cannot represent or be the positive content of the Divine principle.[44] These phenomena are still

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[41] Ibid., 48. Note also p.116.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 49. See also p.113, where that point is reaffirmed.

[44] Ibid. 'Each of these phenomena, and consequently all of them together, represent only a constant transition, a process having only the appearance of being, but not genuine, essential and constant being.'
(Kazhdoe iz etikh yavleniy, a sledovatel'no i vse oni vmeste predstavlyayut lish' postoyanniy perekhod, protsess,imeyushchiy tol'ko vidimost' bytiya, a ne podlinnoe, sushchestvennoe i prebyvayushchee bytie).

subject to change, they do not possess stable, lasting qualities, and therefore they cannot themselves serve as the full, positive content of the Divine principle.

We have already explained the reasons underlying Solovyov's criticisms of the Deist and the Pantheist views of the Divine in our previous Chapter. He criticised them on account of their exclusive affirmation of the transcendent nature of the Divine and the immanent nature respectively.[45] He called for a due recognition of both these natures in the Divine, and sought to clarify the seeming contradiction involved in the admission of these 'incompatible' qualities by distinguishing God as He is in Himself and God as He is in relation to the world:

> 'God, being in Himself transcendent (existing beyond the confines of the world), at the same time, in relation to the world appears as an active creative force...'[46]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

This resolution of the problem not only avoids the one-sidedness of the Deists' and the Pantheists' respective claims; it also allows Solovyov to develop an interpretation of traditional Christian teaching that relies greatly upon transfiguration and spiritualisation. His views, as developed in the 'Lectures on Godmanhood', highlight the way that the Divine action on the created world is transformative.[47]

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45 Ibid., 164.

46 'Bog, buduchi sam po sebe transtsendentnym (prebyvayushchim za predelami mira), vmeste s tem po otnosheniyu k miru yavlyaetsya kak deystvuyushchaya tvoreheskaya sila...'. (Sob.Soch.III,165)

47 See Transfiguration. And see above: 'God...in relation to the world appears as an active creative force.'

At the same time, these views are Christocentric.

Solovyov criticised some of the mediaeval theologians of Western Europe who had provided extremely legalistic interpretations based on expiation and atonement to account for the Incarnation of God.[48] This emphasis was, in his view, alien to Orthodox Christians and it derived from Roman conceptions of law. Solovyov considered it important to stress that the Incarnation was an essential part of the Divinely-ordained plan for the universe;

> 'With that conception of Divinity and of humanity which is given in these lectures, the Incarnation of the Divinity is not only possible, but in an essential way enters the general plan of the universe.'[49]

> 'In truth, the work of Christ is not a juridicial fiction... it is a real feat, a real struggle and victory over the principle of evil. The Second Adam was born on earth not for the fulfilment of a formal juridicial process, but for the real salvation of mankind, for his effective rescue from the power of the force of evil, for the actual revelation in Him of the Kingdom of God.'[50]

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48 Op.cit., 163-164.

49 'Pri tom ponyatii Bozhestva i chelovechestva, kotorœ dano v etikh chteniyakh, voploshchenie Bozhestva ne tol'ko vozmozhno, no i sushchestvenno vkhodit v obshchiy plan mirozdaniya.'
(Sob.Soch.III, 165).

50 'Poistine, delo Khristovo ne est' yuridicheskaya fiktsiya...ono est' deystvitel'niy podvig, real'naya bor'ba i pobeda nad zlym nachalom. Vtoroy Adam rodilsya na zemle ne dlya soversheniya formal'noyuridicheskogo protsessa, a dlya real'nogo spaseniya chelovechestva, dlya deystvitel'nogo izbavleniya ego iz-pod vlasti zloy sily, dlya otkroveniya v nëm na dele tsarstva Bozhiya.' (Sob.Soch.III, 164).

For Solovyov the cosmic and the historical processes are intimately fused because God, in the Person of Christ, enters the historical process. It is through Christ that the right relations between God and 'fallen' humanity can be re-established.[51]

Solovyov's writings on the subject of All-Unity (where he refers to the idea that the Divine principle contains all within It) are especially noteworthy because they convey how finite man strives towards that All-One, complete Being.

Self-aware, conscious man feels himself to be in a state of privation, and he cannot, by his very nature accept that state. One of Solovyov's most celebrated statements, taken from the 2nd Lecture on Godmanhood, is the following:

> The human personality 'does not want to and cannot be satisfied with any conditional, limited content...'[52]

In Solovyov's view, the true religious faith of the Christian entails acceptance of the idea that man can overcome his finite state, that he can attain 'plenitude of being' (polnota bytiya). Acceptance of that idea is, in effect, a belief in God and in the positive, spiritual nature of humanity itself:

> 'Thus, here faith in oneself, faith in the human personality is at the same time faith in God, for divinity belongs to man and to God, with this difference, that it belongs to God in eternal reality, but is only being attained by man, is only being

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[51] Ibid., 163.

[52] Chelovecheskaya lichnost' 'ne khochet i ne mozhet udovletvorit'sya nikakim uslovnym ogranichennym soderzhaniem...'
(Sob.Soch.III,25).

> received; in [his] given condition [it] is only a possibility [potential], only an aspiration [stremlenie]'.[53]

It will be seen from this and many other passages in his works how important and valuable man's spiritual aspiration was to Solovyov. Since he believed that man must participate actively in the task of universal salvation, he regarded man's aspirations to attain that Christian goal as particularly important. As we have observed elsewhere, Solovyov experienced three mystical visions, in which he sensed the state of harmony and complete fulfilment which humanity, by its very nature, requires and seeks to attain. These were three instances of rare and privileged insight not granted to the ordinary man. Especially in his third and last vision Solovyov perceived the underlying unity of the created world, of the different natural phenomena; he also experienced past, present and future time simultaneously.[54] This perception of the essential unity of created beings must be taken as a highly important factor influencing Solovyov's thinking on the all-comprehensive nature of the Divine.

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53 'Takim obrazom zdes' vera v sebya, vera v chelovecheskuyu lichnost' est' vmeste s tem vera v Boga, ibo bozhestvo prinadlezhit cheloveku i Bogu, s toy raznitsey, chto Bogu prinadlezhit ono v vechnoy deystvitel'nosti, a chelovekom tol'ko dostigaetsya, tol'ko poluchaetsya; v dannom zhe sostoyanii est' tol'ko vozmozhnost', tol'ko stremlenie.' (Ibid.)

See also Sob.Soch.III,164-165:

'Kazhdoe sushchestvo,utverzhdaya sebya v svoey granitse kak eto,vne Boga, vmeste s tem no udovletvoryaetsya etoy granitsey, stremitsya byt' i vsem, t.e. stremitsya k vnutrennemu edinstvu s Bogom.'

54 Sob.Soch.XII,84.

He acknowledged the transcendence of God,[55] but sensed the immanence of God in His creation particularly strongly, as some of his poems show:

'...But the eternal, which has revealed itself in this night,
[It] is not destroyed by time...

Yes! God is with us - ...
Not beyond the confines of countless worlds...
And not in the sleeping memory of centuries.

He is here, now - among the arbitrary rush,
In the turbid stream of life's care
You Grasp the all-joyous mystery:
Evil is powerless; we are eternal; God is with us!'[56]

We mentioned, above, that Solovyov employed the term All-Unity not only to correct one-sided views of the nature of God, but also in order to establish the validity of Christian teaching on the Trinity.

Solovyov undertook to show, in an extensive and elaborate argument which fills the 6th and 7th Lectures on Godmanhood,[57] that the Church's teaching on the mystery of the Trinity itself expresses

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[55] Sob.Soch.IV, 165.

[56] Op.cit., 34 'No vechnoe,chto v etu noch' otkrylos',
Nesokrushimo vremenem ono...
Da! S nami Bog, - ...
Ne za predelami beschislennykh mirov...
I ne v usnuvshey pamyati vekov.

On zdes', teper',- sred' suety sluchaynoy,
V potoke mutnom zhiznennykh trevog
Vladeesh' ty vseradostnoyu taynoy:
Bessil'no zlo; my vechny; s nami Bog!' (Solovyov's Italics)

See also the last stanza of the poem 'Prometeyu'(Ibid., p.88).

[57] See the 6th and 7th Lectures on Godmanhood (Sob.Soch.III,79-102; Sob.Soch.III,103-119).

the notion of God's all-comprehensive (all-unifying) nature. In the 6th Lecture (summarised at the beginning of the following lecture, p.103) he presents reasons for taking the Divinity as three indivisible Persons, sharing one Essence. Each of these Persons perceives (apprehends) that absolute essence in Its own manner. Using the analogy of the three fundamental faculties of man, namely the faculties of willing, knowing and sensing,[58] Solovyov taught that the three Persons of the Divine Trinity will, know and sense one and the same absolute content.[59]

For Solovyov the triad of Good-Truth-Beauty bore great importance, and he believed that the Good, the True and the Beautiful are the fundamental categories under which the three Persons of the Trinity apprehend their absolute content. It is one and the same (absolute) content which is apprehended, respectively as Good, as True, and as Beautiful.[60]

In schematic form (which also provides the basis for other triads belonging to Solovyov's religious-philosophical system), he presents his findings thus:

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58 'My videli,chto priznavaya voobshche bozhestvennoe nachalo kak sushchee s bezuslovnym soderzhaniem, neobkhodimo priznat' v nem trekh edinosushchnykh i nerazdel'nykh sub'ektov, iz koikh kazhdiy po-svoemu otnositsya k odnoy i toy zhe bezuslovnoy sushchnosti, po-svoemu obladaet odnim i tem zhe bezuslovnym soderzhaniem.'
(Sob.Soch.III,103).

59 'Ideya kak predmet ili soderzhanie sushchego est' sobstvenno to,chego on khochet,chto on predstavlyaet,chto chuvstvuet ili oshchushchaet.'
(Ibid., 107).

60 Ibid., 110-111.

> When apprehended primarily by the Will, the idea is called the Good;
> When apprehended by the faculty of Knowing [by representation, Vorstellung, predstavlenie], the idea is called the True;
> When apprehended by Feeling [Chuvstvo], it is called Beauty.[61]

Further than this, he asserts that Good, Truth and Beauty are different aspects of unity.[62] The coherence and underlying unity of the created order are prominent themes for discussion in Solovyov's work 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' (Filosofskie Nachala Tsel'nogo Znaniya);[63] through the construction of various triads, the philosopher assigns Good, Truth and Beauty to particular faculties of man and to particular spheres of human activity. The terms especially associated with Solovyov's religious-philosophical system are free theurgy, free theosophy and free theocracy,[64] (svobodnaya teurgiya, svobodnaya teosofiya, svobodnaya teokratiya).

Solovyov envisaged a complete and ideal organisation of men's creativity,

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61 See Ibid., pp.107-110.
Note the passage which reads: '...Kak soderzhanie voli sushchego ili kak ego zhelannoe, ideya nazyvaetsya blagom,..kak soderzhanie ego predstavleniya, ona nazyvaetsya istinoy,..kak soderzhanie ego chuvstva, ona nazyvaetsya krasotoy.' (p.107).

62 'Zhelannoe, predstavlyaemoe i chuvstvuemoe absolyutno-sushchim mozhet byt' tol'ko vse...Absolyutnoe khochet kak blaga togo zhe samogo, chto ono predstavlyaet kak istinu i chuvstvuet kak krasotu, i imenno vsego. No vse mozhet byt' predmetom absolyutno sushchego tok'ko v svoem vnutrennem edinstve i tselosti. Takim obrazom blago, istina i krasota sut' razlichnie obrazy ili vidy edinstva, pod kotorymi dlya absolyutnogo yavlyaetsya ego soderzhanie ili vsё - ili tri razlichnya storony, s kotorykh absolyutno-sushchee svodit vsё k edinstvu.' (pp.109-110).

63 See esp. Sob.Soch.I, 256-264, 373, 378.

64 Ibid., 289.

knowledge and society, and he defined general morality (objective, not simply the subjective morality for the individual) as a conscious and free service for the enhancement of this general goal.[65] He not only wished to arrive at a coherent and acceptable philosophical or theological definition of the all-comprehensive, all-unifying nature of God, appropriate to scholarly discourse, but also worked for practical goals.[66] He felt that Christian believers are morally obliged to work in active ways for reconciliation among men, for justice and the betterment of society.

The Divine Purpose - Bozhestvenniy Zamysel

Solovyov believed that the study of history is decisive for the Jew and the Christian, because it is precisely within the course of historical development that their respective Traditions enable them to discern God's purpose in creating the world. Solovyov refuted the view that history comprises a flow of random, meaningless events that have no direction or ultimate goal. For him the cosmic process itself is intimately connected with the historical process: if it is possible to say that the cosmic process involves a fundamental transition from

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65 Ibid. 'My poluchili teper' otvet na postavlenniy nami v nachale vopros o tseli chelovecheskogo sushchestvovaniya: ona opredelilas' kak obrazovanie vsetseloy obshchechelovecheskoy organizatsii v forme tsel'nogo tvorchestva ili svobodnoy teurgii,tsel'nogo znaniya ili svobodnoy teosofii i tsel'nogo obshchestva ili svobodnoy teokratii. Nastoyashchaya ob'ektivnaya nravstvennost' sostoit dlya cheloveka v tom,chtoby on sluzhil soznatel'no i svobodno etoy obshchey tseli, otozhdestvlyaya s ney svoyu lichnuyu volyu...'

66 The reaffirmation of the worth and importance of this practical moral code is to be found in Solovyov's work 'Justification of the Good', written twenty years after 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge'.

primordial chaos to a state of increasing harmony and order,[67] then it is in the unfolding of historical events and in the advance of conscious, self-aware humanity that the revelation of meaning and of an underlying Divine purpose become most apparent. On the purely natural, physical level of existence man experiences the meaningless tyranny of time and of passing generations, the 'evil infinity', (das schlechte Unendlichkeit).[68] One generation inevitably has to yield its place to the following one and has to vanish into death and the past; it cannot prolong its hold on the present time, nor retain and fully enjoy the fruit of its achievements. The succeeding generation will, in its turn, have to give way to the next generation, because still subject to the conditions of time, physical destruction and death. If man were really confined to such an existence, it could truly be said that his life lacked meaning. However, according to Solovyov's account, man's involvement in historical development, and his capacity to reflect on the nature of that development, allows him to detect meaning, order and direction in the events unfolding before him. Solovyov sought to show that, for the Christian believer in particular, the very passage of time may be regarded and interpreted sub specie aeternitatis.

This latter point is well conveyed by N.A. Berdyaev, in his book, 'The Meaning of History'

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67 'Russia and the Universal Church' (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), Book III, Ch. VIII, 265-268 (3rd French Edition). See Russian trans., Sob.Soch.XI,311-313. [821]

68 Sob.Soch.III,306-310; Sob.Soch,IV,258-259.

'The historical character of Christianity may be attributed to the fact that the Christian consciousness had conceived eternity as manifesting and incarnating itself in time. The significance of Christianity as it manifests itself in the temporal and historical process lies in its demonstration that eternity or the divine reality <u>can break the chain of time, penetrate into and appear as the dominant force in it</u>.'[69]

(Our Italics).

Berdyaev cites Hinduism and other Oriental religious Traditions as instances of the a-historical viewpoint, that is, of the viewpoint which is not affected by historical considerations because so wholly focused on 'the metaphysical'.[70] The important point to observe, here, is that the Christian historically-based viewpoint provides a view of the relations between God and man as a <u>dynamic drama</u> involving human freedom. It was this question of human freedom and the question whether or not the world process sufficiently provides for that freedom which so deeply concerned Schelling and, in their turn, Solovyov and Berdyaev.

> 'History postulates a Divine-humanity. The character of the religious and historical process presupposes a profound clash and interaction between the Divinity and

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69 '<u>The Meaning of History</u>', N.A. Berdyaev (Geoffrey Bles, London 1936, 2nd Ed.), p.67. [illegible]

70 Ibid., see pp.2-3,14,16-18, and Chap.II, '<u>On the Nature of the Historical: the Metaphysical and the Historical</u>', (pp.21-43), esp. p.26:

> '...As I shall attempt to prove, the metaphysical and the historical are really brought together and intimately fused only in the Christian philosophy of history.'

See p.31: 'The Hindoo consciousness and destiny are the most unhistorical in the world'.

man, between Providence, divine fatality and necessity on the one hand, and the unfathomable mystery of human freedom on the other.'[71]

'Christian freedom postulates the fulfilment of history through the agency of a free subject and spirit.'[72]

Solovyov himself briefly summarises his views regarding the direction and purpose of world history in his book 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', (Chap.III):

> 'The appearance of the new spiritual man in Christ is the focal point [sredotochie] of universal history. The end or goal of this history is [consists in] the appearance of spiritual humanity. The ancient world gravitated towards the spiritual man, the new world gravitates towards spiritual humanity, i.e. so that Christ would realize His image in all [beings] - [chtoby Khristos voobrazilsya vo vsekh].'[73]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

Solovyov not only defines the goal of universal history as the transition (or evolution) from the individual spiritual man to collective 'spiritual humanity', but also states specifically what path is needed

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[71] Ibid., 36-37. See also 'The Wound of Knowledge', Rowan Williams (Darton, Longman and Todd), pp.44-45. (1st edn.1979, reprint 1981)

> 'It is one of the commonest errors to suppose that Platonism of any sort simply devalues the finite...The weakness of Platonism, however, is its lack of historical concern: its world is essentially static. Origen succeeds in giving history, story, a place in such a system, and does so not simply by treating the story as a long cipher, as allegory, but by granting that - at least - the history of Jesus is an irruption of grace into the historical world, an historical picture of the eternal Godhead.'

[72] Ibid., 110.

[73] Sob.Soch.III,403.

to attain that goal, that summum bonum:

> 'This goal is attained by a two-fold path: by the path of personal moral perfectibility and by the path of improvement of social relations.'[74]

Here, as in other statements of his religious thought, Solovyov's resolution of central questions in theology and in history rests upon an acute awareness that individual man and collective humanity[75] must all be accorded importance. Solovyov's practical schemes for the inauguration of a theocratic government, and his writings on the principles of theocracy, were intended to establish the authentic Christian model of culture. He was particularly inspired by his belief that all of humanity represents one living organism, and that this integral, 'organic' aspect of humanity is affirmed by the traditional mystical symbolism of Christianity, according to which the Church, or the collected community of believers, is called 'the Bride of Christ' (Nevesta Khristova) or 'the mystical Body of Christ', (Telo Khristovo). As Solovyov explains, Christian government includes elements seen in the pre-Christian, pagan forms of government of both East and West; it contains these elements, but also provides a new and vital element, which assures the welfare of man:

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74 Ibid. (Eta tsel' dostigaetsya dvoyakim putëm: putëm lichnogo nravstvennogo sovershenstvovaniya i putem uluchsheniya obshchestvennykh otnosheniy).
See also: Sob.Soch.III,165 (Lectures on Godmanhood).

75 See for example Solovyov's article 'Three Forces' (Tri Sily), 1877. Sob.Soch.I,227-239.

Solovyov criticises the extreme rigidity of Islāmic society on the one hand (pp.230-231) and the extreme individualism apparent in West European society on the other hand, its fragmentation and its lack of internal, organic unity, (p.236).

> 'In Christian government is found all that was also in pagan government, both Eastern and Western, but all this acquires a new significance, it is renewed in the spirit of truth [obnovlyaetsya v dukhe istiny]. There is domination [gospodstvo] in Christian government, but domination not in the name of its own strength, but in the name of the general good and in agreement with the directives of the Church authority. There is also submission in Christian government, though not from slavish fear, but according to conscience and voluntarily, for the sake of that general welfare which the sovereign and subjects serve in like manner.'[76]

In 'Judaism and the Christian Question' Solovyov explains how the ideal of Christian rule incorporates Hellenic, Roman and Eastern conceptions of rule, as well as introducing the specifically Christian idea that the ruler is a servant and guardian of the truth.[77] He indicates that humanity's ideas on the rule and organisation of society evolve in the course of history, and that this is, finally, in accordance with the promises of Christ in the Gospels that all humanity can be, and is destined to be, 'redeemed'.

Godmanhood - Bogochelovechestvo

> 'From the first ages of Christianity right until the present time, God-man has appeared for the world as a stumbling-block and a snare. Above all, [it is] deeply-religious people [who] hit themselves

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76 Sob.Soch.III,407.

77 Sob.Soch.IV,163-164.

on this stumbling-block, [people] who could not detach themselves from the old religious idea which did not fathom the actual and complete union of [the] divinity with our nature.'[78]

We have already noted, in our previous chapter, the fundamental criticism which Solovyov levelled against Islām and Zoroastrianism. In Solovyov's view, the Islāmic and Zoroastrian religions are instances of 'the old religious idea' cited above, that is to say, the idea according to which God and created nature are taken as distinct and separate, because the immanence of God in His creation is insufficiently acknowledged. Solovyov took the Christian faith, founded on the Gospels of Christ, to be a more complete revelation of God's nature, because it made man especially conscious of God's immanence in His creation, as well as His transcendence. Solovyov wrote extensively on the similarities and differences between the world's various religious Traditions, and he came to arrange them in a hierarchy, describing some religious philosophies as partial revelations of the nature of God, and naming the Christian view as the most complete revelation of God's nature. The critical difference which set apart the Christian faith from other faiths was the affirmation, central to Christianity,

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78 Sob.Soch.III,33 (The Great Controversy and Christian Politics, 1883).

(S pervykh vremen khristianstva i donyne bogochelovek yavlyaetsya dlya mira kamnem pretknoveniya i soblazna. Prezhde vsego spotknulis' ob etot kamen' lyudi gluboko-religioznye, no kotorye ne mogli otdelat'sya ot staroy religioznoy idei,ne postigavshey deystvitel'nogo i polnogo soedineniya bozhestva s nashey prirodoy.)

that God Himself assumed human nature, became incarnated, so as to effect the redemption of created and imperfect nature. The belief that Jesus Christ embodied divine and human nature, and that He entered the course of human history, and thus 'sanctified' it, (making the spiritualisation of humanity a real possibility,) - this is the real burden of Solovyov's teaching on Godmanhood.

Solovyov's religious-philosophical system was Christocentric, and it assigned prime importance to the universal nature of the salvation proclaimed in the Gospels.

In his 'Lectures on Godmanhood' Solovyov underlines the point that the Incarnation of God, His appearance among men on earth has in various ways been prepared:[79] the Jews' apprehension of God as a Personal Being, their expectation of a Messiah, their view of themselves as God's chosen people with a special religious and historical destiny - all these developments prepared the way for the birth of Christ among the Jewish nation.[80] The threads of continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament are of course very numerous, and this continuity is explicitly confirmed by Christ in His words: 'Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I

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79 Sob.Soch.III, 165:
"...Ego lichnoe voploshchenie v individual'nom cheloveke est' lish' poslednee zveno dlinnogo ryada drugikh voploshcheniy fizicheskikh i istoricheskikh, eto yavlenie Boga vo ploti chelovecheskoy est' lish' bolee polnaya, sovershennaya teofaniya v ryadu drugikh nepolnykh, podgotovitel'nykh i preobrazovatel'nykh teofaniy.'

80 See part I of Solovyov's 'Judaism and the Christian Question' (Sob.Soch.IV, 142-150): 'Pochemu iudeystvo bylo prednaznacheno dlya rozhdeniya iz nego Bogocheloveka, Messii ili Khrista?'.
See also N.A. Berdyaev's 'The Meaning of History', Chap.V, 'The Destiny of the Jews', pp.86-107 (2nd Ed., 1936). [R318]

have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them', (Matt.5,xvii). For Solovyov, as we know particularly from his writings on theocracy, the Old Testament was a profoundly rich source of insights about the nature of God and about Divine-human relations. He recognised the sense in which Christ came to 'fulfil' the Law of the Jews, but he also perceived the essential differences between the Old and New Testaments. In this respect he followed the spirit and tradition of Christian Biblical exegesis. The distinctive feature of Solovyov's interpretation, and of his teaching on Godmanhood in particular, was the manner in which he drew attention to the unique status of Jesus Christ and especially to His central position in the world process itself.[81] In the second place, Solovyov stressed collective man's potential state of harmony and unity (an organic unity), the attainment of which was promised in Christ's statements about the eventual triumph of His Church.[82] Solovyov also stressed Christ's immediate involvement in the human historical process, the need for Christ's appearance at a middle point in history.

In his 7th Lecture on Godmanhood, Solovyov is concerned to show that, although Christianity shares certain elements with other religions and philosophies (asceticism, idealism, and belief in one God), it is actually Christ's teaching about His own Person that

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81 '...Khristos est' vechniy dukhovniy tsentr vselenskogo organizma.' See further, Sob.Soch.III,163.

82 Sob.Soch.IV,260-261: Tserkov' vselenskaya yavitsya nam uzhe ne kak mertviy istukan, i ne kak odushevlennoe,no bessoznatel'noe telo, a kak sushchestvo samosoznatel'noe, nravstvennosvobodnoe, deystvuyushchee samo dlya svoego osushchestvleniya, - kak istinnaya podruga Bozhiya,kak tvorenie, polnym i sovershennym edineniem soedinennoe s Bozhestvom,vsetselo Ego vmestivshee v sebe...'.

distinguishes this from the other religions.[83]

A specially striking feature of Christ's teaching was that He avoided self-assertion as a basis for action, and made a very radical departure from secular morality and attitudes by His consistent advocacy of self-denial.[84] The fundamental contrast between Christ's teachings and the characteristically 'secular' view is brought out in the New Testament through the contrast of 'the kingdom of Caesar' and the 'Kingdom of God'. Christ's celebrated answer to the Pharisees: 'Render unto God the things that are God's, and render unto Caesar those that are Caesar's'[85] underlines the distinction between secular and Christian values. References to 'the kingdom of Caesar' are frequent in the Gospels, and Solovyov employed the image of Caesar's kingdom to denote the 'secular' or non-Christian morality or viewpoint. Such references to the Roman Caesars have a particular significance for Solovyov's explanations of Godmanhood. To make more clear the idea of Godmanhood itself, and to show that Christ advocated self-denial

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83 Op.cit., 111-112. (Khristianstvo imeet svoe sobstvennoe soderzhanie, nezavisimoe ot vsekh etikh elementov,v nego vkhodyashchikh [asceticism, idealism, monotheism]; i eto sobstvennoe soderzhanie est' edinstvenno i isklyuchitel'no Khristos), p.112.

84 Sob.Soch.III,314. (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

On self-denial: 'The source of all man's actions is his will. Thus, the barrier separating [him] from the essential good, or God, is the will of man. But with this very will man can decide not to act on his own or the world's part, not to proceed according to his own and the world's will. Man can decide: I do not want my own will. Such self-denial or direction of the human will is its greatest [highest] triumph.'

(Istochnik zhe vsekh deystviy cheloveka est' ego volya. Itak, pregrada, otdelyayushchaya ot sushchego dobra, ili Boga, est' volya cheloveka. No etoy zhe samoy voley chelovek mozhet reshit'sya ne deystvovat' ot sebya i ot mira, ne postupat' po svoey i mirskoy vole. Chelovek mozhet reshit': ya ne khochu svoey voli. Takoe samootrechenie ili obrashchenie chelovecheskoy voli est' eë vysshee torzhestvo.)

85 Luke 20,xxv.

as the means to attain sanctity, he contrasted that way of self-denial with the self-assertion and self-divinization (samoobozhestvlenie) of the Roman Caesars. They glorified the self-assertive, powerful man, and attributed divine status to him, but this was, in Solovyov's view, the creation of a 'man-god', not the desired 'God-man'.

A most important element in the teaching on Godmanhood was this: Solovyov taught that the individual God-man, Christ, appeared in the middle of the human, historical process, and after that, collective humanity, provided with Christ's teachings and intent on doing God's will on earth (as is affirmed in the Lord's Prayer: Thy will be done), can attain the state of Godmanhood (or God-humanity).

> 'The appearance of the new spiritual man in Christ is the focal point of universal history. The end or goal of this history is [consists in] the appearance of spiritual humanity. The ancient world gravitated towards the spiritual man, the new world gravitates towards spiritual humanity, i.e. so that Christ would realize His image in all [beings].[86]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

Spiritualisation - Odukhotvorenie

Spiritualisation represents a central element in Vladimir Solovyov's religious philosophy, and the philosopher employs that term in a distinctive way.

As will be clear from the foregoing observations on Transfiguration (preobrazovanie), Solovyov takes the unique event of God's Incarnation, His actual entry into the course of human history and His assumption

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86 Op.cit., 403 (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

of human nature, as the point after which men may fully recognise that they bear 'the image of God' within them.

The striking and important point made by Solovyov when he discusses spiritualisation is the following: the entire order of material being evolves, and it goes through a number of important transitional stages as it tends towards that final point, the spiritual state of being. The critical stages in this evolutionary process are:

i) the advance from inorganic to organic forms of life;

ii) the emergence of plant life

iii) the emergence of animal life

iv) the appearance of conscious, reflective man

v) the appearance of God-man, the spiritual being first and most completely exemplified by Jesus Christ.[87]

Solovyov did not accept the widely-held view that the fact of evolutionary growth negates the validity and the content of religious belief. Indeed, he was consistent in arguing that the very fact that evolution occurs supports belief in the spiritual. The process of evolution itself allows for the attainment of a spiritual state, and the fact that men are endowed with self-awareness ('samosoznatel'nost') makes advancement to a higher evolutionary stage virtually certain. (Termination of the whole evolutionary process at the point where creaturely beings finally become self-conscious actually seems more improbable than advancement to a higher state). What Solovyov is

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87 'Russia and the Universal Church', (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), Book III, Ch.VI,254-255. See Russian trans., Sob.Soch.XI,304-305; 'Justification of the Good', (Opravdanie Dobra), Part II, Ch.IX, Sob.Soch.VIII,213-215.

particularly concerned to establish, when he cites the evidence of evolutionary growth in his arguments, is that the emergence of spiritual beings and of a spiritual reality is wholly consistent with the direction and advancement of the world process. Solovyov affirmed that the spiritual dimension of reality is not simply an epiphenomenon of an otherwise mechanistic universe. The transition from man-god to God-man is, on Solovyov's account, the most fitting culminating point of the world process:

> 'The Incarnation of the Divinity is not something miraculous in the proper sense, i.e. is not something alien to the general order of being, but on the contrary, is essentially connected with all the history of the world and of humanity, is something prepared and logically following from this history.'[88]

Self-Assertion - Samoutverzhdenie

In Solovyov's religious philosophy self-assertion is discussed on two distinct, but related, levels:

i) in the context of the entire created order, which strives and requires - for the sake of its freedom - to assert itself as distinct from the Divine Absolute;

ii) in the context of the individual being, whose self-assertive will and actions diminish the well-being of others and promote mutual conflict.

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88 Sob.Soch.III,165. (Lectures on Godmanhood). (So it is that Solovyov refers to Christianity - with its teaching on the Incarnation of the God-man Jesus Christ - as the goal and summation, tsel' i zavershenie, of the cosmic process. See 'Judaism and the Christian Question', Sob.Soch.IV, 158).

Solovyov was aware of the theological and philosophical problems entailed in attempting to reconcile the notions of, on the one hand, the fulfilment of the Divinely-ordained plan for the salvation of the created order, and, on the other hand, human freedom. Here the Russian philosopher was greatly indebted to the writings of Friedrich Schelling on precisely this theme. He was as concerned as Schelling that men's freedom should be an authentic freedom, that men's scope for action should not be determined by subordination to Divinely-ordained goals.[89] Hence, both Schelling and Solovyov argue that it is not desirable for God immediately to render his creation perfect. If men are deprived of the occasion to be any other than perfect, then God's creative action is, in effect, simply an imposition of an ideal condition.[90] However, God's creative action would take on a positive significance if the development or 'unfolding' of His plan allowed for man to be, at some point, other than perfect.

On the basis of this proposition, Schelling, and, in his turn, Solovyov, presented the full world process as being a development in three stages:

a) a stage of complete, undifferentiated unity:

b) a stage at which the created order freely asserts itself as distinct from, and 'other than', the Divine

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89 See 'Reason and Existence: Schelling's Philosophy of History', Paul C. Hayner, publ. by E.J. Brill (Netherlands), 1967. [B.325]

90 'Without His will or longing for freedom no world process would be possible. In its place there would be a static and pre-eminently perfect Kingdom of God as an essential and predetermined harmony.' N.A. Berdyaev, 'The Meaning of History',p.58. Berdyaev took up this point and developed it in his own writings. [B.318]

Absolute, the source of its being;

c) the striving and voluntary <u>return</u> of the created order to unity with the Divine Absolute.

This scheme is applied by both philosophers to central Christian teaching. Paul Hayner writes:

> 'What is referred to as the Fall in the Christian tradition becomes, in Schelling's view, the beginning of the Absolute's self-limitation, the place where freedom as spontaneous choice creates the possibility of the antithesis between 'good' and 'evil' through an activity which, potentially at least, runs counter to the direction established by the Absolute Will.'[91]

> 'Human history, in the sense of a true sequence of events whose immediate occasion is the autonomy of man, does not begin until after the Fall'.[92]

It will be seen how very closely indeed these descriptions of Schelling's outlook correspond to the account of the world process formulated by Solovyov. Both philosophers regarded a deterministic model of the universal and historical process as unacceptable, because inconsistent with the fact of individual and collective man's striving for self-expression in a variety of activities.

Solovyov affirms (in his '<u>The Spiritual Foundations of Life</u>', Chap.III) that the Christian path to spiritual attainment consists of two elements:

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[91] Hayner, p.45, See also p.111,114-115.

[92] Ibid., 143.

> '...the path of personal moral perfectibility and...
> the path of improvement of social relations.'[93]

The second of these is provided for by the true theocratic organisation of society, and the first has meaning and value, holds Solovyov, only if man is given full freedom. Men also need to be induced to respect the freedom of others, to recognise fully the detrimental effects of self-assertion (the assertion of personal will), and to see and accept the efficacy and rightness of Christ's teaching of <u>self-denial</u>, samootrechenie.[94]

<u>The World-Soul - Mirovaya Dusha</u>

In Solovyov's brief description of the term 'the World-Soul' cited in the <u>Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia</u> we find the following explanation:

> 'Many philosophical teachings, having deduced the unity of the world from the eternal sphere of ideal or intelligible being, also, however, admitted a living world-soul in all phenomena, as a subordinate principle receiving and realizing in the sphere of the senses [v chuvstvennoy oblasti] and in the process of time

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93 Sob.Soch.III,403.
(Eto tsel' dostigaetsya dvoyakim putëm: putëm lichnogo nravstvennogo sovershenstvovaniya i putem uluchsheniya obshchestvennykh otnosheniy.)

94 Ibid., 314.
(...Itak, pregrada, otdelyayushchaya ot sushchego dobra, ili Boga, est' volya cheloveka. No etoy zhe samoy voley chelovek mozhet reshit'sya ne deystvovat' ot sebya i ot mira, ne postupat' po svoey i mirskoy vole. Chelovek mozhet reshit':<u>Ya ne khochu svoey voli</u>. Takoe samootrechenie ili obrashchenie chelovecheskoy voli est' ee vysshee torzhestvo.)
(Solovyov's italics.)
See the translation of this passage given in Note 84.

> [that] higher ideal unity, eternally present in the absolute principle.'[95]

In the 7th Lecture on Godmanhood Solovyov relates this notion of two kinds of unity to arguments about the position and status of Christ in the universal or world process. The two kinds of unity are precisely defined, in the lecture, as the active unity which overcomes multiplicity and, secondly, that unity which is passive or 'produced', which is multiplicity brought to a state of unity.[96] The active or 'producing' unity is called such in the lecture (proizvodyashchee edinstvo), and the 'produced' unity is called 'proizvedennoe edinstvo'. On Solovyov's account, the active power which causes the multiple phenomena of the created order to attain unity is plainly conceived of as Divine.

It is noteworthy that Solovyov expressly criticises theories of the World-Soul such as Schopenhauer's. He did not consider Schopenhauer's notion of the World-Soul as a blind, impersonal Will,

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95 'Mnogie filosofskie ucheniya,vyvodivshie edinstvo mira iz vechnoy oblasti bytiya ideal'nogo ili umopostigaemogo,priznavali,odnako, i zhivushchuyu vo vsekh yavleniyakh mirovuyu dushu,kak podchinennoe nachalo, vosprinimayushchee i osushchestvlyayushchee v chuvstvennoy oblasti i vo vremennem protsesse vysshee ideal'noe edinstvo,vechno prebyvayushchee v absolyutnom nachale.'

(Sob.Soch.X,246)

96 '...S odnoy storony edinstvo deystvuyushchego nachala, svodyashchego mnozhestvennost' elementov k sebe kak edinomu, s drugoy storony ..mnozhestvennost', kak svedenn(uyu) k edinstvu, kak opredelenniy obraz etogo nachala. My imeem edinstvo proizvodyashchee i edinstvo proizvedennoe,ili edinstvo kak nachalo(v sebe) i edinstvo v yavlenii.'

(Sob.Soch.III,114)

subjected to no higher power, consistent or tenable.[97]

Solovyov's own views on the World-Soul were in turn submitted to criticism. Some Christians responded warily to his writings on this subject; Solovyov's tendency to mention the World-Soul as a personalised, feminine figure named Sophia (the subject of Cabbalistic and other mystical literature) proved conducive to various misunderstandings among his readers. Possibly the most serious matter to disturb less mystically inclined Christians than he was that Solovyov appeared to be elevating this 'personalised' World-Soul 'Sophia' to a position of spiritual importance unfortunately close to that of the Three Persons of the Trinity. It was thought that he advocated veneration of 'Sophia' as the Fourth Hypostasis. Other charges (which he refuted in the Introduction to the third edition of his poems, 1900) stated that he had established a carnal or earthly ideal through his veneration of the feminine figure 'Sophia', an 'earthly Aphrodite' (Aphrodita Mirskaya).

Schelling and Solovyov both held that the entire created order must be permitted to assert itself as <u>distinct</u> from the Absolute, and then to return freely to the Absolute.[98] This act of self-assertion

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97 Op.cit., 246/247 Solovyov describes Schopenhauer's type of World-Soul theory thus: 'According to this view, the uncontrollably acting and creating World-Soul is the self-sufficient and solitary essence of the universe, not acknowledging above itself another absolute and ideal principle.'
(Po etomu vzglyadu, bezotchetno deystvuyushchaya i tvoryashchaya mirovaya dusha est' samostoyatel'naya i edinstvennaya sushchno vselennoy, no predpolagayushchaya vyshe sebya drugogo absolyutnogo i ideal'nogo nachala.) p.246.

98 '<u>Russia and the Universal Church</u>', (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), Book III, Ch.IV, 236 (3rd French Edition). See Russian trans., Sob. Soch.XI,295. [8.21]

is critically important for conscious man, and it is this which ensures that he is properly free. If man was obliged to accept a 'perfect world order' established by God at the beginning of his history, argued Schelling and Solovyov, then, in that case, man would be deprived of freedom. Only the provision of a real choice between perfection and imperfection makes man's acceptance of perfection valuable.

Man and nature are permitted to 'fall' from perfection, so that conscious, and effectively free, man can experience privation and then elect to return to the Absolute. (See the sections on Self-Assertion, Samoutverzhdenie, and on The Divine Purpose, Bozhestvenniy Zamysel).

Creaturely existence is particularly painful and unsatisfying for conscious man: he is aware that the discord and mutual hostilities, the conflict of interests and (at the human level) the conflict of self-assertive wills, are in themselves undesirable, and under these conditions he senses (more or less acutely) that he is diminished in stature. As Solovyov asserted in the 2nd Lecture on Godmanhood;

- the human personality

> 'does not want to and cannot be satisfied with any conditional, limited content...'[99]

Solovyov taught that man aspires to attain 'plenitude of being', (polnota bytiya), and that, if he is sufficiently willing and receptive to become the channel for Divine grace, the whole created, material order may be 'sanctified'. The evil spirit of discord and hostility

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[99] Sob.Soch.III,25.

("zloy dukh razlada i vrazhdy' are Solovyov's words)[100] may be overcome on account of Christ's Incarnation and redemptive self-sacrifice, and of man's free participation in the Divinely-ordained plan.

Solovyov stressed that the Church founded by Christ plays a most important part in unifying men and in articulating their spiritual aspirations, their wish to see the Kingdom of God realized on earth. On Solovyov's account, the Church is the most suitable instrument through which to attain the 'true life' (istinnaya zhizn'):

> 'The Church is the universal organisation of true life'.[101]

> 'True life must be realized in spiritual humanity, i.e. in the Church. The life of the Church is [situated] between Divine [life] and natural life .'[102]

> 'The ideal of the community of all within the Church*, universal brotherhood, the perfect Kingdom of grace and truth, love and freedom - this is the future of the Church.' [103]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

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100 Sob.Soch.III,163. (Lectures on Godmanhood).

101 Sob.Soch.IV,258. (The History and Future of Theocracy). (Tserkov' est' vsemirnaya organizatsiya istinnoy zhizni).

102 Ibid., 259
(Istinnaya zhizn' dolzhna byt' osushchestvlena v dukhovnom chelovechestve,t.e. v tserkvi. Zhizn' Tserkvi est' srednyaya mezhdu Bozh'ey i prirodnoy.).

103 Ibid.:
(Ideal vsetserkovnosti,vselenskoe bratstvo, sovershennoe Tsarstvo blagodati i istiny, lyubvi i svobody, - eto est' budushchee tserkvi).

* Solovyov provides the term vsetserkovnost' here, which is very close in meaning to sobornost', but which cannot be adequately translated by one word in English.

Vladimir Solovyov conceived of theocracy as the truest possible embodiment of the Christian ideal of community. He saw many merits in the Judaic understanding and application of theocratic rule, and for his own scheme he relied heavily upon the Judaic model, but judged that the fullest, most consistent adherence to theocratic principles is to be found specifically in the Christian Tradition.[106] According to Solovyov, Judaism and Christianity accept one and the same goal - a universal theocracy - but Christianity also provides the path to the attainment of that goal.

Theocratic rule is to be valued because it provides for the spiritual needs of members of the community as well as for the material needs which secular monarchs undertake to provide. Furthermore, when the state is ruled on theocratic lines, men's spiritual needs are accorded primary importance, and their fulfilment is not, as a rule, sacrificed for the sake of more utilitarian, secular considerations. In the community where spiritual matters are recognised as centrally important, the priests charged with responsibility for those matters become invested with a high degree of authority. Such authority may not necessarily be sanctioned by the laws of the state, but, in any event, the relationship between the leaders of the priestly order and the temporal ruler must be determined according to a clear set of criteria acceptable to the community at large. The presence of a figure in the state who derives his authority from a source other than the

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no historical instance of a 'pure' theocracy...The idea of government by God was the dominant one in Israelite polity. It is the leading instance of theocracy for all times.' (p.287).

106 Sob.Soch.Vladimira Solovyova,IV,p.156,163.

temporal ruler, can naturally give rise to disputes and rivalry. It is therefore especially necessary that the mutual relationship between the representatives of spiritual authority and of temporal authority can be seen to rest upon principles laid down in accepted Scripture.[107]

In the theocratic scheme formulated by Solovyov there are three representatives of authority, the High Priest (Pervosvyashchennik), the King (Tsar'), and the Prophet (Prorok). Each of these three figures has particular responsibilities towards the community (as will be specified below), and each, in his way, guides the community towards a consistent enactment or realization of God's will.

At various points in his writings Solovyov reiterates his firm conviction that spiritual salvation is not simply a quest for isolated individuals to pursue. The summum bonum that particular individuals seek to attain must, by its very nature, be the summum bonum for all men. Solovyov perceived that collective, universal salvation is the desired goal, the goal which the theocratic organisation of society can serve. In his work 'The History and Future of Theocracy', (Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii, 1885-1887) he writes:

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107 See Ananda Coomaraswamy's monograph on theocracy and its spiritual significance, entitled 'Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government', (American Oriental Society), New Haven, USA, 1942. [S.342]
And see our 'Meaning and Symbolism in the work of Ananda Coomaraswamy', Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, 1981, Vol. 7, with special reference to the symbolism associated with theocratic rule. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), Curator of the Indian Section of the Fine Arts Museum in Boston, writer and scholar. Two volumes of 'Selected Papers' by Coomaraswamy (Commemorative centenary Edition) were published by Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series LXXXIX, 1977, edited by Roger Lipsey. [S.321]

> '...[But] we know that the essential goal of theocracy consists not in that some people are given up to God, but in that all are united with God.'[108]
>
> (Our Italics)

In his slightly earlier work 'Judaism and the Christian Question', (Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros, 1884), he describes the desired goal as being the point when

> 'God is all in all, [when] each human being is a receptacle of divinity.'[109]

The three theocratic figures of authority provide the community with different kinds of guidance, according to Solovyov's scheme. This is brought out by his deliberate use of three etymologically related words in Russian, conveying both the distinction and the closeness between the High Priest's, the King's and the Prophet's functions. He asserts that the High Priest directs (napravlyaet) the community, the King governs (upravlyaet) it, and the Prophet corrects (ispravlyaet) it.[110] Solovyov provides a further schematic division in order to indicate the basis of their authority:

> The High Priest has authority based on tradition (past time)
> The King has power founded on the law (present time)
> The Prophet has the freedom of personal initiative[111] (future time)[112]

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108 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, IV, 508.

109 Ibid., 161.

110 Ibid., 161.

111 Personal Initiative: In his system Solovyov actually regards the theocratic Prophet as speaking with the authority of personal conscience, thus we will refer to 'personal conscience' below, rather than to the less specific term 'personal initiative'.

112 Op.cit., 161, 548.

If the theocratic representatives of God exercise their delegated authority in a genuinely Christian spirit and manner, then, in Solovyov's view, the spiritual welfare and development of the community is assured. Moreover, he proposed, the activities of the High Priest, the King and the Prophet counter the negative effects of the continuous passing and succession of generations to which men are subject in their natural life.[113] Each generation is prevented from consolidating its achievements and from preserving what is valuable, because it must necessarily yield its place to the next, growing generation. This, writes Solovyov, causes dissatisfaction to each generation in turn, and this natural, but undesirable succession of generations he calls the 'evil infinity' (durnaya beskonechnost').[114] Thus, natural life cannot offer man fulfilment. But, according to Solovyov, the theocratic arrangement of society redeems man from the unsatisfactory conditions of natural existence; it specifically enables man to retain what is valuable from his past, to employ that for his own development in the present and the future. As indicated above, each of the three theocratic figures bears a special responsibility for one period of time, past, present or future; the harmonious cooperation of these three figures renders possible a victory by men over the natural succession of generations, the 'evil infinity'. In other words, Solovyov proposed that if the proper relations between these three figures are maintained, then the attainment of society's ideal of the future need not negate the value

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113 Sob.Soch.IV, 258-259.

114 Ibid.

residing in its life and institutions of the past and present.

Although the High Priest, the King and the Prophet derive their authority and special status partly from tradition, law and personal conscience respectively, (see above), Solovyov views their ultimate authority as deriving directly from the figure of Christ Himself.

Here the philosopher departs from the schematic kind of definitions he has employed elsewhere, and bases his argument on a symbolic interpretation. In symbolic terms that wholly accord with Biblical Scripture, Christ may be designated as High Priest, King and Prophet.[115] He embodies essential aspects of all three theocratic figures, and each of these functions reveals something of His redemptive mission on earth. Thus, this symbolic designation of Christ as High Priest, King and Prophet is the ultimate basis for Solovyov's description of the three representatives of divine authority in his theocratic scheme.

It is now necessary to enumerate the particular attributes and duties of each theocratic figure in turn.

In his work 'The History and Future of Theocracy' Solovyov undertakes a very detailed examination of the Judaic conception of theocracy, and in Books III and IV he considers the status and the responsibilities of the High Priest, the King and the Prophet in the Jewish community during the period from the Exodus to the reign of Saul. In attempting to define the responsibilities of the High Priest in his own theocratic

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115 The corollary of the idea that Christ embodies all three theocratic powers is that, at the end of time, believing Christians will themselves take on the nature of Priest, King and Prophet:

> 'Truly, all genuine believers will be godly prophets at the end of time, at the appearance of the Church Triumphant, just as they will all also be kings and priests.'
>
> (Sob.Soch.IV,168)

scheme, Solovyov refers extensively to the Judaic conception of priestly duties. For the Jews the High Priest was, in the first place, the member of the community who performed the Sacrifice to Yahweh, thus maintaining the communication between the whole Jewish people and their God:

> 'In the normal life of the people and the nation the task of the clergy consists primarily in the making of sacrifices, maintaining the fundamental real link between the Divinity and man, expiating human sins, sanctifying the affairs [of men]....'[116]

But in Judaism the role of the clergy did not remain restricted to the making of sacrifices:

> 'As regards His own chosen people, Yahweh not only wants to be in daily contact with [them], but wants to lead [them] to higher goals... Therefore, that select part of Israel which is in closest contact with Yahweh, which is dedicated to Him - the clergy - cannot limit its service just [to] the offering of sacrifices.'[117]

Solovyov stresses that the role of the High Priest and clergy was to <u>direct</u> the people:

> 'Over and above [performing] its own sacrificial duties, [the clergy] must be a living channel for the providential action of God, directing and leading the whole Israelite nation on its historical path.'[118]

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[116] Sob.Soch.IV,504.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

The spiritual significance of the High Priest for the entire social community is very clearly expressed by Solovyov in the following lines:

> 'The High Priest represents that central point at which the Divinity directly makes contact with the organism of human society, [the point] through which it unites with the whole sphere of social existence, in order to continually and correctly direct this whole [eto tseloe] on the path to its higher purpose, indicating to it each time, at each cross-road - <u>where to go</u>.'[119]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

Solovyov observes that whereas it was the Jews who especially perceived and defined the true function and duties of the High Priest (and of the Prophet), the conception of the Christian theocratic King was developed in Byzantium.[120]

> 'In the Orthodox ruler of the new Rome [Byzantium] all the pagan elements of the idea of rule were purified and transformed by Christianity.'[121]

On Solovyov's account, the Christian conception of temporal ruler is actually a synthesis of other conceptions and insights: the Christian conception of ruler embraces the <u>Oriental</u> idea of supreme autocrat, the <u>Hellenic</u> idea of a wise guide of the people, the <u>Roman</u> idea of the emperor as the very embodiment of state law, and its own particularly <u>Christian</u> view of the ruler as the servant of the true religion, the defender and guardian of its interests upon earth.[122]

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[119] Ibid., 506-507.
[120] Ibid., 163-164.
[121] Ibid., 164.
[122] Ibid.

The power of the Christian ruler must be sanctified by the High Priest, and this act of sanctification is symbolised in the anointing and crowning of the temporal ruler by the High Priest.[123] While Christianity recognises the need for the ruler to be autonomous, not subject to the dictates of his people, it also requires that he be 'a son of the Church', (syn tserkvi).[124] The King's submission to the High Priest in the ritual of anointing and crowning, and his continued service to the Church, does not give the Church hierarchy the right of temporal rule:

> '...This does not give the Church hierarchy any rights of power in the sphere of government, but [it] obliges the ruler to be a devoted son of the Church and a true servant of God's affairs; only under this condition does he have the aspect [significance] of a Christian ruler, one of the formative organs of true theocracy.'[125]

Solovyov stresses that the ordering of the theocratic state must ensure the <u>freedom</u> of man to be united with God. The direction of the High Priest cannot be a matter of compulsion, and the natural, human society (for which the King bears responsibility) requires freedom of choice and action:

> 'But for this [the free union with God] it is essential that the worldly, natural-human element has its own place in the theocracy, that it also is afforded the fullness of independent action and development.'[126]

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123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid., 508.

The fundamental task of the three theocratic figures (the High Priest, King and Prophet) is

> 'to lead people to the divine goal [while] not destroying their human freedom' [127]

The High Priest and the clergy are required to ensure progress towards the divine goal, and the King must use his temporal power in such a way as to guarantee men their freedom.[128] The calling and task of the third theocratic representative of authority, that is, the Prophet, is very special; in the Bible, and in Solovyov's own scheme, the Prophet is most truly and completely the instrument of God,[129] Solovyov asserts that

> 'In actual fact, the prophetic power is presented in the Bible as the source of all the other [powers]'.[130]

We have already mentioned that the Prophet is regarded by Solovyov as primarily a man of faith (having faith in the ultimate victory of the Good); he is guided by personal conscience; and he is only entitled to assume the prophetic role after a proper and rigorous moral preparation. If the prophetic attributes of discernment, humility and moral attainment are lacking, then a man's reliance upon personal, free conscience may be harmful. Solovyov criticised Protestantism[131] on the grounds of excessive reliance upon personal conscience

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127 Ibid., 502.
128 Ibid., 502-503.
129 Ibid., 503.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid., 168-169.

as the arbiter of morality: this valuation of personal conscience by the Protestants excluded due recognition of the 'authority' of the Church on moral issues; it also allowed people to be guided by personal conscience alone, even in the absence of a high standard of morality or of suitable moral preparation. Solovyov judged that to accord personal conscience absolute value in this way was equally undesirable, whether among the whole Protestant movement or on the part of individuals.

The Prophet, suitably qualified by his moral preparation and attainments, and firm in the faith that the Divine plan for the development of humanity may be attained, is, according to Solovyov, a free evangelist and teacher (svobodniy propovednik i uchitel').[132] Though the status of the Prophet in a truly theocratic society is so special, the Prophet nevertheless requires the presence and cooperation of the High Priest and the King. Indeed, to completely fulfil his own function, he requires the greatest possible development of the priestly and kingly functions.[133] In one sense the Prophet is the very root and also the crown of the theocratic organisation of society (koren' i venets teokraticheskoy organizatsii);[134] but also, he must be considered the third of the three theocratic figures, for his purpose is to reconcile and synthesize the functions of the High Priest and the King.[135]

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[132] Ibid., 161.
[133] Ibid., 503.
[134] Ibid., 504.
[135] Ibid., 503-504.

The inter-dependence of the three theocratic figures is explained and illustrated by references to Old Testament history. Solovyov explains how the High Priest cannot become directly involved in temporal rule,[136] and later gives the reasons why the temporal ruler must allow himself to be guided by the High Priest and the Prophet.[137]

The true Prophet, writes Solovyov, regards his calling not as a natural right or a personal privilege, but as a special gift of God which requires him, for his part, to cultivate moral virtues. The manner in which Solovyov treats the whole subject of the prophetic vocation (prorocheskoe prizvanie), the moral significance he attached to the Prophet's work, and his own serious and moral approach to problems, gives one grounds for surmising that he himself felt the prophetic vocation. Like the Prophet in the Judaic model of theocracy, he was himself an independent, individual figure outside the established hierarchy of the clergy, concerned with the fundamental transformation of society, having faith and looking forward to the realization of the Divine plan. It is fair to say that some of his contemporaries (not all admirers) were more ready to attribute a prophet's character and role to him than he was ready to assume these.[138] He was

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136 Ibid., 509-510.

137 Ibid., 544: 'The theocratic king (ruler), receiving in all his own affairs indications of God's path, through the oracle of the High Priest, also received, through the Prophet,the revelation of the very goal of this path.'

138 The following lines from a poem by Solovyov suggest that he did not appreciate being regarded as a prophet, and that he was suspicious of people's motives for describing him as such:

'I have been elevated among prophets by (my) enemies,
They have given me this title in mockery...'
(Ya v proroki vozveden vragami,Na smekh eto dali mne prozvanie...)
(Sob.Soch.XII,20, 'Modest Prophecy', Skromnoe Prorochestvo).

undoubtedly very conscious of the spiritual dangers and the pride involved in claiming prophetic authority, and this may account for his personal reluctance to consciously adopt the Prophet's position. However, his writings indicate that he had, over a long period of time, devoted much thought to the nature of prophecy, the Prophet's authority in society, and to his concern with the transformation and spiritual growth of collective humanity.

The critical importance of the Prophet in Solovyov's theocratic society may be guaged by the following two assertions from Book IV, Chap.xvii of '<u>The History and Future of Theocrary</u>':

> 'Only the builders of the future give meaning and significance to the guardians of the present.'[139]

> '...In the person of prophets <u>all</u> this society, <u>all the world</u> is inwardly and freely united with the Divinity.'[140]

In view of the inter-dependent nature of their functions and authority, the exclusive self-assertion of either the High Priest, the King or the Prophet at the expense of the others constitutes a criminal infringement of the very essence of theocracy (prestup noe pokushenie protiv samogo sushchestva teokratii).[141] Referring again to Old Testament history to elucidate this point, Solovyov writes that Saul's self-assertion as Israel's absolute ruler, and his destruction

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139 Op.cit., 549.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid., 534.

of the official priesthood and the prophets was a plain deviation from the theocratic ideal. Having established this absolute, but unjust rule, Saul forfeited any true claim to moral superiority, and hence he also forfeited any right to dominate the Gentiles. Deprived of the authority and support of the official priesthood and the prophets, Saul found his own nation on the same level as other nations which relied for victory solely on physical strength. His rejection of the theocratic ordering of society and government contributed significantly to the defeat and downfall of the Jewish people.[142]

Solovyov completed only one third of his work 'The History and Future of Theocracy'. Here the theocratic ideal is mostly discussed by him in the context of Judaic theocracy. In his book 'Russia and the Universal Church',(La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), he considered theocracy and authority in the context of Roman Catholic ideas, and he argued in favour of recognising the Apostolic Succession and the primacy of the Bishops of Rome.[143] His practical schemes for the reconciliation of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches and for the inauguration of a true theocracy envisaged the Tsar of Russia as the suitable theocratic monarch. His ideas on this subject made him

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142 Ibid., 535-536.

143 'Russia and the Universal Church', (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), Book III, Ch.X, pp.304,306-312. (3rd French Edition). See the Russian translation: Sob.Soch.XI, pp.329-336. [8.21]

'Without one common father for all the human family, the earthly life of the children of Adam will be given up to all forms of division, and unity here on earth will only be an ideal existence.'

(Sans un seul père commun à toute la famille humaine la vie terrestre des enfants d'Adam sera abandonnée à toutes les divisions, et l'unité n'aura ici-bas qu'une existence idéale.) (p.311).

See also Book II, Chs.1-III, pp.87-112 (3rd French Edition).

politically suspect in the eyes of the Tsarist government in the late 1880's. Solovyov's schemes were variously interpreted and criticised, but here we confine ourselves to an exposition of his fundamental views on theocracy.

CHAPTER VI

'JUSTIFICATION OF THE GOOD' AS A CENTRAL TERM IN VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV's RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

'Knowledge of what one ought to do presupposes a knowledge of what one is.'

Vladimir Solovyov

The religious philosophy offered in Vladimir Solovyov's writings is the fruit of a wide-ranging and particularly ambitious enquiry concerning human goals, creativity and values. This enquiry was undertaken by a man singularly well versed in Biblical studies, in Church history, West European philosophy, in Platonism, Neo-Platonism and in the mystical literature of various religious Traditions. His vast erudition was supported by a very strong conviction that his work in these major fields would yield beneficial and important results. He valued both mystical apprehension and rational thought as means of acquiring knowledge, while prophetic insight and mystical visions (when accompanied by the requisite degree of moral preparation and discipline) also found a place in his scheme. His writings testify that he regarded Christianity as the truest and most complete revelation of the nature and the Will of God that men have received, a revelation that affirms the reality of God's intimate relationship with His creation and that fully provides for human freedom.

Our previous two Chapters present an account of Solovyov's central teachings and his religious terminology. Here, in the present

Chapter, our examination of his religious writings begins with an analysis of four important features of his philosophy. These are:

i) his concern with 'the justification of the Good';

ii) his view of '<u>mystical apprehension</u>', (misticheskoe vospriyatie);

iii) his typological classification of religions;

iv) his arguments for a theocratic organisation of society and government.

It is our considered view that these merit particular attention in any serious evaluation of Solovyov's thought. His view of 'mystical apprehension' has received critical attention before, generally in the context of Solovyov's work on epistemology, where he criticises the Empiricist and Rationalist accounts of knowledge and affirms the validity of 'mystical apprehension'. (In this connection, see the full-length work by John Palan, '<u>The Theory of Religious Knowledge of Vladimir Solovyov</u>', D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford 1976). As mentioned before, Solovyov's conception of theocracy has been interpreted in negative terms by some commentators, notably by Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy.[1] These and other works have in their various ways cast light upon the nature of Solovyov's religious thought, and we are

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1 '<u>The Worldview of Vladimir Solovyov</u>',(Mirosozertsanie Vladimira Solovyova), Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy, Vol.I-II, Moscow 1913. [B.49]

'<u>The Downfall of Theocracy in the Works of Vl.S.Solovyov</u>' (Krushenie Teokratii v Tvoreniyakh Vl.S.Solovyova), Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy, <u>Russkaya Mysl'</u>, January 1912 (Moscow), pp.1-35. [B221]

fortunate in being able to draw on their research and critical insight. Although we recognise the worth of previous works on the subject, and though we accept that certain scholars have covered very wide ground in their investigations (notably Mochulsky, Radlov, Sergey Solovyov, Stremoukhov and Trubetskoy), it is nevertheless appropriate to undertake new reassessments of Solovyov and his religious writings. It is quite natural that we should view the figure of Solovyov from a different perspective, now that at least forty years have passed since the last of the aforementioned scholars published their work in 1936 (Mochulsky's critical biography appeared in that year). Radlov and Trubetskoy published their respective works as early as 1913, a little more than a decade after the philosopher's death. Their writings clearly gain from the author's direct personal contact with Solovyov and from an immediate appreciation of the time and circumstances in which he worked. New studies, undertaken now, stand to gain from the large body of literature available on the subject, including the important contributions of the above authors. Far-reaching historical and cultural changes must also alter our view of the philosopher's goals and achievements.[2] The hopes for reconciliation between the Russian

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[2] N. Setnitsky has alluded to Solovyov's prophetic insight, and has commented on the striking way that the philosopher's words about the 'Yellow Peril' (published in the 1890's) anticipated Russia's humiliation at the hands of the Japanese in 1904-1905. 'Russian Thinkers on China' (Russkie Mysliteli o Kitae), Kharbin, 1926. The passage of time has possibly revealed another instance of prophetic insight on Solovyov's part: in his essay 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' (Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika, 1883) Solovyov argued that reconciliation between the hostile cultures of East and West could best be brought about by Russia's reconciliation with the Polish people, a people that had Slav blood but that adhered to West European Catholic tradition and culture. (Sob.Soch.IV,15-17).

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Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches (and the necessary goodwill to bring it about) appear to be stronger and more widespread now than in Solovyov's own time, thus making his work for that goal a relevant and early contribution.

One hopes, also, that the more rapid and extensive exchange of ideas possible today will provide the basis for a generally freer, more frank and tolerant discussion of religious views and practice. Solovyov himself urged his readers to adopt a more tolerant, more truly 'Christian' attitude towards the Jewish people.[3] Our extension of that principle to include other non-Christian peoples would help create an atmosphere conducive to balanced study of religions, and to well-founded research rather than the simple reinforcing of cultural and other prejudices.

Another factor that is bound to affect the most recent studies of Solovyov's work is the emergence and growth of comparative religious studies as a discipline. Even if not all studies of his work are conceived in terms of cross-cultural, cross-religious comparisons, the climate in which this new discipline has arisen must make itself felt by those concerned with the phenomenon 'religion'. Fears are sometimes expressed that scholars who commend the comparative approach

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Almost 100 years after the publication of this viewpoint Karol Wojtyla, a Pole, was elected to be the Roman Catholic Pope, and he has particularly worked for reconciliation of East and West. See our letter in 'Doctrine and Life' May-June 1979 (journal of the Dominican Order in Ireland). [Setnitsky - B.196]

3 'Judaism and the Christian Question' (Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros), 1884, Sob.Soch:IV, 135-136.

would in time surrender their own beliefs, and that in the attempt to find what common ground exists between the world's religions they would reduce religion to 'the lowest common denominator' of these various and rich creeds. (Solovyov foresaw this danger,[4] and was consequently anxious to establish the distinctive content of the Christian religion which cannot be 'reduced' in that manner unless actually denied.) The temptation to diminish the content of specific religions in this way (or to equate religion too easily with utopian, political creeds) will never be entirely eliminated, that is clear, and it would be unrealistic to expect otherwise. However, it seems to us that the comparative approach to the study of religions may actually promote awareness of the methodological difficulties to be encountered in describing or classifying religions. This attention to methodology, and the efforts of scholars to provide an increasingly refined terminology for use in this field, should greatly assist specialists on Solovyov's works, as also his other modern readers.

We have already cited the Introduction to Solovyov's 'The History and Future of Theocracy' (1885-1887), where the philosopher wrote that his general aim was 'to justify the faith of our fathers (opravdat' veru nashikh otsov), raising it to a new level of rational consciousness', (see our Chapter II). This statement by Solovyov has inevitably attracted much attention and critical comment. Some commentators such as A.F. Koni, believe that he responded correctly to the needs

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4 'Lectures on Godmanhood', (3rd Lecture), Sob.Soch.III,38.
Solovyov specifically states that this reduction of religions to their 'lowest common denominator' leads people of a consistent mind to complete atheism.

of the time,[5] and that he provided a framework of ideas based on the Gospel teachings which would enable agnostic members of the intelligentsia to accept Christianity. Other writers, such as Lev Shestov,[6] contended that the very notion of 'raising' faith (that is, religious faith) 'to a new level of rational consciousness' was misconceived, an unfortunate, mistaken view that failed to recognise the irreconcilable and mutually exclusive attributes of religious faith and of discursive reason. In his celebrated work 'The Spirit of Russia' (1919),[7] which includes a lengthy chapter on Solovyov's thought, Thomas Masaryk expresses serious reservations about the nature of his enterprise.[8] Like Shestov, Masaryk believed that the Russian philosopher was engaged in an attempt to bring together elements difficult if not impossible to reconcile: Masaryk writes that Solovyov sought to reconcile two fundamentally different types of philosophical thought, namely Platonic and Kantian thought.[9] Other writers

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5 'To the Memory of Vladimir Solovyov', (Pamyati Vladimira Solovyova), A.F. Koni (1903). [B.134]

6 'Thought and Apocalypse' (Umozrenie i Apokalipsis), Lev Shestov, an essay on Solovyov's philosophy in the collection of his essays 'Thought and Reveletion' (Umozrenie i Otkrovenie), Paris 1964. [B.234] In 1880 B.N. Chicherin had criticised Solovyov's use of rational categories in supporting non-rational propositions regarding the nature of human knowledge. See Chicherin's 'Mysticism in Science' (Mistitsizm v Nauke), Moscow, 1880, p.119. [B.56]

7 'The Spirit of Russia', T. Masaryk, (1919), Vol.II, pp.225-286 (London 1955). [B.197]

8 Ibid., 254-258, 278-286.

9 Ibid., 256.
Vladimir Solovyov 'had an internal struggle of his own, the struggle with himself, the struggle between faith and unfaith. 'Kant' and 'Plato' are the two war-cries wherein the tragic problem of Solovyov is comprised. The man's whole life was a vain attempt to bring these two poles together, to reconcile their opposition. Kant represents deliberate action in accordance with the light of reason, represents

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(Zernov, for instance)[10] were much more appreciative of Solovyov's efforts to achieve a synthesis of different streams of philosophical thought. Analysis of Solovyov's aims and achievements has led writers to compare him with figures as various as Origen, St. Augustine, Cardinal John Newman, Lev Tolstoy, Friedrich von Huegel, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.[11] To pursue these suggested lines of comparison

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individual activity and spontaneity; Plato represents deliberate receptivity, passive contemplation of the objective, higher world. Kant represents the self-sufficiency and independence of the individual critical understanding; Plato represents dependence upon the absolute, upon the revelation of the absolute, upon dogmas, upon the Church...'
Masaryk then writes (p.257): 'I must insist that his friends and adherents discern in the works of their teacher and master a unity which is in truth non-existent.'

10 'Three Russian Prophets: Khomiakov, Dostoevsky, Soloviev', Nicolas Zernov, London, 1944. [B.82]

11 Solovyov/Origen:
'The Spirit of Russia', T. Masaryk, London 1955, ed., p.258. [B.347]
Solovyov/St. Augustine:
See 'Vladimir Solovyov's Teaching on the Freedom of the Will' (Uchenie Vladimira Solovyova o Svobode Voli), Ernest Radlov (Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya, 1911). [B.187]
'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', Sergey Solovyov, p.26. [B.48]

Solovyov/Cardinal Newman:
'Vladimir Soloviev: Un Newman russe' Michel d'Herbigny, Paris 1918. [B.63]
'Vladimir Solovyov: A Russian Newman' Mark Everitt, 'Sobornost', Vol.I, No.1, 1979, pp.23-38. [B.247]

Solovyov/Tolstoy:
'Logical and Historical Methods in Ethics', (Logicheskiy i Istoricheskiy Metody v Etike), N.A. Vasil'ev, University of Kazan, n/d. (pre-1920's). [B.104]
'Thought and Apocalypse' (Umozrenie i Apokalipsis), Lev Shestov, p.29. [B.234]

Solovyov/von Huegel:
The comparison of Solovyov with Friedrich von Huegel was suggested (but not further pursued) by Donald Attwater, who translated Solovyov's 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' into English, under the title 'God, Man and the Church', publ. by James Clarke, Cambridge 1937, See 1974 Reprint, p.ix. [B.39]

Solovyov/Teilhard de Chardin:
'Teilhard und Solowjew', Karl Vladimir Truhlar, Munich 1966. [B.79]

in appropriate detail goes beyond the scope of our particular enquiry. We have already set out four points for examination in this Chapter, and will now pursue those points.

i) Solovyov's concern with 'justification of the Good', 'opravdanie Dobra'

'Justification of the Good' (Opravdanie Dobra) is the title of a major work written by Solovyov in 1897, setting out his moral philosophy. We submit that the term 'justification of the Good' can justifiably be employed to characterise his whole philosophical enterprise, and we support that claim in the present Chapter. Solovyov's goals and method will be more readily understood if we say of him not only that he wished to 'justify the faith' (opravdat' veru) of his fathers, but that he also regarded it as necessary 'to justify the Good'. The term is used by Solovyov in a very distinctive way, and this must be explained at some length, and illustrated with examples.

Solovyov regarded it as necessary to 'justify the Good' because men, being in a state of imperfection and of impaired vision, fail to recognise the Absolute Good. Therefore, they either seek less than the Absolute Good, or they become disheartened by the apparent domination of evil over good, and they lose faith in the possible realization of the Good on earth. Solovyov asserted that faith in the ultimate triumph of the Good on earth is kept alive mainly by prophets, utopian idealists and dreamers precisely because it is they who refuse to accept the imperfection of the created order as 'given' and inalterable.[12]

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[12] Sob.Soch.III,201 (2nd Speech in Memory of Dostoevsky).

A further and very important reason why men cannot fully discern the Good here, in our earthly existence, is that the absolute perfection of the Divine Being does not manifest itself immediately and fully to men. To ensure that men have an <u>authentic</u> freedom to choose between perfection and imperfection, between 'good' and 'evil', the absolute perfection of God is not fully manifest in His creation at the beginning of the world process. Perfection is to be <u>attained</u> by man, to be freely desired.[13] Here, in essence, is the teaching elaborated by Friedrich Schelling and accepted by Solovyov as a central element in his religious views and his interpretation of human history.[14]

Thus, in attempting to ascertain the reasons why Solovyov saw 'the justification of the Good' as his principal task, we may relate this conception of his work to the belief in man's flawed nature, to his acceptance of the Christian teaching of 'original sin'. Inability to fully recognise the Good is entailed in the very notion of this imperfect human state, and in the Christian Tradition this is experienced as (and usually described in terms of) <u>privation</u>, the feeling of being 'distant' from God or 'deprived' of His redemptive love. This experience of privation, and especially an awareness of our own '<u>nothingness</u>' which tends to go with it - these, in Solovyov's view, are conducive to recognition that 'God is <u>All</u>'.[15] His concern with 'justification of the Good' belongs in the context of this central Christian premise that human nature is 'fallen' and imperfect, and

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[13] Sob.Soch.IV, 337; Sob.Soch.VIII, 15-16.

[14] See '<u>Reason and Existence: Schelling's Philosophy of History</u>', Paul C. Hayner, E.J. Brill, (Netherlands), 1967. [B.325]
'<u>Lectures on Godmanhood</u>', Vladimir Solovyov (Sob.Soch.III).

[15] See Sob.Soch.III, 315-316 (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

that consequently men must be assisted in their recognition and acceptance of the Absolute Good.[16]

One general objection that could be raised in answer to Solovyov's views on 'justification of the Good' is this: it is precisely the Good which requires no 'justification'. According to that view, the Good is its own justification, or in other words, the Good is self-sufficient, 'complete'; it stands in no need of definition, rationalisations, and so forth. Only that which is incomplete, imperfect, unsound, requires qualification and rationalisation to make it more acceptable. But nothing essential can be 'added' to the Good by human efforts to 'justify' it, nor can the Good be made more acceptable than it already is on account of those efforts to 'justify' it.

It is hardly possible to refute that objection. There is indeed a fundamentally important sense in which the Good cannot be 'justified' by human reason. The limited categories and terms which we generally use could not embrace the 'complete' and essential nature of the Good, nor even describe its nature. The Good, in that absolute and self-sufficient sense, eludes all particular definition and all attempts of human reason to formulate valid, positive assertions[17] concerning it.

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16 'Justification of the Good', (Opravdanie Dobra), Preface to the 1st edition, See Sob.Soch.VIII, p.8.

'One must in no case consider such an analysis of moral definition and norms superfluous. In the present state of human awareness, even those few who have a firm and final solution of the question of life for themselves must justify it for others; the mind that has overcome its own doubts does not make the heart indifferent to the errors of others.'

17 'The Divine Names', Dionysius the Areopagite, trans. by C.E. Rolt (SPCK, 1920, See 1979 Reprint), ChapIV, see pp.89-90:

'...All the Attributes of the Good we express in a transcendent manner by negative images'. (See our Chapter I). [8.324]

It may safely be said that Solovyov was quite conscious of this 'transcendent', self-sufficient aspect of the Good,[18] and that he was very familiar with the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite and others who concentrated on that theme. However, as has already been mentioned, he firmly held that because man's capacity to recognise and accept the Good is so limited, because his understanding is so imperfect, he must be assisted in every possible way to recognise the manifestations of the Absolute Good in our created world. Solovyov personally undertook to show that the primary evidence we have for accepting the Absolute Good is the extent of order and unity (as well as the striving towards unity) apparent in our world.[19] He argued (in the 'Lectures on Godmanhood' and elsewhere) that the history of the world and of humanity is not simply an arbitrary sequence of meaningless, undirected events, but, on the contrary, a process indicative of a benevolent, guiding Divine Will that Itself seeks the triumph over Chaos.[20]

Solovyov employed metaphysical arguments and arguments concerning historical development to establish his religious philosophy. We showed in Chapters IV and V that the central issues of moral philosophy especially engaged his attention. Ernest Radlov put forward the view

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18 'Justification of the Good', Preface to the 1st edition, Sob.Soch. VIII: 'The Good itself is not conditioned by anything, it conditions everything and realizes itself through everything'.
(Dobro samo po sebe nichem ne obuslovleno,ono vsë soboy obuslovlivaet i cherez vsë osushchestvlyaetsya.)

19 See our Chapter V, on All-Unity (Vseedinstvo).

20 'Russia and the Universal Church', (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), Book III, Ch.VIII,264-270 (3rd French Edition). Russian trans. Sob.Soch.XI, 311-314. [B.21]

that Solovyov was a moral philosopher above all else:

> 'Anyone who tries to become aware of the life and activity of Solovyov must be struck by the following fact: Solovyov brought only one subject to a conclusion - he finished only one part of his philosophical system, namely ethics... He wrote his moral philosophy earliest of all and succeeded in giving only that a conclusive form. This is not chance, it is explained by the fact that Solovyov was primarily a moralist, and that in this sphere [he] most fully displayed his individuality and in this he invested all the depth of his mysticism.'[21]

The evidence that supports Radlov's view of Solovyov as primarily a moral philosopher is very substantial. Certainly it would be appropriate to examine his statements on 'the justification of the Good' in the light of Radlov's view. First, however, it can immediately be shown that Solovyov's understanding of the philosopher's aims and work supports Radlov's thesis. In Chapter II of his 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' (Filosofskie Nachala Tsel'nogo Znaniya, 1877) he distinguishes between the purely theoretical philosophy of the Schools and, on the other hand, the type of philosophy that is more than purely theory and that includes consideration of

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21 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, X, pp.xxxv-xxxvi.
(Vsyakogo,kto popytaetsya dat' sebe otchёt o zhizni i deyatel'nosti Solovyova, dolzhen porazit' sleduyushchiy fakt:Solovyov dovёl do kontsa tol'ko odno delo:on zakonchil tol'ko odnu chast' svoey filosofskoy sistemy, a imenno etiku... On ranee vsego napisal nravstvennuyu filosofiyu i tol'ko ey uspel pridat' zakonchennuyu formu. Eto ne sluchaynost', eto ob'yasnyaetsya tem,chto Solovyov byl po preimushchestvu moralistom i v etoy sfere polnee vsego proyavil svoyu individual'nost' i v neё umestil vsyu glubinu sveogo mistitsizma).
This viewpoint is expressed in the Biographical Sketch by Radlov that accompanied the 2nd Edition of Solovyov's Collected Works.

the higher aspirations of the human will and of feeling. This latter type of philosophy (which is the type acceptable to Solovyov) has moral and aesthetic significance in addition to its strictly theoretical value.[22] It is important to note that Solovyov reminds his readers of the full meaning of the word 'philosophia': maintaining the distinction between the purely abstract theoretical significance (tol'ko otvlechënno-teoreticheskoe znachenie) of the Schools' philosophy and the 'vital essential' significance (zhivoe sushchestvennoe znachenie) of the second type, Solovyov writes:

> 'If, for the solution of our question we turn to the etymology of the word 'philosophy', then we obtain an answer that favours the vital philosophy [v pol'zu zhivoy filosofii]. Obviously the name 'love of wisdom' [lyubomudrie]... cannot apply to abstract theoretical learning. Wisdom signifies not only completeness of knowledge, but also moral perfection, inward wholeness of the spirit [nravstvennoe sovershenstvo, vnutrennyaya tsel'nost' dukha].'[23]

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22 Sob.Soch,I,291.
(Po pervomu ponyatiyu filosofiya otnositsya isklyuchitel'no k poznavatel'noy sposobnosti cheloveka; po vtoromu ona otvechaet takzhe i vysshim stremleniyam chelovecheskoy voli i vysshim idealam chelovecheskogo chuvstva, imeet takim obrazom ne tol'ko teoreticheskoe, no takzhe nravstvennoe i esteticheskoe znachenie, nakhodyas' vo vnutrennem vzaimodeystvii s sferami tvorchestva i prakticheskoy deyatel'nosti, khotya i razlichayas' ot nikh.)

23 Ibid., 291-292.
(Esli dlya razresheniya nashego voprosa my obratimsya k etimologii slova 'filosofiya', to poluchim otvet v pol'zu zhivoy filosofii. Ochevidno, nazvanie ' lyubomudrie'...ne mozhet primenyat'sya k otvlechënnoy teoreticheskoy nauke. Pod mudrost'yu razumeetsya ne tol'ko polnota znaniya, no i nravstvennoe sovershenstvo, vnutrennyaya tsel'nost' dukha.)

Solovyov's work 'Justification of the Good', published twenty years after 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge',is consistent in affirming the moral aspect of the philosopher's endeavour. On the subject of his own specific aims he writes (in the Preface to the 2nd edition of 'Justification of the Good'):

> 'To establish within the absolute moral principle the internal and full connection between true religion and sound politics - here is the main claim of this moral philosophy.'[24]

In Part V of the Introduction to the same work, Solovyov specifically writes that a clear conception of the very idea of the good, and also moral receptivity (nravstvennaya vospriimchivost'), are prerequisites if the idea of the good in the form of duty[25] is to be a sufficient motivating force in the individual:

> 'For the idea of the good in the form of duty to acquire the force of a sufficient basis or motive, the combination of two factors is necessary: a sufficient clarity and fullness of this very idea in the consciousness and sufficient moral receptivity in the nature of the subject.'[26]

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[24] Sob.Soch.VIII,6.
(Ustanovit' v bezuslovnom nravstvennom nachale vnutrennyuyu i vsestoronnyuyu svyaz' mezhdu istinnoy religiey i zdravoy politikoy - vot glavnoe prityazanie etoy nravstvennoy filosofii).

[25] 'Ideya dobra v forme dolzhnogo' are Solovyov's actual words (Ibid., 44).

[26] Ibid., 44
(Dlya togo,chtoby ideya dobra v forme dolzhnogo poluchila silu dostatochnogo osnovaniya ili motiva, nuzhno soedinenie dvukh faktorov: dostatochnoy yasnosti i polnoty samoy etoy idei v soznanii i dostatochnoy nravstvennoy vospriimchivosti v nature sub'ekta). (cont.)

The foregoing passages are intended to establish Solovyov's concern with man as a 'moral being'. That concern of his plays a critical part in his attempt to 'justify the Good', for that attempt would be deprived of all sense and value if man could not be shown to be a 'moral being', receptive to the idea of the Good. However, Solovyov adhered firmly to the view of man presented in the New Testament, the view which emphasises man's likeness to God, his capacity and desire to receive God's love (to be drawn to God). He saw man as 'fallen', in accordance with the Bible teaching, but as a being that could strive for spiritual perfection. Also, man could desire this goal of perfection not for himself, the individual, alone, but for all created beings.

In Chapter V (see the section on All-Unity) we showed that Solovyov interpreted the relationship of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity largely on the basis of the triad Goodness - Truth - Beauty. Using the analogy of the human individual as a willing, knowing and feeling entity, he wrote (in the 7th Lecture on Godmanhood) that the Persons of the Trinity are willing, knowing and feeling subjects, in each of which one mode of apprehension predominates.[27] That

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It may be noted that in this particular passage Solovyov mentions not only the moral receptivity of man, but also his capacity for awareness of what is good. This term 'awareness' (Soznatel'nost') was highly important for him: it was this faculty which, held Solovyov, raises men from the level of purely animal existence. (See 'Justification of the Good', Sob.Soch,VIII,24,26.)

27 Sob.Soch.III,108.
(...Pripisyvaya kazhdomu iz bozhestvennykh sub'ektov osobennuyu volyu, predstavlenie i chuvstvo, my razumeem tol'ko, chto kazhdiy iz nikh est' volyashchiy, predstavlyayushchiy i chuvstvuyushchiy,t.e. kazhdiy est' sushchiy sub'ekt ili ipostas', sushchnost' zhe ikh voli, predstavleniya i chuvstva est' odna i ta zhe, imenno bozhestvennaya, v silu chego vse tri ipostasi khotyat odnogo i togo zhe, imenno bezuslovnogo blaga, predstavlyayut odno i to zhe, imenno absolyutnuyu istinu i.t.d., - i tol'ko otnoshenie etikh trekh sposobov bytiya u nikh razlichno).

which they will, know and feel is the all.[28] According to Solovyov, one may say that the Absolute Essential Being (Absolyutno-Sushchee) wills the all as Goodness, knows (or represents) it as Truth, and feels it as Beauty.[29]

Solovyov regarded this form of argument as an acceptable means of determining the nature of the relationship between the three Persons of the Trinity. In his book 'Russia and the Universal Church' (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle) he acknowledges that the teaching on the Trinity is given us through revelation: however, he also writes (in the same passage, Book III, Chapter I) that once the truth of God's existence is fully admitted, then the truth of the teaching on the Trinity can be logically deduced.[30] The tendency of Solovyov to seek logical confirmation of revealed teaching caused Lev Shestov to submit the whole Solovyovian philosophy and approach to severe criticism in his lengthy essay 'Thought and Apocalypse' (Umozrenie i Apokalipsis) of 1927. The specific point that concerns us here is this: Solovyov did not accept the view that the Absolute is to be described only in terms of 'freedom from definition' or as 'above' all definitions, categories, limiting attributes, classifications, and so forth. He attributed such a view of the Absolute to Buddhism at

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28 Ibid., 109-110 (Zhelannoe, predstavlyaemoe i chuvstvuemoe absolyutno-sushchim mozhet byt' tol'ko vsë).

29 Ibid., 110.

the beginning of the 4th Lecture on Godmanhood,[31] and consequently described Buddhism as a negative religion. He valued Christianity precisely because it offers a positive view of the Absolute, because the Christian Tradition stresses that the Absolute is <u>plenitude of being</u> (polnota bytiya), Wholeness, completeness (vsetsel'nost').[32] The Good is, for Solovyov, one of the three fundamental aspects by which man may know the Absolute.

Solovyov's concern with 'justification of the Good' is not confined to discussion of the Trinity and the nature of God, but extends to the <u>practical</u> sphere. He took the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth to be the primary Christian goal: the 'Kingdom of God' must supersede the 'kingdom of Caesar', and the precepts of the Gospels must replace the secular values of temporal kingdoms and of self-assertive man. Man's full and free conformity to the will of God in personal moral conduct and in the very ordering of the community would, on Solovyov's account, provide the desired manifestation of the Good in the created order. Solovyov envisaged an eventual spiritual transformation (preobrazovanie) of the created order;[33] indeed, it was

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30 '<u>Russia and the Universal Church</u>' (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle), 3rd Ed., pp.212-213 (See also the Russian trans., Sob.Soch.XI,p.283).

(La trinité des hypostases ou des sujets dans l'unité de la substance absolue est une vérité qui nous est donnée par la révélation divine et la doctrine infaillible de l'Eglise. Nous venons de voir que cette vérité s'impose à la raison et peut être logiquement déduite dès qu'on admet que Dieu <u>est</u> dans le sens positif et complet de ce terme.) [8.2]

31 Op.cit., 48.

32 Ibid., 49.

33 See our Chapter V, the section on <u>Transfiguration</u>.

a hope that particularly animates the pages of his 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', (1882-1884). Adopting a central episode and imagery from the Old Testament for a poem entitled 'Into the Promised Land' (V Zemlyu Obetovannuyu, 1886), the philosopher expressed his deep hope that the community of men (here exemplified by the Jewish nation) will accept Divine guidance.[34] In the poem, as in the Old Testament itself, Yahweh requires moral purity on the part of men.[35] Yahweh promises His guidance, but seeks man's active commitment to the Good - such is the theme of the poem.

Solovyov's affirmation of the Good as an ultimate goal for free and conscious man involves two all-important elements:

a) the notion that humanity, taken as a whole, requires Divine grace and guidance, and that these are made available to man through the Person and the teachings of Christ;

b) the notion that, individually and collectively, man must undertake actively to oppose evil.

Solovyov felt that it was especially necessary to recognise the second of these points, for the reason that man is susceptible to tragic deception in this matter. Solovyov's celebrated apocalyptic tale

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[34] Sob.Soch.XII, 26-27.

[35] Ibid., 27.

'Preserve My testament:
With pure heart and strong soul,
Be true to Me on inclement and on clear days...'

(Moy zavet sokhrani:
Chistym serdtsem i krepkoy dushoy
Bud' Mne veren v nenast'e i v yasnye dni).

'A Short Story about Antichrist' (Kratkaya Povest' ob Antikhriste),[36] which was appended to the work 'Three Conversations' (Tri Razgovora, 1899-1900), conveys this notion very forcefully. The figure who finally proves to be the Antichrist misleads the vast majority of men by assuming the role and activity of an enlightened benefactor of humanity. His far-reaching plans for the reorganisation of human society meet with a very enthusiastic response. The really 'Satanic' nature of his reforms, and indeed of his own person, is not recognised until a very late stage in his 'reign'. Solovyov's fictional 'Antichrist' is shown as unacceptable because his actions are grounded in a self-regarding, self-affirming will.[37] The real welfare of men is of no consequence to him, and his reforms are ultimately sterile or destructive. (Various points of comparison exist between Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor and Solovyov's Antichrist, and scholars have already taken up this subject.)[38]

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[36] Sob.Soch.X,193-218.

[37] Note the words of Czeslaw Milosz on this subject:

> 'Here Solovyov is in complete accord with apocalyptic folklore, which saw the cause of evil in the universe as the rebellion of an angel of great wisdom and beauty: that angel preferred himself to God, Solovyov is one of those pessimistic philosophers who hold that every ego repeats the act of the fallen angel; it cannot be otherwise in the order of Nature except through the intervention of divine grace.'

'Science Fiction and the Coming of Antichrist' (1971), p.25 from 'Emperor of the Earth: Modes of Eccentric Vision', Essays by C. Milosz, University of California Press, 1977, pp.15-31. [B271]

[38] 'Dostoevsky and Vladimir Solovyov: [their] Grand Inquisitor and Antichrist', (Dostoevskiy i Vladimir Solovyov: Velikiy Inkvizitor i Antikhrist), N. Prutskov, 'Russkaya Literatura 1870-1890 godov', (Sbornik 5), Sverdlovsk, 1973, pp.51-78. [B180]

In Chapter IX we shall consider the preoccupation with apocalypse and conflict that marked the last decade of the philosopher's life, especially the years 1898 to 1900. We there present an account of the way Solovyov sought to establish a historical (and symbolical) parallel between the Byzantine Empire which fell to the Muslims in 1453 and the Russian Empire of the late 19th Century. He was deeply disturbed by the idea that Russia, which he viewed as the eminent guardian of authentic Christian culture and values (especially in his writings of 1880 to 1890), might suffer defeat at the hands of a non-Christian people from the East. With increasing intensity and dread, he anticipated a major confrontation between Christian and non-Christian peoples: his famous poem of 1894, '<u>Panmongolism</u>', which warns of this stark prospect, was intended to incite Russians to avert their own 'fall'. In the poem itself, and in his essay '<u>Byzantinism and Russia</u>' (Vizantizm i Rossiya, 1896), Solovyov urged his Russian readers to forego their complacent ways, to recognise the danger they faced (both physical and moral), and finally, actively to defend Christian values, exposing the various forms of falsehood which the Byzantines had allowed to undermine their society.

Solovyov's fears regarding this major conflict find their expression in his last major work, '<u>Three Conversations</u>'. In his preface he describes the content of the book as 'these "conversations" about evil, about the military and the non-violent struggle against it' (eti "razgovory" o zle, o voennoy i mirnoy bor'be s nim).[39] He accepted that cases exist when war is the single, effective means to

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[39] Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, X, p.88.

oppose and eradicate evil. For this reason Solovyov does not scorn the 'imperfect' means that the general and the diplomat use in the defence of human values:

> 'Only the very principle of evil and falsehood is absolutely wrong, but not those means of struggle with [evil] such as the soldier's sword or the diplomat's pen...'[40]

This position is fundamentally different from the position which Lev Tolstoy adopted in the years after his spiritual crisis and conversion. Both Tolstoy and Solovyov had a realistic understanding of men's capacity for evil and of all the obstacles which prevented them from living in harmony. Both men had, at some point in their life, been profoundly attracted to the pessimism of Schopenhauer, but each, in his turn, sought Christian solutions. The ethical element in Christian teaching held paramount importance for Tolstoy and Solovyov; they both believed that the critical impulse for spiritual regeneration comes from within man,[41] from a 'change of heart' and an increased awareness of the need for a 'break' with one's former sinful ways. Both men believed that this interior revolution in one's feelings and perceptions profoundly alters the individual's relations to the world about him. Tolstoy and Solovyov also share common ground when they write

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40 Ibid. (Bezuslovno nepravo tol'ko samo nachalo zla i lzhi, a ne takie sposoby bor'by s nim, kak mech voina ili pero diplomata).

41 At the same time Solovyov drew attention to the danger of taking a purely subjective morality as a final goal and of denying the various historical and collective manifestations of the Good (...otritsanie vsekh istoricheskikh i sobiratel'nykh proyavleniy i form dobra): 'Justification of the Good', Preface to the 1st edition, Sob.Soch.VIII,17. See also pp.18-20.

that the Christian bears responsibility for improving the community of which he is a member, and both men were highly critical of attempts to evade that responsibility.[42]

The differences between the religious thought of Tolstoy and of Solovyov were, in certain respects, great and irreconcilable. As regards the doctrinal content of Christianity, they were separated by Tolstoy's inability to accept the Resurrection of Christ.[43] But aside from this critical difference, there were also two central matters about which these men held opposing and mutually exclusive views. These were, firstly, the question where to assign blame for the evils of our world; secondly, the question of which is the effective and morally acceptable means to combat evil.

Briefly, it may be said that Tolstoy wanted to re-establish the Gospel precepts as the central, guiding code for the individual and society, but he concluded that the traditionally accepted representatives of authority in society, the high-ranking clergy, judiciary, and so forth, belied the very code they formally acknowledge, through their acquisition of wealth, rank and power. He consequently disputed the worth of those institutions (the Church, the law-courts, military

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[42] See our Chapter VIII.

[43] Pis'ma III, 38-42 (A letter from Vladimir Solovyov to Lev Tolstoy, 1894).

Note also F.M. Dostoevsky's letter to N.P. Peterson (March 1878) in which he writes of his own and Solovyov's belief in a real, literal personal resurrection of men, in a resurrection that will take place here on earth:

> 'Preduprezhdayu ,chto my zdes', t.e. ya i Solovyov po krayney mere verim v voskresenie real'noe, bukval'noe, lichnoe i v to, chto ono sbudetsya na zemle.'
>
> F.M. Dostoevsky, Letters, Vol.IV, p.10 (Moscow 1959 ed.)

tribunals etc.) which regulate men's affairs, and he advocated that individuals who were truly preoccupied with their spiritual development should withhold their support from these traditionally respected, but actually corrupt institutions.

Solovyov viewed this question entirely differently. He was as aware as Tolstoy was of the great discrepancy between the ideal conditions that would best suit man's needs and the actual, unsatisfying conditions of his present life. Solovyov especially drew attention to that discrepancy whenever he wrote of 'that which is' (to,chto est') and 'that which ought to be' (to,chto dolzhno byt'). But he believed that Christian teaching provides the means to recognise the ideal goal (the summum bonum) and the way (put') to attain it. It was his view that the various institutions through which we organise our lives and social relations are, plainly, imperfect, but he did not consider Tolstoy's kind of absolute denial of their worth to be appropriate.[44] He believed it was man's duty to use the imperfect means at his disposal in realizing a better world, a world that conforms more truly to the Gospels' depiction of 'the Kingdom of God'.

Solovyov did not regard the traditional representatives of authority in society as being above criticism: whereas he accepted the institution of monarchic rule, he deplored the misuse of temporal power -

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[44] The Christian dictum 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's' would suggest that absolute denial of the worth of temporal, secular institutions in the name of 'the things that are God's is mistaken. Christ affirmed the primacy of the spiritual kingdom, but that affirmation did not require believers to condemn or discard the temporal kingdoms and those invested with temporal power.

(Luke 20,xxv).

especially when monarchs threatened the autonomy of the Church. He was equally prepared to criticise the clergy for undue interference in temporal matters (or for complete subservience to the monarch). His ambitious attempts to inaugurate a theocratic form of government were designed to restore Church-State relations to a sound basis, where each of these institutions is free and where each has effective charge of its own affairs. Solovyov's article '<u>On the Clerical Power in Russia</u>' (O Dukhovnoy Vlasti v Rossii),[45] written in 1881, provides a noteworthy instance of his outspoken criticism of the Church. In that article Solovyov acknowledges that the Russian Church has achieved great moral stature at times, and that it really led society.[46] On the other hand, he notes the tendency of the clergy to become a submissive partner of the tsars, and he deplores that betrayal of its proper calling.[47]

Solovyov's acceptance of the <u>imperfection</u> of the Church, and

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45 Sob.Soch.III,227-242.

46 Ibid., 230

'There was a time when the clerical power in Russia, although poor in active forces, represented the Christian principle in society, and, true to its calling, possessed a generally acknowledged moral authority.'

(Bylo vremya,kogda dukhovnaya vlast' v Rossii, khotya i skudnaya deyatel'nymi silami, predstavlyala,odnako, khristianskoe nachalo v obshchestve i, vernaya svoemu prizvaniyu, obladala obshche-priznannym nravstvennym avtoritetom).

47 Ibid., 236.

'First, under Nikon, it [the Russian hierarchy of the Church] was drawn by the <u>state crown</u>, then it firmly grasped the <u>state sword</u>, and finally it was obliged to put on the <u>state uniform.</u>'

(Snachala, pri Nikone, ona tyanulas' za <u>gosudarstvennoy koronoy</u>, potom krepko skhvatilas' za <u>mech gosudarstvenniy</u>, i nakonets prinuzhdena byla nadet' <u>gosudarstvenniy mundir</u>.)

(Solovyov's italics)

the weakness of its representatives, accords with the traditional Christian teaching on the 'visible' Church here on earth and the 'invisible', heavenly and perfect Church. Solovyov's view of the seriously erring Russian clergy, presented in '<u>On the Clerical Power in Russia</u>', may be set next to his view of the Church given in his Introduction to '<u>The History and Future of Theocracy</u>'.[48] - the contrast between these passages is certainly illuminating. In the latter we see the Church shown in terms of a unanimous community of believers, a Church that has <u>attained</u> harmony.

From the foregoing pages it is possible to see the opposing views of Tolstoy and Solovyov on the institutions regulating human society. The contrast is succinctly expressed by N. Vasil'ev, at the beginning of his perspective article comparing their approaches:

> 'In all forms of social life, in government, law etc., Solovyov sees the manifestation of the Good and therefore, in contrast to Tolstoy [he] justifies them, though their point of departure is the same.'[49]

The important question of man's proper moral response to evil led Tolstoy and Solovyov to entirely different and mutually opposed conclusions. Both men accepted that Christ proclaimed 'the Kingdom of God' and sought to eradicate evil, but Solovyov responded very critically to Tolstoy's uncompromising and <u>literal</u> interpretation of

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48 Sob.Soch.IV, 260-261.

49 '<u>Logical and Historical Methods in Ethics</u>', (Logicheskiy i Istoricheskiy Metody v Etike), N. Vasil'ev, University of Kazan, n/d, (pre-1920's). [illegible]

(Vo vsekh formakh obshchestvennoy zhizni,v gosudarstve,prave i.t.d, Solovyov vidit proyavlenie Dobra i potomu v protivnost' Tolstomu opravdyvaet ikh,khotya iskhodnaya tochka ikh obshchaya.)

Christ's words on 'turning the other cheek',[50] Solovyov's polemic against the central Tolstoyan doctrine of 'non-resistance to evil' (neprotivlenie zlu), which we find in 'Three Conversations', was intended to establish that this doctrine has no proper Christian basis.

Tolstoy sought to honour the fundamental Christian commandment 'Thou shalt not kill', and to honour it both in spirit and in the letter he deemed it right to condemn all forms of killing. In practice he persuaded men to refuse military conscription, holding that it is better for Christians to suffer imprisonment for this refusal to kill than to submit to the state's immoral, anti-Christian legislation. (His defence of the pacifist religious sect called the 'Dukhobors' was inspired by this belief in the right of religious believers not to cooperate with a state that enforces immoral laws, laws violating the absolute commandment not to kill.) In Solovyov's view, adherence to this uncompromising stance would on some occasions cause believers to condone evil actions that could be prevented through active opposition on the part of someone truly concerned and compassionate.[51] Solovyov held that in certain extreme instances the Good could be better served by actively opposing evil than by non-resistance. Furthermore, he personally felt obliged to draw attention to the weaknesses of the Tolstoyan teaching; he regarded it as deceptive, harmful, and opposed to the spirit of the New Testament.[52]

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50 Matt,5,xxxix.

51 Sob.Soch.X, 99-100, 102-104, 107 et al.

52 Ibid., 84-85.
'The true task of the polemic here is not the refutation of an invalid religion, but the exposure of a real deception.'
(Istinnaya zadacha polemiki zdes' - ne oproverzhenie mnimoy religii, a obnaruzhenie deystvitel'nogo obmana.) p.85.

ii) Solovyov's view of 'mystical apprehension', (misticheskoe vospriyatie)

We explained in Chapter IV that at the very beginning of his scholarly career Solovyov addressed himself to the central problems of epistemology. He undertook a detailed evaluation of the claims presented in the major Empiricist and Rationalist accounts of human knowledge. He recognised the influence and importance of Empiricism and of Rationalism in Western Europe, and his extensive examination of those directions in philosophy is provided in three of his earliest works. These are: 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy', (Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii, 1874), 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge', (Filosofskie Nachala Tsel'nogo Znaniya, 1877), and 'A Critique of Abstract Principles', (Kritika Otvlechennykh Nachal, 1877-1880). As we showed in Chapter IV, Solovyov brought to light the defects of the Empiricist and the Rationalist accounts of human knowledge. In 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy', the Master's Thesis that won him very extensive scholarly recognition, he criticised the exclusive claims of both Schools and demonstrated the untenable nature of their conclusions. On Solovyov's account, the Empiricists are led to a plain 'reductio ad absurdum', for their premises and following argument oblige them to assert that there is sensation without a specific content and without a sensing subject. Likewise, the premises and following argument of the consistent Rationalist lead him to a philosophically untenable position, for he is obliged to defend the notion of pure thought without specific content and without a thinking subject.[53]

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[53] Sob.Soch.I.

'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' begins with an important statement of Solovyov's belief that exclusively theoretical philosophy now belongs to the past.[54] He writes, also, that this conviction is significantly different from the normal negative attitude towards philosophy that may be found in Positivism, for it gives equal weight to speculative philosophy (metaphysics) and to the Empiricist direction of philosophy.[55]

In this work the author confines himself almost entirely to criticism of the positions adopted by various West European schools and individual philosophers. He shows, for instance, that materialism actually (but unwittingly) goes beyond the confines of the empirical, for it assigns absolute significance to empirical matter (empiricheskoe veshchestvo), and this is a procedure which conflicts with the fundamental premise of materialism.[56] A further brief example of Solovyov's

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[54] Ibid., 27.

[55] Ibid. (Eto ubezhdenie otlichaetsya ot obyknovennogo otritsatel'nogo otnosheniya k filosofii,sistematicheskoe vyrazhenie kotorogo my nakhodim v tak nazyvaemom pozitivizme,- otlichaetsya eto moë ubezhdenie , vo-pervykh, tem, chto odinakovo otnositsya k umozritel'nomu napravleniyu filosofii - t.e. k tomu,chto pozitivisty nazyvayut metafizikoy - tak ravno i k napravleniyu empiricheskomu - t.e. k tomu, kotoroe v samom pozitivizme nakhodit svoë poslednee i polneyshee vyrazhenie.)

(Solovyov's italics)

[56] Ibid., 139. (Sushchnost' zhe materializma sostoit v tom,chto , s odnoy storony, prinimaetsya za real'noe pervonachalo nechto empiricheski dannoe (veshchestvo),- no tak kak chisto empiricheskoe znachenie etogo dannogo esche ne soznano,to s drugoy storony etomu empiricheskomu veshchestvu pripisyvaetsya znachenie bezuslovnoy i vseobshchey sushchnosti, chto vykhodit uzhe iz predelov empirii, imeyushchey delo tol'ko s dannoy chastnoy deystvitel'nost'yu , a nikak ne s vseobshchimi sushchnostyami.)

(Solovyov's italics)

critical treatment of European philosophies may be seen where he discusses the rejection of metaphysics by both main streams of philosophical thought in Europe. He writes that their rejection of metaphysics originates in the particular limitation and one-sidedness of <u>those</u> streams of thought. This, he says, is clearly demonstrated by the fact that those philosophers who attempt to overcome that 'one-sidedness' (particularly Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann) come to <u>reinstate</u> metaphysics in their own systems.[57]

The concluding words of '<u>The Crisis of Western Philosophy</u>' merit special attention: the young philosopher (21 years old when he wrote the work) felt confident enough to assert, on the basis of his critique and of his very extensive reading in theology, that the findings of Western philosophical thought, which it expresses in the form of <u>rational knowledge</u>, prove to be those same truths which theological teachings of the Christian East have affirmed. Eastern theologians express those truths through <u>faith</u> and <u>spiritual contemplation</u> (dukhovnoe sozertsanie).[58] This emphatic and positive conclusion

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[57] Ibid., 140.
(...My videli,chto otritsanie metafiziki, prisushchee oboim napravleniyam zapadnoy filosofii, proiskhodit iz sobstvennoy ogranichennosti i odnostoronnosti etikh napravleniy, i potomu filosofskie ucheniya, kotorye pytayutsya snyat' etu ogranichennost', neobkhodimo vosstanovlyayut metafiziku.. kak my eto i vidim v sistemakh Schopenhauera i v osobennosti Hartmanna.)

[58] Ibid., 150.
(...I tut okazyvaetsya, chto eti poslednie neobkhodimye rezul'taty <u>zapadnogo</u> filosofskogo razvitiya utverzhdayut, v forme <u>ratsional'nogo poznaniya</u>, <u>te samye</u> istiny,kotorye v forme <u>very</u> i dukhovnogo <u>sozertsaniya</u> utverzhdalis' velikimi teologicheskimi ucheniyami <u>Vostoka</u> - otchasti drevnego, a v osobennosti khristianskogo.) (Solovyov's italics)
In this context see also the 1st and 2nd Lectures on Godmanhood, where the philosopher writes that the full development of pessimism and of other predominantly negative philosophies in Western Europe allows <u>other</u> peoples to appreciate the defects of the Western tradition of thought and to pursue more fruitful lines of enquiry. (Sob.Soch.III,pp.14-15)

pointed to the kind of study undertaken by Solovyov in subsequent works, especially in 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' and in 'A Critique of Abstract Principles'. As stated in our chapters II and IV, Solovyov aimed to set out the major lines for a synthesis of theology, philosophy and science. He was convinced that mysticism plays a role of prime importance in this synthesis, and therefore he was especially anxious to delineate the distinguishing features of mystical apprehension.

Solovyov affirms the high status of mysticism as a form of knowledge in Chapter II of 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge':

> 'Mysticism, according to its absolute character, has primary significance, defining the supreme principle and the ultimate goal of philosophical knowledge; empiricism, according to its material character, serves as the external basis and at the same time as the final application or realization of higher principles, and finally, the rational, specifically philosophical element, according to its chiefly formal character, appears as the intermediary or the general link of the whole system.'[59]

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[59] Sob.Soch.I,306.

(Mystitsizm po svoemu absolyutnomu kharakteru imeet pervenstvuyushchee znachenie, opredelyaya verkhovnoe nachalo i poslednyuyu tsel' filosofskogo znaniya; empirizm po svoemu material'nomu kharakteru sluzhit vneshnim bazisom i vmeste s tem kraynim primeneniem ili realizatsiey vysshikh nachal,i, nakonets, ratsionalisticheskiy, sobstvenno filosofskiy element po svoemu preimushchestvenno formal'nomu kharakteru yavlyaetsya kak posredstvo ili obshchaya svyaz' vsey sistemy.)

Here one may see very clearly the wide frame of reference for Solovyov's discussion of mysticism and mystical apprehension. His final claim in 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy', namely that West European philosophy led eventually to recognition of the same truths apprehended by theologians of the Christian East (see above), would not have been accorded serious consideration by the Positivists if Solovyov had neglected to examine the fundamental premises of Empiricism at the outset. Comte's Positivism exerted an extraordinarily deep influence on intellectual thought, particularly in Russia during the 1860's and 1870's. In 1898 Solovyov himself looked back on that period, and he called this preoccupation with Positivism a form of idolatry (idolopoklonstvo)[60] which it was necessary to check. S.M. Lukyanov notes that a slight reaction against the dominance of Positivist ideas had begun in Russian universities,[61] and this was marked by the publication of one or two critical studies of the Positivist viewpoint. These books appeared just ahead of Solovyov's Master's Thesis (1874), but it was the latter work which represented a serious critical questioning of the bases of the whole doctrine, and which created a significant impact in educated circles.

On the basis of the foregoing observations it would be proper to say that Solovyov's enquiry into the nature and validity of mystical apprehension (misticheskoe vospriyatie), though so greatly shaped

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60 Sob.Soch.IX, 172 'The Idea of Humanity according to Auguste Comte', (Memorial lecture to mark the 100th anniversary of Comte's birth).

61 Lukyanov specifically mentions a competent critical study of Positivism written by V.Ya.Tsinger (1836-1907), of the University of Moscow. 'On Vl.S.Solovyov in his Young Years', (O Vl.S.Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody), S.M. Lukyanov, Vol.I,pp.209-210. [B.45]

by his reading in Patristic theology and Cabbalistic literature, cannot be divorced from the contemporary scholarly discussion of Empiricism, Rationalism and Positivism. Leading Slavophiles such as Alexey Khomyakov had devoted great attention to studying the predominant trends in West European thought, and this served them in their attempts to delineate the distinctive features of Slav and Orthodox thought. Solovyov followed their example of submitting West European ideas to serious critical study, and the content and conclusions of his Master's Thesis indeed supported the fundamental Slavophile analysis.

In 'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' (Chapter II) we find discussion regarding the possibility of there being any true knowledge. Referring to his earlier findings contained in his Master's Thesis, Solovyov reminds us of the absurd and untenable conclusions offered by consistent Empiricism and Rationalism.[62] One is confronted with two choices, writes Solovyov. Given the untenability of the Empiricist and Rationalist claims about knowledge,

> '...one must generally deny any true knowledge and adopt the viewpoint of absolute scepticism, or else one must admit that the sought-after [factor] of philosophy is contained neither in the real being

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[62] Sob.Soch.I,305.

> '...Thus, mystical knowledge is essential for philosophy, since without it philosophy, in consistent Empiricism and consistent Rationalism, leads to absurdity (in either case)'.
> (Itak,misticheskoe znanie neobkhodimo dlya filosofii, tak kak pomimo ego ona v posledovatel'nom empirizme i v posledovatel'nom ratsionalizme odinakovo prikhodit k absurdu.)

> of the external world, nor in the ideal being of of our reason, that it is known neither by the way of the empirical, nor by the way of purely rational thought.'[63]

This choice of alternatives eventually proves to be a choice between absolute <u>scepticism</u> and the admission that <u>mysticism</u> may offer the satisfactory solution to the question of 'true knowledge'.

Solovyov asserts that mystical philosophy permits man to recognise he is <u>not</u> purely idea (predstavlenie) or being (bytie); he is, indeed <u>greater</u> than these, and he may, consequently, learn of essential being (sushchee).[64] Consistent with his whole criticism of abstract philosophy and his attempt to evolve a 'vital' philosophy, Solovyov writes:

> 'The authentic truth, complete and vital, itself contains its own reality and its own reason, and it transmits these to all else [soobshchaet ikh vsemu ostal'nomu]. In accordance with this, the subject of mystical philosophy is not the world of phenomena, brought back to our sensations, nor the world of ideas, brought back to our thoughts, but the vital reality of beings in their internal

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63 Ibid., 303
(...Dolzhno ili otkazat'sya voobshche ot istinnogo poznaniya i stat' na tochku zreniya bezuslovnogo skeptitsizma, ili zhe dolzhno priznat',chto iskomoe filosofii ne zaklyuchaetsya ni v real'nom bytii vneshnego mira, ni v ideal'nom bytii nashego razuma, chto ono ne poznaetsya ni putem empirii, ni putem chisto-ratsional'nogo myshleniya.)

64 Ibid., 305.
(...Protiv skepticheskogo utverzhdeniya,chto chelovek nichego ne mozhet znat', krome predstavleniya, ona [misticheskaya filosofiya] ukazyvaet na to,chto chelovek sam est' bolee chem predstavlenie ili bytie i chto, takim obrazom, dazhe ne vykhodya iz samogo sebya, on mozhet znat' o sushchem.)

living relations; this philosophy is concerned not with the external order of phenomena, but with the internal order of beings and their life, which is defined by their relationship with the primoridial being.'[65]

iii) Solovyov's typological classification of religions

Solovyov's interest in the typological classification of religions is clearly apparent in his very first piece of writing to be published, that is, in the article 'The Mythological Process in Ancient Paganism',(Mifologicheskiy Protsess v Drevnem Yazychestve).[66] Other works that merit examination in this context are: 'Lectures on Godmanhood' (Chteniya o Bogochelovechestve, 1877-1881), 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' (Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika, 1883), 'Judaism and the Christian Question',(Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros, 1884), 'The History and Future of Theocracy', (Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii, 1885-1887), 'The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it',(Talmud, i Noveyshaya Polemicheskaya Literatura o nëm, 1886), 'China and Europe',(Kitay i Evropa, 1890), and 'Byzantinism and Russia', (Vizantizm i Rossiya, 1896).

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65 Ibid., 304.
(Nastoyashchaya zhe istina, tsel'naya i zhivaya, sama v sebe zaklyuchaet i svoyu deystvitel'nost' i svoyu razumnost' i soobshchaet ikh vsemu ostal'nomu. Soglasno s etim predmet misticheskoy filosofii est' ne mir yavleniy, svodimykh k nashim oshchushcheniyam, i ne mir idey, svodimykh k nashim myslyam, a zhivaya deystvitel'nost' sushchestv v ikh vnutrennikh zhiznennykh otnosheniyakh; eta filosofiya zanimaetsya ne vneshnim poryadkom yavleniy, a vnutrennim poryadkom sushchestv i ikh zhizni, kotoriy opredelyaetsya ikh otnosheniem k sush-chestvu pervonachal'nomu.)

66 Sob.Soch.I,1-26. First published in 'The Orthodox Review' (Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie), 1873, No.11, pp.635-665.

The scheme according to which Solovyov eventually classified the world's religions is itself an interesting one. The philosopher's writings on the subject are highly informative, and it may be seen from the very opening pages of his 'The Mythological Process in Ancient Paganism' that he was extremely well acquainted with the specialist literature on the history and development of religion. Furthermore, the young Solovyov was aware of contemporary discussion and controversies in his field: he assimilated the ideas of preceding scholars and, where necessary, submitted their conclusions to criticism.[67] It is plain that in this very first published article Solovyov sought to deepen his readers' understanding of the mythological process, partly through avoiding the over-simplification of previous accounts,[68] and also - on the positive side - by introducing fresh material for examination and elaboration. He himself appreciated the work done on this subject by Schelling and by Khomyakov, and he felt that contemporary scholarly discussion of the mythological process would benefit from a closer reading of their research.[69] Solovyov considered the religious belief of primitive man to be a singularly important subject for study,[70] and he sought to contribute a satisfactory account of the central stages in the development of early (pre-historical) religious belief.

> 'Having mentioned, with due gratitude, the works of these two little appreciated, solitary thinkers [i.e. Schelling and Khomyakov] we attempt, not

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67 Ibid., 1-3.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., 3-5.

70 Ibid., 1.

> without their help, to indicate the general course of ancient religious development in its main phases.'[71]

Consideration of Solovyov's classification of religions generally, (not just of the ancient beliefs studied in the above article), aids evaluation of his religious system and of his method. The latter requires quite extensive treatment, and we return to the philosopher's methodology in Chapters VIII and IX, although the present section of this Chapter will establish some points about that methodology. (This is in the very nature of the subject under discussion).

Certain questions must figure as centrally important in the study of religion: the religious philosopher needs to determine whether or not the essential nature of the Absolute Divine Being is in any sense manifest or intelligible to men. It must be asked whether or not that Absolute Divine Being enters into any direct contact or relationship with beings in the phenomenal order of existence. (This is the crucial question about the transcendence and/or immanence of God in relation to the phenomenal order). If indeed the notion of direct contact or relationship can be accepted, then the religious philosopher must ascertain how the truth concerning God's relationship to the phenomenal, natural order may best be conveyed to men. Fourthly, it will be necessary for him to judge whether the Absolute Being is benevolent in His intentions and in His actions towards creaturely

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[71] Ibid., 5
(Upomyanuv s dolzhnoy priznatel'nost'yu o trudakh etikh dvukh malo otsenennykh, odinokikh mysliteley, postaraemsya ne bez ikh pomoshchi ukazat' obshchiy khod drevnego religioznogo razvitiya v glavnykh ego momentakh.)

beings, and whether He provides for human freedom or subjects man to necessary laws.

We have traced Solovyov's discussion of these central matters at some length (especially in Chapter V). That account of his views may stand as it is; the present discussion does not alter or diminish the import of the foregoing material. We have already had occasion to mention Solovyov's criticism of Deism and Pantheism because of their exclusive assertion of God's transcendence and His immanence respectively (Chapter IV); similarly, we considered Solovyov's criticism of absolute dualism, especially his critical view of the Islāmic insistence on the transcendence of God, (Chapter IV). A brief examination of Solovyov's first published article will show the importance he attached to the task of correctly classifying the world's religions.

'The Mythological Process in Ancient Paganism' is a work that not only traces the development of religious ideas and practices, but also focuses upon the classification of religions according to their predominant characteristics. The article is devoted to a brief, but quite detailed examination of the Vedic literature[72] of India. The author's choice was dictated by the special significance of the Vedic religion as the accepted prototype for the Aryan religions in general.

> 'The Vedic religion, as has been proved by the investigations of comparative scientific philology, is essentially identical to the primordial religions

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[72] Foremost attention is paid to Vedic hymns addressed to the figure of Varuna, See Sob.Soch.I,7-9.

of all other Indo-European peoples - Iranian, Hellenic, Latin, Celts, Germans, of Liths, and the Slavs - so without any great mistake it is possible to accept the Vedas as a monument of the primordial general Aryan religion.'[73]

Solovyov cites the eminent Orientalist Max Müller's description of the Vedic religion as one where the 'deities' have no fixed, distinctly defined attributes.[74] The Vedic deities tend to be viewed as the various facets of one (supreme) deity.[75] Solovyov then presents the problematic choice we must make when considering the nature of the Vedic deities. Given that the Vedic religion cannot be accepted as the absolutely primordial religion, we are obliged to decide whether the Vedas constitute a monotheistic development of an earlier polytheism, or whether, on the contrary, they themselves represent the breaking down into multiple forms of an original monotheism?[76]

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[73] Ibid.
(Vediyskaya religiya, kak eto dokazano issledovaniyami sravnitel'noy nauchnoy filologii, sushchestvenno tozhdestvenna s pervonachal'nymi religiyami vsekh drugikh indo-evropeyskikh narodov - irantsev,ellinov, latinyan, kel'tov, germantsev, litvy i slavyan - tak chto bez bol'shoy oshibki mozhno prinimat' Vedy za pamyatnik pervonachal'noy obshcheariyskoy religii.)

[74] Ibid., 5-6.

[75] Ibid., 6.
(Sushchestvuet soznanie,chto vse bogi sut' lish' razlichnye formy, proyavleniya ili attributy odnogo bozhestva.)

[76] Ibid., 6-7.
(Tut dolzhen neobkhodimo vozniknut' vopros: est' li vediyskaya religiya vyrabatyvayushchiysya sinteticheski iz pervonachal'nogo mnogobozhiya monoteizm, ili zhe, naprotiv, predstavlyaet ona raspadenie pervonachal'nogo edinstva religioznogo soznaniya na mnozhestvennost' form?)

From a discussion of the specially high status of the deity Varuna and his inaccessible nature (p.10), Solovyov moves on to explain that the deity can be known only by his external manifestations in the visible world.[77] This article traces the increasing externalisation that takes place in the mythic accounts of deities and their actions. A range of 'heavenly' deities in the different religions (Indian, Egyptian, Hellenic, etc.) yield to a succession of 'sun' deities. The process is not merely one of externalisation, but also of concretisation (p.18).[78] The 'sun' deities are also to be distinguished from the purely heavenly deities by their ability or their need to descend to earth sometimes (as 'avatars' in some cases, for the welfare of humanity.) (p.19). They are depicted as 'intermediaries' between heaven and earth.

Even this brief summary of Solovyov's argument shows sufficiently clearly his concern with the varying forms which men's conceptions of divinity take.[79] Judaic religious conceptions had particular significance for Solovyov (see Chapter V), as his writings on theocracy and

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[77] Ibid., 10.
(Nedostupno vnutrenno, bozhestvo stanovitsyá poznavaemym tol'ko v svoem vneshnem deystvii, ili proyavlenii - v vidimom mire, tak chto eto vneshnee proyavlenie stanovitsya neobkhodimost'yu dlya religioznogo soznaniya, kotoroe dolzhno myslit' bozhestvo neobkhodimo proyavlyayushchimsya vo vne, ibo bez etogo vneshnego proyavleniya bozhestvo sovsem ischezaet dlya soznaniya v dannom ego sostoyanii.) See further p.10.

[78] Ibid., 18.
(V samom dele, yavleniya prirody, soedinennye s solntsem, predstavlyayutsya gorazdo bolee opredelennymi, svyazannymi vneshnim zakonom neobkhodimosti, oni sovershayutsya pravil'no, periodichno, bez vsyakoy proizvol'nosti.... V solntse Bog svyazan opredelennoy veshch'yu, konkretnym predmetom.)

[79] See also 'Understanding about God' (Ponyatie o Boge, 1897), Sob. Soch. IX, 3-29.

other subjects show. Solovyov's own close affinity with Jewish spirituality allowed him to present the Jewish standpoint in an exceptionally lucid way. For this reason it may be helpful to examine Solovyov's typological description of Judaism first of all, and then the other important non-Christian faiths.

In the preface to his study of Judaism (Judaism and the Christian Question)Solovyov admits that his subject matter is complex, that it requires special explanation.[80] However, while Judaism is a complex phenomenon that poses questions regarding religion, race and nationhood and the mutual inter-relation of these, one may relatively quickly discern which features of Judaism assumed greatest importance for Solovyov. His understanding of religion is deeply marked by the notion that one people who played an active role in man's earliest recorded history could be shown to have a unique and spiritually significant collective destiny. The destiny of this people, the Jews, was not solely apparent to non-Jews, but was experienced by themselves as distinct, as a reality which defined their responses, values and way of life. In Solovyov's view, theirs was a 'sacral' (non-secular) history, and one of the keys to the understanding of this people was their long and remarkable adherence to their God Yahweh.[81] The themes of divine guidance, leadership by morally worthy prophets, of aspirations, recurrent instances of weakness and 'falling away' from the path to the deeply desired homeland and goal - all these mark the Scriptural and historical records of the life of the Jews.

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80 Sob.Soch.IV,141 (Trudno ponyat' iudeystvo potomu,chto te tri velikie fakta,s kotoroy svyazany ego sud'by, ne predstavlyayutsya kak chto-nibud' prostoe, estestvennoe,samo po sebe ponyatnoe. Oni nuzhdayutsya v osobom i slozhnom ob'yasnenii.)

81 See Solovyov's poem on this theme, 'Into the Promised Land' (V Zemlyu Obetovannuyu), Sob.Soch.XII,26-27 .

Solovyov underlines the point that the special designation of the Jewish people as the 'chosen people of God' was not an arbitrary matter.[82] The profound suitability of the ancient Jewish community depicted in the Old Testament as an instrument of God's will was evident in the nature of their religious faith,[83] and was further enhanced by their possession of certain qualities of national character. Critically important was the lead that the Jews gave other men in conceiving of the Absolute Divine Being primarily as personal, as a Being with Whom men might enter into a relationship. Even before the true God was directly revealed to Abraham, Abraham himself had felt deeply dissatisfied with the veneration of elemental and demonic forces in nature:

> 'The forefather [of the Jews] Abraham, living among heathens and having not yet received any direct revelation of the true God, was not satisfied with and was oppressed by the cult of imaginary gods, so appealing to all nations. Service to elemental and demonic forces of nature was alien to the Jewish soul. The founder of Israel could not believe in that which is lower than man, he sought a personal and moral God, in Whom it would not be humiliating for man to believe...'[84]

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82 Op.cit., 142.
(Poskol'ku naznachenie iskhodit ot Boga,ono est' delo bezuslovnoy svobody. No svobodu Bozhestvennuyu ne dolzhno myslit' napodobie chelovecheskogo proizvola ili pristrastiya...V natsional'nom kharaktere evreev dolzhny zaklyuchat'sya usloviya dlya ikh izbraniya.)
(Solovyov's italics)
See our Chapter V, Note 8.

83 Sob.Soch.IV, 142-150.

84 Ibid., 144
(Praotets Avraam,zhivya sredi yazychnikov i eshche ne poluchiv pryamogo otkroveniya istinnogo Boga, ne udovletvoryalsya i tyagotilsya kul'tom mnimykh bogov,stol' privlekatel'nykh dlya vsekh naradov. (cont.)

The various peoples that surrounded the Jews at the time of Abraham were preoccupied with magical rites or nature worship, while the people of Israel - under his leadership - renounced these as unsatisfactory, as unworthy of men. Solovyov writes that the people of Israel earned special consideration among the nations of the world:

> 'Having set themselves apart from paganism and by their own faith raised themselves above the Chaldean magic and the Egyptian wisdom, the founders and leaders of the Jews became worthy of Divine selection.'[85]

This moral eminence was affirmed by the setting up of a Covenant between God and His chosen people; this form of agreement between God and man is the very basis of the Jewish religion, as Solovyov observes.[86] In treating this central ground of Jewish religious beliefs, Solovyov adhered to standard interpretations of Old Testament history. He also accepted the central Christian notion that Christ's 'new' testament was founded upon mercy and that it superseded the Judaic concern with sacrifice,[87] (See Matt.12,vii).

The distinctive feature of Solovyov's account is his extensive treatment of Jewish religious perception in the light of certain prominent traits in the national character. We shall refer to these

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Sluzhenie stikhiynym i demonicheskim silam prirody bylo protivno evreyskoy dushe. Rodonachal'nik Izrailya ne mog verit' v to,chto nizhe cheloveka, on iskal lichnogo i nravstvennogo Boga, v kotorogo cheloveku ne unizitel'no verit'...)

85 Ibid.

(Otdelivshis' ot yazychestva i podnyavshis' svoey very vysshe khaldeyskoy magii i egipetskoy mudrosti,rodonachal'niki i vozhdi evreev stali dostoyny Bozhestvennogo izbraniya.)

86 Ibid.

87 'Lectures on Godmanhood' (5th Lecture), Sob.Soch.III,76-77.

elements of the Jewish character to which he attached significance. In the first place, he mentioned the Jews' strongly developed sense of ' self'. According to him, Jews have a keen sense of their own identity,[88] an identity that is variously expressed in his individual person, in his family and in his common bond with the whole nation. This sense of identity is, for the most part, a positive asset, a factor that has contributed to the nation's survival when deprived of a homeland. This sense of 'self' influenced the Jews' approach to the spiritual, as Solovyov already ventured to show in the 6th Lecture on Godmanhood.[89] In 'Judaism and the Christian Question' he alluded particularly to the strength which the Jews' sense of identity lends them; strong and self-conscious man may rebel against God at times, but the 'struggle' between God and man is here viewed as fruitful.

> '...A strong God chooses for Himself a strong man, a man who could struggle with Him; a self-essential God reveals Himself only to a self-aware personality; a holy God unites Himself only with a man seeking sanctity and capable of active moral accomplishment [podvig].'[90]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

The reference, here, to 'active moral accomplishment' is noteworthy. It accords particularly with the emphasis placed upon the active moral leadership of the Jewish prophets.[91] It was the task

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88 Solovyov writes of the self-aware personality (samosoznatel'naya lichnost') of the Jews, p.145. (Judaism and the Christian Question, (Sob.Soch.IV).

89 Sob.Soch.III,79-80.

90 Op.cit.
(Sil'niy Bog izbiraet sebe sil'nogo cheloveka, kotoriy by mog borot'sya s Nim; samosushchiy Bog otkryvaetsya tol'ko samosoznatel'noy lichnosti; Bog svyatoy soedinyaetsya tol'ko s chelovekom, ishchushchim svyatosti i sposobnym k deyatel'nomu nravstvennomu podvigu.)

of the prophets to rectify the negative effects of the Jews' self-assertion, a self-assertion that was, in their spirituality and lives, a desirable feature.

> '...From this it is clear that the authentic religion which we find among the Israelite nation does not exclude, but on the contrary requires the development of the free human personality, its feeling of self, its awareness of self, the activity of [that] self.'[92]

Solovyov shows an astonishing degree of approval for this special 'self-affirming' type of spirituality. His approval can even be guaged by his carefully chosen words of criticism directed against the type of man with a weakly developed sense of his own identity:

> '...A man [who is] weak by nature is not capable of a strong spirituality. Exactly likewise, a man without personality, characterless and with a weakly developed awareness of self cannot understand how one should [attain?] the truth of the self-essential Divine being. Finally, the man in whom the freedom of moral self-determination is paralysed, who is incapable of beginning an action from his own part, is incapable of accomplishing a deed, of attaining sanctity - for such a man godly sanctity will always remain as something external and alien - he will never be 'a friend of God'.![93]

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91 Sob.Soch.III,79-80 (6th Lecture on Godmanhood); see also our Chapter V on the Prophet's function in the ideal theocratic society, (Theocracy).

92 Sob.Soch.IV, 146.
(Yasno otsyuda,chto ta istinnaya religiya,kotoruyu my nakhodim u naroda izrail'skogo, ne isklyuchaet, a naprotiv trebuet razvitiya svobodnoy chelovecheskoy lichnosti,eë samochuvstviya, samosoznaniya i samodeyatel'nosti.)

93 Ibid., 145-146 (cont.)

This passage merits special consideration, for it shows man's attainment of truth and of sanctity as greatly dependent upon an active assertion of the will. Solovyov writes of the need to take an initiative[94] (nachat' deystvie iz sebya) or, rather, criticises the person unable to do so. He notes that even in its most recent form Judaism has embodied a special combination of human energy and very deep-lying belief in God.*

The particular form of moral courage which Solovyov had in mind when writing the above passage could be attributed to individuals and to a whole people. The spirituality of the Jewish people attracted the philosopher personally, as his Jewish friends and acquaintances noted. Their appreciative acceptance of Solovyov was, in part, because his attitude to Judaism contrasted so greatly with the rather prevalent anti-Semitism of the period. But further than this, some Jewish scholars were astounded by Solovyov's readiness to become properly

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(Chelovek ot prirody slabiy ne sposoben i k sil'noy religioznosti. Tochno takzhe chelovek bezlichniy,bezkharakterniy i s malo razvitym samosoznaniem ne mozhet ponyat' kak dolzhno [...?] istinu samosushchego bytiya Bozhiya. Nakonets chelovek,u kotorogo paralizovana svoboda nravstvennogo samoopredeleniya, kotoriy nesposoben nachat' deystvie iz sebya, nesposoben sovershit' podvig dobyt'sya svyatosti - dlya takogo cheloveka svyatost' Bozhiya vsegda ostanetsya chem-to vneshnim i chuzhdym - on nikogda ne budet 'drugom Bozhiim'.)

94 The above passage might usefully be examined in the light of the words from the Book of Wisdom, VI,xii,xv-xvi; the idea expressed by Solovyov, namely, that man must be willing to start out on the path to sanctity, is contained in these evocative Biblical verses: Divine Wisdom comes out to meet the man who actively seeks Her, and She Herself seeks out those worthy of her.

* Op.cit. 147. (Eto soedinenie glubochayshey very v Boga s vysochayshim napryazheniem chelovecheskoy energii sokhranilos' i v pozdneyshem iudeystve.)

informed about Judaism, learning sufficient Hebrew to read the Bible in that language, studying the Torah at length, Talmudic literature and the extensive critical literature on the Talmud. F. Getz, who assisted Solovyov in his study of Hebrew and in the correct interpretation of Judaic spiritual literature, writes that this deep study bore great fruit and is clearly evident in his published works. In an informative article entitled 'On the Attitude of Vladimir Solovyov to the Jewish Question' (Ob otnoshenii Vladimira Solovyova k Evreyskomu Voprosu) Getz writes about the philosopher's 'The History and Future of Theocracy' in the following terms:

> 'This work serves as graphic proof of his fundamental knowledge of the original text of the Sacred Scripture, of his deep understanding of the meaning of Biblical history.'[95]

In his essay 'Judaism and the Christian Question' Solovyov affirms that faith made Israel a great people (Izrail byl velik veroy).[96] In the passage which follows, he writes of faith as requiring uncommon spiritual resources; it is difficult to attain, but it liberates man;

> 'For its part, the energy of the free human principle manifests itself best of all in faith. There is a

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95 'On the Attitude of Vladimir Solovyov to the Jewish Question'. (Ob Otnoshenii Vladimira Solovyova k Evreyskomu Voprosu), F. Getz; appended to a 1925 edition of Solovyov's 'The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it'.(Berlin):

(Eto sochinenie sluzhit naglyadnym dokazatel'stvom ego osnovatel'nogo znaniya podlinnika svyatogo Pisaniya, ego glubokogo ponimaniya smysla bibleyskoy istorii).

(p.124)

See the same article in the journal ' Voprosy Filosofii i Psykhologii', 1904, No.1, pp.159-198. [8.115]

96 Op.cit., 146.

> very wide-spread prejudice, according to which faith suppresses the freedom of the human spirit and positive knowledge extends freedom. But, essentially, the contrary is true. In faith the human spirit goes beyond the confines of the given reality - it affirms the existence of such subjects which do not <u>compel</u> recognition - it freely acknowledges them. Faith is an <u>accomplishment of the spirit</u> [podvig dukha], revealing things unseen. The believing spirit does not passively await the influence of an external object, but boldly goes to meet it, it does not follow slavishly after phenomena, but anticipates them - it is free and active. As a free accomplishment of the spirit, faith has moral worth and merit...'[97]

This explicit passage on the nature of faith allows one to appreciate a central aspect of Solovyov's personal spirituality: it is, indeed, a spirituality that values faith in a singular way, and that associates man's capacity to believe with moral courage and with

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97 Ibid.

(S svoey storony enèrgiya svobodnogo chelovecheskogo nachala vsego luchshe proyavlyaetsya imenno v vere. Ves'ma rasprostranen predrassudok, budto vera podavlyaet svobodu chelovecheskogo dukha, a polozhitel'noe znanie rasshiryaet svobodu. No po sushchestvu dela vykhodit naoborot. V vere chelovecheskiy dukh perestupaet za predely dannoy, nalichnoy deystvitel'nosti, utverzhdaet sushchestvovanie takikh predmetov, kotorye ne <u>vynuzhdayut</u> u nego priznaniya - on svobodno priznaet ikh. Vera est' <u>podvig dukha</u>, oblichayushchego veshchi nevidimye. Veruyushchiy dukh ne vyzhidaet passivno vozdeystviy vneshnego predmeta, a smelo idët im navstrechu, on ne sleduet rabski za yavleniyami, a predvaryaet ikh,- on svoboden i samodeyatelen. Kak svobodniy podvig dukha, vera imeet nravstvennoe dostoinstvo i zasluga.)

the justification of the Good. Getz believed that it was precisely Solovyov's faith that allowed him to penetrate the spirit of Judaism so very deeply:

> 'Himself inspired by an ardent faith and capable of a martyr's accomplishment in the service of the higher interests of religion, Vladimir Solovyov had to [be able to] fathom the 'martyr-people' [narodu-mucheniku] with genuine respect, [the people] whose whole history constitutes a unique religious accomplishment and a complete martyrdom in the name of faith.'[98]

Solovyov's writings on sacred corporeality (svyataya telesnost')[99] are important for a proper assessment of his view of the Judaic approach to spiritual matters. His examination of the notion of 'sacred corporeality' allows him to

a) underline the continuity between Jewish Old Testament spirituality and the Christian spirituality of the New Testament;
b) consider some defects of the Jewish national character in the light of their particular spiritual history.

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98 Getz, 1925, ed., p.128.
(Sam vdokhnovenniy plamennoy veroy i sposobniy na muchenicheskiy podvig v slushenii vysshim interesam religii, Vladimir Solovyov dolzhen byl proniknut'sya istinnym uvazheniem k narodu-mucheniku, vsya istoriya kotorogo sostavlyaet nebyvaliy religiozniy podvig i sploshnoe muchenichestvo za veru.)

99 See our Chapter V, on Sacred Corporeality.

We have already noted, above, that Solovyov accepted standard Christian interpretations of the Gospel teachings as a 'fulfilment' and 'completion' of the Old Testament Law. But Solovyov's words on 'sacred corporeality' offer exceptional insights into the essential proximity of Jewish and Christian spirituality. Using as his point of departure the commonly made criticism of the materialism of Jewish people, he writes that this materialism is of a special and 'religious' character. It originates in the Jews' tendency to seek an immediate and visible realization of any idea.[100] The Jews, argued Solovyov, appreciate those ideals that can bear results in the present life. Significantly, they also resist any rigid separation of the spiritual and the physical; the physical realm is, from their point of view, simply the ultimate manifestation of the spiritual.[101] Or, in other words, spirit penetrates and informs matter - the Jews perceive this, and they consequently find no proper cause to separate the spiritual and the physical.[102]

We here underline the point that Solovyov's clarification of the notion of 'sacred corporeality' in Jewish religious thought allowed him to arrive at a remarkably positive interpretation of asceticism. He defined not just the very principle of asceticism, but managed to give a positive significance to asceticism within the context of central, specifically Christian teachings. As already shown in Chapter V, he

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100 Sob.Soch.IV,148.
(Dlya vsyakoy idei i vsyakogo ideala evrey trebuet vidimogo i osyazatel'nogo voploshcheniya i blagotvornykh rezul'tatov; evrey ne khochet priznavat' takogo ideala, kotoriy ne v silakh pokorit' sebe deystvitel'nost' i v ney voplotit'sya.)

101 Ibid., 149.

102. Ibid., 148.

avoided any outright condemnation of material nature as evil (3rd Lecture on Godmanhood), and indeed he held that the view of material nature as itself inherently evil, (the Gnostics' view), is not really tenable. In view of this, simple 'mortification' of the flesh is not appropriate as a spiritual discipline. Rather, Solovyov wrote, the true goal of asceticism is

> 'a strengthening of the spirit <u>for a transfiguration of the flesh</u>.'[103]
>
> (Solovyov's italics).

In Solovyov's view, the whole of the New Testament promises an eventual spiritual transformation of the natural world order, a promise guaranteed by the very Incarnation of God on earth as a man. Solovyov discerned in the Jews' understanding of 'sacred corporeality' a basis for the Christians' positive acceptance of material nature, for their recognition of material nature not as inherently evil, but as receptive to spiritual influence.

In the philosopher's examination of Judaism there are yet other significant instances of Christian adoption and improvement of Jewish religious thought and practice. These may be mentioned quite briefly.

In his article '<u>The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it</u>'[104] Solovyov gives an account of the varying responses of the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes to the fundamental

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[103] Ibid., 157-158. (...usilenie dukha dlya preobrazheniya ploti). See our Chapter V, Notes 20 and 29.

[104] Sob.Soch.VI, 3-32.

Scriptural teachings handed down by Moses (p.4). These three 'parties' developed religious thought and practice along different lines, and Solovyov shows that each 'party' tended to adhere rather exclusively to their chosen way.

The Sadducees resisted any form of innovation in the Scriptures, they honoured its ritual above all, sought to preserve the legacy of the past, and they saw no need for any further or other response.

> 'For the Sadducees the Torah was the foundation upon which they did not wish to construct anything. Taking religion primarily from the ritual, priestly side, they saw in it the fact of the past, which it was necessary to acknowledge and preserve unchanged but which did not oblige them [to undertake] any further action.'[105]

Solovyov criticises this exclusive concentration on the past, and describes how the Sadducees advanced their own interests and power in the name of adherence to the fundamental teachings of their religion.[106]

The people genuinely committed to their faith sought a solution to this problem in Phariseeism.[107] The Pharisees accepted the Torah,

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[105] Ibid., 4.
(Dlya saddukeev tora byla osnovaniem, na kotorom oni ne khoteli nichego stroit'. Prinimaya religiyu preimushchestvenno s eë ritual'noy, zhrecheskoy storony, oni videli v ney fakt proshedshego, kotoriy nuzhno priznavat' i neizmenno khranit', no kotoriy ne obyazyvaet ni k kakomu dal'neyshemu deystviyu.)

[106] Ibid., 4-5.

[107] Ibid., 5.
(Chto kasaetsya lyudey, serdechno predannykh natsional'noy religii, to oni dolzhny byli iskat' drugogo vykhoda i nashli ego v fariseystve.)

but not only as a fact of the past age, handed down unchanged to succeeding generations:

> 'Together with their opponents, the Sadducees, the Pharisees accepted the Torah as the immutable foundation of the religion, but for them this Torah was not only a fact of the past which must be venerated, but also the law of the present life, which must be fulfilled. The Pharisees did not want to admit a contradiction between the demands of the religion and real life; for them all life must go according to the religious law, and the divine precepts must be realized in all human affairs.'[108]

Solovyov contrasts the Sadducees' approach and the Pharisees' approach further by describing the former as 'mechanical' and the latter as 'organic'. Some of the requirements of the religion handed down by Moses could not be practically and literally applied; therefore much interpretation of the Scriptures was required to ensure conformity to the spirit of the Sciptures. The Pharisees used the Judaic law not as an end in itself, but as a point of departure for the construction of a whole system of interpretation.[109]

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[108] Ibid., 5-6

(Vmeste s svoimi protivnikami saddukeyami farisei priznavali toru, kak neprelozhnoe osnovanie religii, no dlya nikh eta tora byla ne odnim tol'ko faktom proshedshego, kotoriy nuzhno pochitat', no eshchë i zakonom nastoyashchey zhizni, kotoriy dolzhno ispolnit'. Farisei ne khoteli dopustit' protivorechiya mezhdu trebovaniyami religii i deystvitel'noy zhizn'yu; dlya nikh vsya zhizn' dolzhna idti po religioznomu zakonu, vo vsekh delakh chelovecheskikh dolzhny osushchestvlyat'sya zapovedi Bozhii.)

[109] Ibid., 6.

The third 'party' of religious believers making up the Jewish community looked not to the past, like the Sadducees, nor to the present, like the Pharisees, but to the future.[110] For them the word of God indicated, above all the ideal of the future.

> 'These people, who received the name Essenes, sought in religion not an external support for selfish ambitions, nor practical leadership in everyday life, but the highest perfection and beatitude.'[111]

This third party focused upon the goal of religion,[112] Solovyov regarded this third group as deeply misguided in its exclusive assertion of the final goal of religion and in their seeming indifference to the means by which that goal might be attained.

> 'The place [for] the highest goals is the heavenly kingdom, it is not given freely, but is attained by effort. Therefore those who find themselves [confined] against their will to an earthly path, must think about the factual supports and the formal foundations with which one may more truly attain the goal. Here the axiom is completely applicable: the person who desires the goal desires the means, and they are - right and strength, the law and power.'[113]

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110 Ibid., 6-7 (Solovyov's italics).

111 Ibid., 7.
(Eti lyudi,poluchivshie nazvanie esseev, iskali v religii ne vneshney opory dlya svoekorystnykh stremleniy, a takzhe ne prakticheskogo rukovodstva v povsednevnoy zhizni, a vysshego sovershenstva i blazhenstva.)

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.
(Mesto vysshikh tseley est' tsarstvo nebesnoe,ono zhe ne daëtsya darom, a berëtsya s usiliem. Poetomu nakhodyashchiesya na zemnom puti ponevole dolzhny dumat' o fakticheskikh oporakh i formal'nykh osnovaniyakh, pri kotorykh vernee mozhno doidti do tseli. Tut vpolne primenyaetsya aksioma: kto khochet tseli, khochet sredstv, oni zhe sut': pravo i sila, zakon i vlast'.)

Solovyov is critical of those who forget the higher goals in their pursuit of the direct means, but writes that their position is not as regrettable as those who look exclusively to the goal of ultimate perfection and fail to take any practical steps to attain their goal.[114]

Solovyov's thesis is that the idea at the heart of the Christian Gospel embraces all the positive features of the three different approaches he has described above:

> 'The Gospel idea united in itself what was positive and true in the three Jewish parties.'[115]

The continuity between Judaism and fundamental Christian teaching is underlined by the following image:

> 'In general, [for] the construction of the temple of the New Testament, there was no need to devise new material; Christ and His apostles used for this work those bricks which were at their hands. Even the plan itself was not new in its parts, but in their union, in the completeness [tselosti] of the religious ideal.'[116]

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114 Ibid.
(...Krayne zhalok tot,kto tol'ko mechtaet ob ideal'nom sovershenstve, ne delaya ni odnogo prakticheskogo shaga, chtoby k nemu priblizit'sya).

115 Ibid., 8.
(Blizhayshim obrazom evangel'skaya ideya soedinyala v sebe to,chto bylo polozhitel'nogo i istinnogo v trëkh evreyskikh partiyakh.)

116 Ibid.
(Voobshche, pri sozidanii novozavetnogo khrama, ne bylo nadobnosti izobretat' noviy material; Khristos i Ego apostoly upotreblyali v delo te kirpichi, kotorye byli u nikh pod rukami. Dazhe samiy plan zdaniya byl nov ne v svoikh chastyakh, a v ikh soedinenii, v tselosti religioznogo ideala).
(cont.)

It is appropriate to cite the extremely favourable view which F. Getz, as a well-read and informed Jew, formed of Solovyov's treatment of this subject:

> 'The pages in which Vladimir Solovyov expounded his view of the above-mentioned religious parties, and on the relationship of Christianity to them, belong to the most instructive [material], convincing in content and most penetrating and fine in form, that has ever been written on this subject.'[117]

Our account of the philosopher's typological classification of religions passes on to his description (and criticism) of Islām. Solovyov's ideas on Islām are striking for their consistency. He expressed them in the very early years of his career, in an article called 'Three Forces' (Tri Sily, 1877). A lucid restatement and extension of his ideas occurs in Part III of his 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' (Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika, 1883). He returned specifically to the subject in the mid-1890's, in an 80-page account of the Prophet Mahommed's life and teachings;[118]

Note that Solovyov, much as he admired the Judaic conception of theocracy (See Chapter V), believed that Christianity embodies the theocratic ideal more fully, extends it from a primarily national principle to a universal principle. (Judaism and the Christian Question, Sob.Soch.IV, 163).

117 Getz, p.124-125.
(Stranitsy na kotorykh Vladimir Solovyov izlagal svoy vzglyad na vyssheupomyanutye religioznye partii i na otnosheniya k nim khristianstva, prinadlezhat k samym pouchitel'nym, ubeditel'nym po soderzhaniyu i samym ostroumnym i prekrasnym po forme, kogda-libo po etomu predmetu napisannym.)

118 'Mahommed; His Life and Religious Teaching' (Magomet, ego Zhizn' i Religioznoe Uchenie, 1896), Sob.Soch.VII, 203-281.

but in fact, as we shall establish in Chapters VIII and IX, Islām represents an important element in Solovyov's later views on religion, culture and the course of history.

Solovyov's findings regarding the nature of Islām are presented most clearly in 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics'. His whole view of the Islāmic faith is determined by his deduction that the Christian faith provides the most complete religious revelation and that the central tenets and premises of Islām do not represent a complete revelation. The critical difference between these faiths is the presence, in Christianity, of the teaching of Godmanhood. He writes:

> 'Christianity is the revelation of the perfect God in the perfect man.'[119]

The 'perfect man' is defined as one possessing the human faculties in full measure, who

> 'willingly and absolutely submits the human element in him to the higher Divinity.'[120]

Solovyov judged that Islām was deficient where due recognition of the human element is concerned. The uncompromising form of submission to God demanded in the Qur'an entirely deprives man of any autonomy. The transcendence and might of God are acknowledged, as well as the

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119 Sob.Soch.IV,30.
(Khristianstvo est' otkrovenie sovershennogo Boga v sovershennom cheloveke.)

120 Ibid.,
(...sam dobrovol'no i bezuslovno podchinyaet vsë chelovecheskoe v sebe vysshemu Bozhestvu.)

gulf between God and creaturely beings. This view of a transcendent, almighty and unapproachable God is enforced, in Islām, by the absence of a divine 'mediator' (posrednik),[121] sent to assist and redeem men. Islām, then, according to Solovyov's account, presents a Divinity that lacks real ties with man - this is an '<u>inhuman God</u>' (bezchelovechniy bog).

Solovyov writes that Islām may be compared not only with the authentic Christian revelation, alongside which its defective understanding of Divine-human relations is plain to see, but may also be compared with various of the early Christian heresies. Solovyov maintained that Islām resembled these heresies in a fundamental way; the teaching of Godmanhood proved an obstacle that neither Muslims nor Christian heretics could accept.[122] However numerous and varied the early heresies were, they all coincided in their <u>denial</u> of the true God-man.[123] Some heretical teachings cast Christ as a 'prophet' but not as God; others denied the humanity of Christ.[124] The denial of Christ as a 'mediator' between Heaven and the created order led some to a rigid dualism, a complete opposition of divinity and creation.[125]

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121 See p.37.

122 Ibid., 33.

123 Ibid.

1 24 Ibid., 34.

125 Ibid., 37
(...Pri otsutstvii deystvitel'nogo posredstva, utverzhdaetsya bezuslovnaya protivopolozhnost' mezhdu bozhestvom i tvoreniem, i mir priznaetsya porozhdeniem durnogo nachala - zla ili bezumiya, Satany, ili Demiurga.)

Solovyov maintained that the exclusive recognition of God's transcendence, which we find in Islām, is very close (in spirit and in content) to the early heretical teachings against which the Church had to defend itself in the 4th and 5th Centuries. However, one may still view Islām in a better light than the Manichean and other beresies cited in 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics'. Solovyov readily acknowledged the consistent adherence of the Muslims to their Qur'anic moral code. The teachings found in that sacred book may have appeared less developed and penetrating from the spiritual point of view than the Christian code, but faithful adherence to those teachings was, in Solovyov's opinion very commendable.[126] Here, as in other of the philosopher's works, the moral stature of true Muslim believers is set higher than that of the Byzantine Christians.[127] This latter group applied their professed religion in a regrettably inconsistent manner, and - writes Solovyov - they were blameworthy in their indifference to the rigorous adherence to the ethical code contained in the Gospels.

We have provided the central substance of Solovyov's views on Islām. The rigidity of Islāmic society and the lack of individual freedom are stressed more in the early article 'Three Forces', but 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' presents a picture

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126 Ibid., 47.

127 Ibid., 47-48.
Solovyov held to the idea that true adherence to an 'inferior' or less developed religious ethical code is more valuable than inconsistent observance of a 'superior' religious ethical code. The idea is expressed in the opening pages of his 'Judaism and the Christian Question' (Sob.Soch.IV,pp.135-136,165-166), written in 1884; see also his 1891 lecture 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' (Sob.Soch.VI,p.388).

of fundamental rigidity and exclusivity in religious conceptions. In Chapters VIII and IX we shall set forth the historical parallel that Solovyov drew between Islām and China as non-Christian forces threatening the security and foundations of authentic Christian culture.

It is now necessary to consider the other major category of non-Christian religions examined by Solovyov, namely those of the Indian sub-continent. We have already indicated that Solovyov made a study of the Vedic literature in his first published article (of 1873), and that he treated the Vedic religion as the prototype for the Aryan religions in general. The Vedic religion finds occasional mention in the philosopher's later writings, (as does the Vedāntic literature, and Sankara's contribution to Indian religious philosophy). However, we submit that it was Hinduism and, ultimately, Buddhism that, for Solovyov, most came to typify Indian spirituality. We also submit that, as with his critical view of Islām, Solovyov formulated his views on Hinduism and on Buddhism at a very early point in his career. (Since we take his references to Buddhism in the 4th Lecture on God-manhood to be an important element in Solovyov's evaluation of that system of beliefs and practice, we argue that he had formulated his views on it by July 1877, when the 4th Lecture was first published.) We have already drawn attention to the consistency of Solovyov's statements on the character of the Islāmic religion: in his study of the life of Mahommed, written in 1896, Solovyov holds the same fundamental view provided in his article of 1877, 'Three Forces'. As we shall see in Chapters VIII and IX, his critical view of the Christians in Byzantium is also highly consistent, restated in works as far apart

as 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' (1883)[128] and 'Byzantinism and Russia', (1896). His view of Buddhism was marked by the same consistency, and in our examination of his writings we have found no evidence to support the view that Solovyov's fundamental attitude towards Buddhism changed in the years after 'Lectures on Godmanhood'.

His evaluation of Buddhism comprises two elements, and these are:

a) his examination of the Buddhist conception of the Absolute;

b) his evaluation of the role that asceticism plays in Buddhism.

In his 3rd and 4th Lectures on Godmanhood Solovyov treated both these subjects, first criticising the pessimistic stance of those who condemn nature as 'evil'.[129] Solovyov's article on Indian philosophy in the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia states that the various schools of Indian philosophy all agree in their negative view of the world as evil and deceptive:

> 'As regards content, all the 'accepted' and a majority of the 'unaccepted' systems have one and the same negative of the world and life as evil and deception, and with all of them the task is liberation (moksha) from this false existence.'[130]

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128 Ibid., 43-45.

129 Sob.Soch.III,41-44.

130 Sob.Soch.X,338.
(So storony soderzhaniya vse 'prinyatye' i bol'shinstvo 'neprinyatykh' sistem imeyut odin i tot zhe otritsatel'niy vzglyad na mir i zhizn', kak na zlo i obman, i zadachey u vsekh yavlyaetsya izbavlenie (moksha) ot etogo lozhnogo sushchestvovaniya.)

In the 'Lectures on Godmanhood' he specifically cites Buddhism as the religious-philosophical system that views nature in negative terms.[131] He describes Buddhism as a more advanced religious view than nature worship, for the latter entails man's submission to arbitrary external phenomena, while Buddhism views nature negatively and is consequently detached from it and free from submission to it: in the first stage of religious development, 'the Divine principle is hidden behind the world of natural phenomena' (bozhestvennoe nachalo skryto za mirom prirodnykh yavleniy, p.40).

> 'In the following, second stage of religious development, the Divine principle reveals itself in its distinction and opposition to nature, as its denial, or as the absence of natural being, the negative freedom from it. This stage, distinctive, essentially, on account of its pessimistic and ascetic character, I call negative revelation; its purest type is represented by Buddhism.'[132]

Solovyov concedes that Christianity has an ascetic element also, expressed in the Apostle John's words 'All the world lies in evil' (See 7th Lecture on Godmanhood).[133] But he argues that Christianity embraces all the fore-going stages of religious understanding: he

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131 Op.cit., 40.

132 Sob.Soch.III,40.
(Na sleduyushchey vtoroy stupeni religioznogo razvitiya bozhestvennoe nachalo otkryvaetsya v svoëm razlichii i protivopolozhnosti s prirodoy, kak eë otritsanie, ili nichto(otsutstvie) prirodnogo bytiya, otritsatel'naya svoboda ot nego. Etu stupen', otlichayushchuyusya po sushchestvu pessimisticheskim i asketicheskim kharakterom, ya nazyvayu otritsatel'nym otkroveniem; chisteyshiy tip ego predstavlyaetsya buddizmom.)

133 Ibid., 111. (1 John 5,xix). See also 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', (Sob.Soch.III,351-353) and 'Justification of the Good' (Sob.Soch.VIII,129).

asserts that it includes the ascetic element also evident in Buddhism, a recognition of the ideal world such as we find in Platonism, the view of the Divine Absolute as <u>personal</u> (the characteristically Judaic view), and the definition of God's nature as <u>triune</u>, which the philosophers of Alexandria elaborated.[134]

Our considered view is that Solovyov's description of the 'ascetic' element in Buddhism is <u>determined</u> by his interpretation of Buddhist conceptions of the Absolute. At the beginning of the 4th Lecture on Godmanhood he clearly juxtaposes the Buddhist and Christian conceptions of the Absolute: he classifies the Buddhist view of the Absolute as 'negative' and the Christian view as 'positive'.[135] On Solovyov's account, the Buddhists' refusal to provide positive definitions of the Absolute leads them to concentrate exclusively upon the <u>absence</u> of attributes and definitions relating to the Absolute. The Absolute is then, in their case, a 'nothing' (nichto). This view of the Absolute influenced their entire religious understanding and practice, according to Solovyov; it necessarily led the Buddhists to a very different spirituality from the spirituality which grew out of the 'positive' Christian view of the Absolute. He recognised the achievement of Buddhist and other Indian spiritual teachings in liberating man from complete subjection to the natural elements, from nature worship; but he argued that the Indians' new-found freedom 'inebriated' them, causing them to lose themselves in subjective, trance-like states, renouncing the 'world', and declining to <u>develop</u> their spiritual understanding. This view of Indian religious philosophy

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134 Sob.Soch.III,111.

135 Ibid., 48-49.

is given in the 10th Lecture on Godmanhood:

> 'In India the human soul was freed for the first time from the power of cosmic forces, as if inebriated by its own freedom, by its awareness of its own unity and its absolute nature; its inner activity is not connected with anything, it dreams freely, and in these dreams all the ideal fruits of humanity are already contained in embryo, all the religious and philosophical teachings, poetry and science, but all this is [in a state of] indifferent indefiniteness [v bezrazlichnoy neopredelënnosti] and confusion, as if in a dream all merges and is mixed up, all is one and the same, and therefore all is nothing. Buddhism has said the final word of the Indian consciousness; all existing being and non-existing being are likewise just an illusion and a dream.'[136]

Solovyov proceeds, in the same lecture, to explain how the philosophers of Ancient Greece evolved a more satisfactory view of the Absolute than the characteristic Indian view. Solovyov held that the particular achievement of the Greeks (best exemplified by Plato) was to liberate themselves not simply from external cosmic forces, but also from purely subjective self-contemplation;

> 'In the Graeco-Roman world the human soul appears free not only of external cosmic forces, but also of itself,

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[136] Ibid., 155-156.

(V Indii chelovecheskaya dusha vpervye osvobozhdena ot vlasti kosmicheskikh sil, kak by op'yanena svoey svobodoy, soznaniem svoego edinstva i bezuslovnosti; eë vnutrennaya deyatel'nost' nichem ne svyazana, ona svobodno grezit, i v etikh grezakh vse ideal'nye porozhdeniya chelovechestva uzhe zakoncheny v zarodyshe, vse religioznye i filosofskie ucheniya, poeziya i nauka, no vsë eto v bezrazlichnoy neopredelënnosti i smeshenii, kak by vo sne vsë slivaetsya i pereputyvaetsya, vsë eto est' odno i to zhe i potomu vsë est' nichto. Buddizm skazal poslednee slovo indiyskogo soznaniya; vsë sushchestvuyushchee i nesushchestvuyushchee odinakovo est' lish' illyuziya i son.)

> of its own inner, purely subjective self-contemplation, in which, with the Hindus, it was immersed.'[137]

Solovyov presents a picture of Buddhism, Hinduism and of Indian spirituality generally as inferior to Greek idealist philosophy, and as exclusively subjective in character (as the above passages show). This view of Indian religious thought extends, for Solovyov, to Taoism and other Chinese religious thought: the seeming indistinctness and merging of concepts alluded to in the above description of Buddhist thought (vsê eto v bezrazlichnoy neopredelënnosti i smeshenii)[138] is, in Solovyov's view, characteristic of Taoism also. (See our Chapter IX for a full treatment of Solovyov's view on Chinese religious thought).

We believe that Solovyov was sincere in his attempt to evaluate Buddhist thought and the Indian religious philosophies objectively. The account of central Buddhist thought provided in 'Lectures on Godmanhood' is not comprehensive or entirely satisfactory (as we indicate below), and this must diminish the value of his typological classification of religions. A number of Solovyov's conclusions regarding Buddhist thought require considerable modification in the light of scholarly research undertaken since his life-time. We acknowledge that the limited availability of translations and commentarial literature on the subject accounts for some of the main defects in his account. In this connection, we cannot properly blame

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1 37 Ibid., 156.
(V greko-rimskom mire chelovecheskaya dusha yavlyaetsya svobodnoy uzhe ne tol'ko ot vneshnikh kosmicheskikh sil, no i ot samoy sebya, ot svoego vnutrennego ,chisto-sub'ektivnogo samosozertsaniya, v kotoroe ona pogruzhena u indusov.)

138 Ibid.

Solovyov for the imbalance in his views, when whole areas of Buddhist philosophy still remained unexamined. Extensive research into Mahayāna Buddhist thought did not get established until after Solovyov's lifetime: some of the most important pioneering work in this field (still valid now) was undertaken by Professor Th.Shcherbatsky during the 1920's and the 1930's.[139] We may respect Solovyov for his own pioneering work in this field, and for his readiness to study the major texts of Indian religious thought and evaluate them; at the same time, we must exercise caution in our study of his conclusions, where necessary supplementing his account of Buddhist thought with the findings of Shcherbatsky and more recent specialists.

We argue that Solovyov's classification of Buddhism as a 'negative revelation' (otritsatel'noe otkrovenie) gives a misleading and incomplete view of the essential goals and character of Buddhism. The description provided by Solovyov must be qualified in a number of ways, and here our observations fall into two categories:

a) those relating to the stated aims of the founder, Sakyamuni Buddha, and to his positive assertions regarding the spiritual life;

b) those relating to Māhayāna Buddhist thought.

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139 Theodor Ippolitovich Shcherbatsky [Shcherbatskoy], 1866-1942. See 'Indian Culture and Buddhism: A Collection of Articles to the Memory of Academician (F.)I. Shcherbatsky' (Indiyskaya Kul'tura i Buddizm: Sbornik Statey pamyati Akademika (F.)I.Shcherbatskogo), edited by N.Konrad and G.Bongard-Levin, Moscow 1972, Academy of Sciences,USSR. See esp. PP.13-50 for an account of Shcherbatsky's life and scholarly achievements. Shcherbatsky's most widely known works are: 'The Central Conception of Buddhism, and the Meaning of the word 'Dharma', (London, 1923),'Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna', (Leningrad, 1927), and 'Buddhist Logic'(Leningrad,1930-1932).

The very extensive use of a negative terminology in Buddhism is a striking and often disconcerting feature for anyone accustomed to the positive terminology generally employed in the Christian teachings and their interpretation. Concern with the problems posed by this negative terminology has to some degree directed attention away from the actually positive aims of Buddhism and of Sakyamuni Buddha himself. In his words immediately before death he affirmed the worth of spiritual endeavour, advising his followers to work diligently for their salvation. The very fact that he spent numerous years teaching all monks and laymen who approached him about spiritual attainment indicates his concern with active transmission of his enlightened understanding, with an affirmation of the truths he himself apprehended.

It should be remembered in this connection, that according to the traditional Scriptural accounts of his life, Sakyamuni Buddha attained full enlightenment and then hesitated about conveying his understanding to other men. His compassion for men and his subsequent decision to teach them the path to spiritual attainment must, surely, represent a profoundly positive aspect of Buddhism that is missed in Solovyov's references to 'negative revelation'. (The Buddha's compassionate decision to teach men, his concern for their welfare and for the welfare of all sentient beings, is well conveyed, and indeed perpetuated, in the Mahayana ideal of Bodhisattvahood; the Mahayana tradition stresses the particular merit of those who temporarily renounce the very final stage of their spiritual elightenment so as to return to the 'world' and assist others to achieve salvation.)

With regard to the actual content of Buddhist teaching, it is necessary to emphasize the following point. At the very heart of Buddhism lies the teaching of the Four Noble Truths. The first two of

of these Truths draw attention to the impermanence of worldly phenomena (the Truth of aniccā) and to the general conditioning of suffering of beings in the world (the Truth of dukkhā). It is not at all uncommon for European commentators to focus exclusively upon the Buddha's statements on these two Truths and to conclude that he preached a form of pessimistic and passive resignation. The essential importance and indispensability of the third and fourth Noble Truths is too often overlooked; these are the Truths which affirm that there is indeed a possible cessation of suffering, and that there is a path to the cessation of suffering. The Path is described in very specific terms, under headings such as Right Understanding, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right attentiveness, which altogether make up the 'Eightfold Path', and its basis is experiential. It is the fruit of Sakyamuni Buddha's disciplined quest for truth, a programme of spiritual training that is itself highly rigorous, but that it would be wrong to characterise solely as a 'flight' from pain and suffering. It should be remembered that according to the Buddhist Scriptures, Sakyamuni Buddha specifically criticised the extreme asceticism of some spiritual masters in whose company he trained before his own enlightenment: he found their extreme austerity and their complete renunciation of the secular world unfruitful, and he responded to their extreme and narrow practice by elaborating the Middle Way as a viable path to spiritual understanding and virtue. Thus, his role in advancing spiritual understanding and practice could be seen as positive and creative, for he recognised the defects of a narrow asceticism, and he developed his own teaching in another direction.

In addition to those positive affirmations contained in the third and fourth Noble Truths, we need to recall Sakyamuni Buddha's celebrated

and important affirmation recorded in Uddana VIII,3. It reads as follows:

> 'There is, oh monks, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed. If there were not this Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed, escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed, would not be possible.'

If men were wholly and forever confined to the realm of 'the born, the originated, the created, the formed', then the spiritual endeavour would have no meaning, and it would be inefficacious. But, as we have seen already, the Buddha affirmed the worth and rightness of the spiritual endeavour,he stressed the <u>practical</u> aspect of his teaching and discipline (using the image of a raft that can take the aspirant to 'the Other Shore'), and here, (in more specifically philosophical language), he affirms that man, who finds himself in the realm of 'the born, the originated, the created, the formed', subject to the fundamental law of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda), <u>may</u> attain the realm of 'the Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed.'

To further establish the positive aspects and emphasis of central Buddhist teaching, which appear to have eluded Solovyov, we need to consider the means of instruction chosen by the Buddha and by those who followed him. Here, the weaknesses in Solovyov's account of Buddhist thought may be attributed to the lack of reliable commentarial literature from which he suffered. As far as we can judge, from our reading of his works, Solovyov undertook no special study of the terminology of Buddhism. If one examines his 4th Lecture on Godmanhood, one is obliged to conclude that he wholly accepted the view of Buddhism as a religious philosophy which conceived of, and defined, the

'Absolute' as 'Nothing" (Nichto), as a pure absence of attributes. Our own view is that unqualified assent to Solovyov's description of Buddhism as a 'negative revelation' (as here defined) leads one to under-estimate the subtlety of the Buddhist position, especially in the Madhyamika formulation of it.[140] Furthermore, attention to the Madhyamika formulation of the central tenets of Buddhism leads to a recognition of the universal dimension of Buddhism: this was conspicuously absent from Solovyov's account,[141] and his typology of religions could not be employed without first correcting that serious omission.

Professor T.R.V. Murti provides a very illuminating account of the dangers of dogmatic adherence to viewpoints and theories, and of the Buddha's ways of countering that dogmatism.[142] His teachings were adapted to suit the capacity of his pupils: when he discerned that his listeners might fall into the trap of true 'nihilism', then he modified his teaching on the non-substantiality of the Soul so as not to lead them into error.[143]

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140 See: 'Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna', Th.Shcherbatsky (Leningrad 1927); 'The Central Philosophy of Buddhism', T.R.V. Murti (London, 1955); 'Nāgārjuna's Philosophy', K.Venkata Ramanan (Japan, 1966). Dates of 1st editions given here. [B.335, 332 and 334 Respectively]

141 See our Chapter IX, Note 25.

142 'The Central Philosophy of Buddhism', T.R.V. Murti (London, 1955, Reprint 1980), pp.44-49.
It is very noteworthy that Solovyov, who was especially concerned with criticism of dogmatic, exclusive views in philosophy and religion, failed to appreciate this essential aspect of the Buddha's teaching and approach. [B 332]

143 Ibid., 42-43. See also pp.207,247, et al.

As is extremely well shown in Professor Murti's work, and also in K. Venkata Ramanan's study 'Nāgārjuna's Philosophy', the Buddha was especially concerned to rectify the various forms of dogmatism to which men are susceptible. Wholly in the spirit of the Buddha's correction and criticism of exclusive, extreme viewpoints, Nāgārjuna evolved a critical method designed to show up the untenability of theoretical views as 'absolute'.[144] The effective pursuit of truth involves not simply intellectual rigour, but the capacity of the aspirant to avoid clinging to one or other viewpoint. This point is well conveyed by Ramanan:

> 'It is necessary to note that the utter unspeakability of things in the ultimate truth does not mean that they cannot even be spoken of in the mundane truth. The undivided being, the indeterminate dharma is non-exclusive; it is this that is the highest reality. It is not exclusive of determinations although it is false to hold them as absolute. In the mundane truth the indeterminate dharma is expressed through the determinate modes of thought and speech in a non-clinging way. The question is not one of speaking or not speaking but of clinging or not clinging to the speech and the things spoken of.'[145]

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144 Note the point made by Pratima Bowes in her book 'The Hindu Religious Tradition' (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977):

> 'In the Hindu tradition while Truth, in the sense of the Being of religious reality, is said to be absolute, truth in the sense of the epistemological status of the statements we make about it is not claimed to be so..." (p.272). [B.319]

145 'Nāgārjuna's Philosophy', K.Venkata Ramanan, (1st edition 1966, Reprint published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1978), p.274. See also pp.159-160. [B.334]

Ramanan stresses that Nāgārjuna's criticism of opposing views is not an end in itself:

> 'It is to be noted that śūnyatā criticism is not an end in itself; as revelatory of the non-substantiality of mundane things it is the means to the further realization of the ultimate reality.'[146]

This statement by Ramanan accords with the account provided by Murti, for whom the criticism of opposing, exclusive viewpoints is just the second of three stages in the Madhyamika dialectic:

> '...The dialectic reaches its fruition through three 'moments': the antinomical conflict of opposed views of the real advanced by speculative systems (dṛṣṭivāda); their criticism, which exposes their hollowness (śūnyatā); and intuition of the Real in which the duality of 'is' and 'is not' is totally resolved (prājña - wisdom). It is the Absolute beyond Reason. Implicit in the process, Prājña guides the entire dialectical movement.'[147]

Murti also shows that ignorance (avidyā), according to the exponent of Madhyamika,

> '... is equated with ideal construction screening the real. The Real is known by uncovering it, by the removal of the opacity of ideas (śūnyatā of dṛṣṭi). Philosophy performs this uncovering function. It is both this process and its culmination.'[148]

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146 Ibid., 168.

147 'The Central Philosophy of Buddhism', T.R.V. Murti, pp.226-227. [& 332]

148 Ibid., 212.

In the light of Murti's and of Ramanan's findings, and of the important contributions by Shcherbatsky (whose study 'Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna', 1927, they acknowledged and valued), the outright dismissal of the Buddhist notion of Śūnyatā as purely a principle of negation cannot be convincingly defended. There is a sense in which, writes Murti, Śūnyatā is even more positive and all-embracing than pure affirmation:

> '[Śūnyatā] may even be taken as more universal and positive than affirmation. For, to affirm 'A is B', that a figure is a triangle, is implicitly to deny that it is a square or circle. Every affirmation implies an element of negation. Both affirmation and negation are determinations, limitations or negations.... Śūnyatā is negation of negations; it is thus a re-affirmation of the infinite and the inexpressibly positive character of the Real.'[149]

Finally, we cite Shcherbatsky's seminal work 'Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna'. He regarded it as inappropriate to translate the term 'śūnyā' as 'void', for that usage is possible in common life 'but not as a technical term in philosophy', (p.45). The whole import of the fore-going consideration of the Madhyamika critical method is highlighted by Shcherbatsky in the following passage:

> 'That the term śūnyā is in Māhayāna a synonym of dependent existence (pratītya-samutpāda) and means

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149 Ibid., 160.
See also p.271.:
'...The dialectic, then, as the Śūnyatā of dṛṣṭis, is the negation of standpoints, which are the initial negation of the real that is essentially indeterminate... Correctly understood, Śūnyatā is not annihilation, but the negation of negation; it is the conscious correction of an initial unconscious falsification of the real.'

not something void, but something 'devoid' of independent reality (svābhāva-śūnyā), with the implication that nothing short of the whole possesses independent reality, and with the further implication that the whole forbids every formulation by concept or speech (nisprapañca), since they can only bifurcate (vikalpa) reality and never directly seize it - this is attested by an overwhelming mass of evidence in all the Māhayāna literature.'[150]

(Our italics)

We have tried to convey some of the complexity of the Buddhist usage of negative terminology, citing authoritative scholars who have written on this subject. Even from the limited materials presented above, it should be apparent that, in his evaluation of Buddhist thought, Solovyov did not give a very extensive account of the Buddhist approach to the Absolute. He worked from translations of some of the major Hinayāna Scriptures, but appears to have accepted their negative terminology in a rather literal spirit. His approach to the study of Buddhism differs significantly from his approach to the study of Judaism; in the latter case, his personal affinity with the Jewish people, his admiration for their history, culture and achievements prompted him to explore their spiritual thought and practice in great depth. Buddhism (and the Indian spirituality which it represented, in his mind) only won his qualified acceptance, as a belief system superior to nature worship and inferior to Greek idealist philosophy and to the Christian revelation.

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150 'Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna', Th.Stcherbatsky (Delhi 1975 ed)., pp.45-46. (Here we give the spelling of the author's name as used for this edition). [B.395]

Solovyov's various writings on the world religions were intended to establish the coherence and 'completeness' of Christian spirituality, and also to show the process whereby separate elements, such as the ascetic principle (in Buddhism), the view of the Absolute in 'personal' terms (in Judaism), developed and finally coincided in Christianity itself. We argue that this endeavour was an important part of Solovyov's over-all aim 'to justify the Good'. Solovyov's religious philosophy was, in the final analysis, a Christocentric one: his 7th Lecture on Godmanhood affirms that although Christianity has some elements in common with other religions and philosophies (asceticism, recognition of the ideal, and so forth), the completely new and distinct element in the Gospels was Christ's teaching about His own Person.[151] Where Solovyov's survey of non-Christian beliefs is concerned, we have drawn attention to certain weaknesses and imbalance in his description and classification of those beliefs, while also acknowledging his impressive assimilation of Judaic religious ideas and his appreciation of their historical and cultural context. So far as we are aware, our account of Solovyov's typological classification of religions is the first attempt to examine in detail and criticise Solovyov's conclusions on this subject.

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151 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, III,112.

iv) Solovyov's arguments for a theocratic organisation of society and government.

'Man alone can gradually adopt Divine grace in an unceasing struggle with his own nature and with external hostile forces, perfecting himself through the aid of his own efforts and attainments.'[152]

Book II of Solovyov's 'The History and Future of Theocracy' opens with an affirmation of human freedom. The philosopher describes man as being endowed with a unique degree of freedom to choose between 'good' and 'evil'.[153] Man does not make one choice that binds him forever to 'good' or 'evil', for his two-fold nature, spiritual and natural, allows the possibility of a free act of choice.[154] His freedom, is, furthermore, a freedom to perfect himself, to overcome the limitations of his natural condition and, finally, to improve material nature itself.[155] The New Testament shows man as 'created in the image and likeness of God',[156] and is filled with assurances that he can attain the 'plenitude of being' (polnota bytiya). But, in order to achieve this desirable end he must, according to Solovyov, consciously recognise the Good and order his activities so that they increasingly conform to,

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152 Sob.Soch.IV,339
(Odin chelovek mozhet postepenno usvaivat' sebe blagodat' Bozhiyu v nepreryvnoy bor'be s sobstvennoy prirodoy i s vneshnimi vrazh'imi silami, sovershenstvuyas' pomoshch'yu sobstvennykh usiliy i podvigov.) (Solovyov's italics).

153 Ibid., 337-339.

154 Ibid., 341-342.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid., 341.

and outwardly express, that Good.

In his book on moral philosophy, 'Justification of the Good', Solovyov defined the three bases of morality as being shame, pity and piety (styd,zhalost', blagogovenie). He considered that if we adopt these as the basis for action, we can determine how man should act

a) in relation to what is beneath him (purely material nature)

b) in relation to beings on the same level as himself (other conscious beings)

c) in relation to what is above him (the Divine).[157]

We have already indicated that, in Solovyov's view, man's relation to material nature should be that of a benevolent and responsible domination. Solovyov's notion of how man should act in relation to his fellow men becomes especially evident in his writings on theocracy. His writings on theocracy also reveal much about Solovyov's conception of man's relation to the Divine, and they show his distinctive emphasis upon the need for collective humanity's voluntary, wholly free, submission to the Divine Will. He taught that the Kingdom of God must be realized not just within the heart of the individual man, but also externally and practically (na dele), through man's various creative and other activities.

Solovyov's affirmation of spiritual values - so central to his life's work - was very closely bound with his conviction that, at least

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[157] Sob.Soch.VIII,59

potentially, human society itself represents a 'spiritual community'. He examined the principles and the practice of rule in various societies (Islāmic, West European, Roman, Judaic and others), and endeavoured to establish which form of rule (or social ideal) best suits humanity. Rejecting the Islāmic and Roman models of rule,[158] be concentrated greatly upon the Judaic conception of theocratic rule. As shown in our Chapter V, he deeply admired the form of theocratic rule which the Jews aimed to establish. He acknowledged the efforts of the Jewish people to place their religion at the very centre of their communal (and individual) life, and he criticised only the exclusive attention to ritual (on the part of the Sadducees), to interpretation of the Law (on the part of the Pharisees, who reacted against the Sadducees), and the exclusive, extreme reaction of the Essenes against both the former groups.[159] Ultimately, Solovyov was concerned with illustrating the evolution that had taken place in men's understanding of religion: his lengthy article 'Judaism and the Christian Question' expresses the idea that in the New Testament the Judaic idea of theocracy is perfected and extended.[160] He asserts that in Christianity the theocratic ideal is freed of a narrow, exclusive application on the purely national level, while the Jews

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158 In his article 'Three Forces' (Tri Sily, 1877) Solovyov specifically rejects the Islāmic ideal of rule on the grounds that it is despotic and that it denies the individual's freedom. The Romans' secular ideal of justice is rejected by him as being imposed by force ('Russia and the Universal Church', Book II,Ch.VII,p.138 in the 3rd French edition) and as being inferior in kind to the Christian ideal of love.

159 Sob.Soch.VI,7-8 (The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it).

160 Sob.Soch.IV,163.

tended to apply it too much to their own nation.[161] His writings on the specifically Christian understanding of theocracy (writings which belong, for the most part, to the decade 1880 to 1890) stress that the relations between Church and the temporal state need to be rectified. He felt it necessary to clarify the nature of the Church's authority and of the State's authority, to define (or re-define) the inter-relation of the Church and the State in true Christian society. He considered that rivalry between these two central institutions of the Christian community was profoundly harmful, and that it deferred the realization of 'the Kingdom of God on earth'.

'Judaism and the Christian Question' and 'The History and Future of Theocracy' provide a very detailed picture of the Judaic theocratic ideal, and these works show how very precisely the authority and functions of the Jewish High Priest, King and Prophet were set forth in the Old Testament. Solovyov used the Judaic model of theocratic rule to very good effect in his own account of priestly and temporal rule in the Christian community. He acknowledged, for instance, that the conception of 'priesthood' and the understanding of the Prophet's calling and status were very far developed in the Jewish community[162] (as the Old Testament records), and he showed that the Christian view of 'priesthood' and prophecy draws much from the Judaic interpretation of these.

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161 Ibid.

162 Sob.Soch.IV,161-165.

As previous chapters have shown, Solovyov read very extensively in most fields of religious thought, and this applies also to his reading on the subject of theocracy. He supplemented his reading of Jewish spiritual writings and of the Old Testament with wide reading of Roman Catholic sources. His familiarity with the works of St. Augustine is noteworthy in this context; also he frequently cited the ideas of Joseph de Maistre (on whom he wrote a quite long entry for the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia).[163] His attitude of increasing sympathy towards Catholic theologians, philosophers and historians in the latter part of the 1880's caused considerable regret and suspicion in Russia itself, among his readers and in government circles. His close association with Jesuit priests in Western Europe was criticised, and many Orthodox believers were prepared to believe that Solovyov personally had become a Roman Catholic.[164] His writings on theocracy appeared to such disenchanted readers simply as further evidence of the philosopher's new allegiance to Rome. His critical stance towards the Slavophiles, expressed in articles from 1883 onwards,[165] rather obscured the fundamentally pro-Slavophile content of his theocratic hopes. He maintained a belief in Russia as the rightful guardian of authentic Christian values and culture long after his apparent

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163 Sob.Soch.X,429-435.

164 Solovyov's alleged conversion to Roman Catholicism at this stage in his career may be discounted if one examines his letter of November 1886 (Pis.ma III,172) to the editors of the paper 'Novoe Vremya'. Not only does this letter contain a full and explicit assertion that Solovyov was a practising member of the Russian Orthodox Church; it also states that he believed attempts to persuade individuals to acknowledge the Roman Catholic faith could actually harm the cause of reunion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

165 See the articles under the collective title 'The National Question in Russia', (Natsional'niy Vopros v Rossii, Sob.Soch.V,3-401).

defection to the pro-European and liberal publicists centred in Petersburg, such as A.N. Pypin (1833-1904). Evgeniy Trubetskoy considers that this faith in Russia's messianic role was unduly prominent in his conception of theocracy, and he submits Solovyov's view to extensive criticism. Dmitry Stremoukhov also draws attention to the prominence of ideas about Russia's glorious role as defender of Christian culture in the philosopher's treatment of theocracy. Both these scholars present convincing evidence to support the conclusion that Solovyov cherished hopes about Russia's role that even exceeded the hopes of most Slavophiles regarding their country. Stremoukhov actually argues that it is only with the advent of Solovyov that Slavophilism becomes a true messianism:

> 'In essence, it is only with Soloviev that Slavophilism becomes true messianism...'[166]

Trubetskoy writes:

> 'He [Solovyov] places such hopes in the theocratic ruler [tsar'], by comparison with which the Slavophile dreams may appear modest.'[167]

In his article 'The Downfall of Theocracy in the Works of Vl[adimir]

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166 'Au fond, ce n'est qu'avec Soloviev que le Slavophilisme s'érige en véritable messianisme.'
'Vladimir Soloviev and His Messianic Work', (Vladimir Solovyov et son Oeuvre Messianique), Dmitry Stremoukhov, Univ. de Strasbourg, 1935, p.117. See also p.199, cited at the end of our Chapter VIII. (Translation by Elizabeth Meyendorff, Nordland Books, Massachusetts 1980, p.130). [B.78]

167 'The Worldview of Vladimir Solovyov', (Mirosozertsanie Vladimira Solovyova), Evgeniy Trubetskoy, Moscow 1913, Vol.I,p.514. [B.79]
(Na teokraticheskogo tsarya on vozlagaet takie nadezhdy, po sravneniyu s kotorymi slavyanofil'skie mechtaniya mogut pokazat'sya skromnymi.)

S. Solovyov' (Krushenie Teokratii v Tvoreniyakh Vl.S.Solovyova),[168] Trubetskoy criticises Solovyov for illegitimately introducing temporal ideas on Russia's historical destiny into his religious philosophy.[169] He regards the philosopher's last work 'Three Conversations' (Tri Razgovora) as valuable because there, he believes, Solovyov has overcome his preoccupation with Russia's destiny. Trubetskoy argues that the new view of world history presented in 'Three Conversations' is significantly different from the theocratically-based views of his earlier years. In this new philosophy of history

> '...the eternal universal, Christian ideal triumphs over the temporal dream of the great religious thinker and over the nationalistic romanticism of his youth.'[170]

That Solovyov questioned the worth of the 'Third Rome' ideal before composing his last work is clear in the opening pages of 'Byzantinism and Russia',(1896). Trubetskoy suggests that he arrived at the idea

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168 See Russkaya Mysl', (Moscow), 1912, pp.1-35.

169 Ibid., 35.

170 Ibid., 34.

(...Vechniy vselenskiy,khristianskiy ideal torzhestvuet pobedu nad vremennoy mechtoy velikogo religioznogo myslitelya i nad natsionalisticheskoy romantikoy ego molodosti.).

NB. 'The idea of the Third Rome was the sincere dream of Solovyov from his young years.'

(Ideya tret'ego Rima byla zadushevnoy mechtoy Solovyova s yunykh let.) p.19 (Ibid.).

through poetic intuition some time before he managed to argue his case in logical or historical terms.[171] His reference to the adherents of the 'Third Rome' ideal as Russia's "flatterers" (l'stetsy) in his poem 'Panmongolism' (Panmongolizm, 1894) is widely known and commented upon. But it is not so widely recognised that Solovyov treated this theme as soon as two years later, in his article 'Byzantinism and Russia' (Vizantizm and Russia).

We indicated, in Chapters II and V, that historical argument forms an important element in Solovyov's writings on religion. The very nature of the subject 'theocracy' entails the introduction of the historical perspective into the discussion of religious ideas. This is all the more true when the hopes for actual foundation of a theocratic society are as immediate as they evidently were for Solovyov during the 1880's. Certain features of Russia's historical past induced him to hope that she might be especially suited to attaining Christian goals. Here Solovyov cited her capacity for self-denial, apparent - he argued - in the Russians' invitation to the Varangians to rule over them, and in Peter the Great's readiness to learn from West European countries and to submit his whole country to European influence.[172] His high expectations of Russia's future destiny

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171 Ibid., 11.
'In the given instance, as it often happened with Solovyov, his poetic inspiration preceded the logical course of his thoughts: in a prophetic intuition he discerned that which several years later was vested in the form of a correct mental deduction.'
(V dannom sluchae, kak eto chasto sluchalos' s Solovyovym, ego poeticheskoe vdokhnovenie upredilo logicheskiy khod ego mysley: v prorocheskoy intuitsii on prozrel to,chto neskol'kimi godami pozzhe obleklos' v formu pravil'nogo umozaklyucheniya.)

172 In his article 'Saint Vladimir and the Christian State' (Saint (cont.)

were, in all likelihood, sustained and considerably reinforced when his ideas on theocracy and especially the reunion of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches won the admiration of Archbishop Strossmayer (in 1886).

Solovyov's reliance upon historical argument and upon ideas concerning culture is evident not only in his works on theocracy, but also in his evaluation and classification of religions, as we show in subsequent chapters. (To examine the specifically <u>historical</u> basis of Solovyov's understanding of theocracy would require a more extensive study of Slavophilism than can be undertaken here).

We submit, here, that in his writings on theocracy Solovyov was able to highlight numerous other facets of religious life and thought. He offers valuable insights in four major areas:

a) in his treatment of Church-State relations in the Christian state;

b) in providing a serious and informed reappraisal of Jewish spirituality generally, and of the Jewish, religiously-based ideal of community in particular;

c) in his description of the Priest, the King and especially the Prophet as <u>spiritual types</u>;

d) in his emphasis upon the <u>practical</u> application of religious teachings, in his insistence that not only the Christian philosopher but all sincerely believing Christians are concerned, primarily, with 'justification of the Good'.

Vladimir et l'Etat Chrétien, 1888), Solovyov writes of the need for Russia to overcome the bad principle of egoism and of national particularity through voluntary <u>denial</u> - such as St. Vladimir achieved. (See Sob,Soch.XI,134-135). [B.22]

CHAPTER VII

TWO BASES OF 'AUTHORITY' IN VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S PHILOSOPHY: REVEALED SCRIPTURE AND SPECULATIVE REASON

From the foregoing exposition and examination of Vladimir Solovyov's religious thought, it will be apparent that he sought to lead his readers to a very profound reappraisal of Christian values. Although he always maintained that the Church guides us in these matters, and that it provides safeguards against misunderstanding and false belief, he also saw the need for independent enquiry on the part of individual philosophers.[1] He explicitly criticised 'blind faith' at the beginning of his work 'The Drama of Plato's Life', (Zhiznennaya Drama Platona, 1898):

> 'Faith, when it is only fact accepted through tradition, is an extremely undurable and unsteady thing ... Exclusively factual, blind faith is not in conformity with the dignity of man.'[2]

Solovyov certainly endorsed the Platonic view of philosophy as being directly concerned with life.[3] He also held that philosophical enquiry must, in the first place, give a satisfactory answer to the question regarding the goal of existence.[4] This question would simply not arise if all men lived in a state of complete well-being; but, since it is

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1 Sob.Soch.IX,89-90. (This point is affirmed in the opening pages of Solovyov's uncompleted work 'Theoretical Philosophy', Teoreticheskaya Filosofiya, 1897-1899).

2 Sob.Soch.IX, 199.
(Vera, kogda ona est' tol'ko fakt, prinyatiy chrez predanie, est' delo chrezvichayno neprochnoe, neustoychivoe ... Isklyuchitel'no faktichеskaya, slepaya vera nesoobrazna dostoinstvu cheloveka.)

3 Ibid., 197. See also: Sob.Soch.I, 291-292, 304. (The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge, 1877).

4 Sob.Soch.I, 250. (The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge).

very clear that they do not live in such a state and that they generally experience considerable dissatisfaction, difficulties and suffering, the question of the goal or purpose of this unsatisfying existence must arise in their minds. It is indeed this, wrote Solovyov, that prompts men to engage in philosophical enquiry.[5]

This emphasis upon the unsatisfactory aspect of man's present, natural state is central to Solovyov's thought (see our Chapter IV), and it is brought to the reader's attention whenever he refers to the contrast between 'that which is' (to, chto est') and 'that which ought to be' (to,chto dolzhno byt').[6] Solovyov also referred to this contrast as a contrast between the 'actual' and the 'ideal'. His writings on religion are distinctive in their insistence upon the gradual nature of man's attainment of the 'ideal'. He accepted the New Testament symbol of the growth of a tree from its initial seed-form as indicative of this gradual attainment. It is clear that Solovyov was not the only exponent of traditional Christian teachings to focus upon the gradual attainment of Christian goals, but he took particular care to illustrate that feature of the New Testament message. The symbol of the tree's growth also accorded with his view of the Christian Church as an organic, living body (a view he accepted as traditionally Christian, founded directly upon the New Testament). He wrote of Christianity as the fullest religious revelation, as the religion that shows men the way to the ultimate good or welfare of all. On his account, it is specifically

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5 Ibid.

6 In his work 'The Central Philosophy of Buddhism' (1955) Professor T.R.V. Murti associates the beginning of spiritual life precisely with the experience and awareness of this contrast:

> 'Spiritual life is born of the sharp contrast felt between what is and what should be. It is the consciousness of suffering ...'

See pp.260-261 in the George Allen & Unwin 1980 Reprint. [B.S.2]

the appearance of the God-man Jesus Christ on earth that makes the spiritual salvation of collective humanity possible.[7]

Solovyov's examination of traditional Christian beliefs is extremely wide-ranging. By means of an extensive analysis of contemporary secular philosophies and of non-Christian beliefs he attempted to show firm grounds (theological and philosophical grounds) for accepting Christianity as the religious revelation most truly and fully answering humanity's needs. He defined his own aims as a philosopher in terms of 'justifying the faith of our fathers' and of 'justifying the Good'. Our previous Chapter examined four areas of his religious and philosophical thought where he especially strove to 'justify the Good'. To determine the nature of the Good was, from his point of view, a task of prime significance. His Introduction to 'Justification of the Good' ends with the following affirmation:

> 'Prior to any metaphysics, we can and must learn what our reason finds as good in human nature, and how it develops and extends this natural good, raising it to the significance of complete moral perfection.'[8]

In Part II of this work he provides his own definition of the fullness or completeness of the Good. The Good, in its fullest sense, is expressed in three forms or aspects. Solovyov writes:

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[7] As Solovyov's examination of non-Christian religions shows, he did not regard this prospect of universal salvation as a feature of all religions. (See our Chapters IV and IX).
This collective aspect, and the true freedom of the constituent members of human society, are stressed in Solovyov's Doctoral thesis 'A Critique of Abstract Principles' (Kritika Otvlechënnykh Nachal, 1877-1880), Sob. Soch.II, 176-177, et al. See also 'Justification of the Good' (Opravdanie Dobra), Sob.Soch.VIII, 514.

[8] Sob.Soch.VIII,47.
(Ran'she vsyakoy metafiziki my mozhem i dolzhny uznat', chtò nash razum nakhodit kak dobro v chelovecheskoy prirode, i kak on eto estestvennoe dobro razvivaet i rasshiryaet, vozvodya ego do znacheniya vsetselogo nravstvennogo sovershenstva.)

'Perfection, i.e. the fullness of good, or the unity of good and blessedness, is experienced in three aspects:

1) absolutely essential, eternally real perfection - in God;
2) potential [perfection] - in the human consciousness, containing in itself the absolute plenitude of being as an idea, and in the human will, positing it as an ideal and norm for itself;

finally

3) in the actual realisation of perfection or in the historical process of perfectibility.'[9]

It is very noteworthy that in this late work Solovyov accords such great importance to the notion of perfectibility, to the notion that man can consciously, in his mind and his will, accept plenitude of being as the goal (the inherently good goal) to be attained. This restatement of his belief in man's receptivity to the idea of perfection is in itself valuable. Furthermore, one deduces, from this restatement, that Solovyov felt the fundamental content and the direction of his earlier religious writings to be correct. It was his firmly held conviction that man is a 'moral being' receptive to the idea of the Good which led him to see a reformulation of his moral philosophy as necessary,[10]

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[9] Ibid., 198.
(Sovershenstvo, t.e.polnota dobra, ili edinstvo dobra i blaga, vyrazhaetsya v trëkh vidakh:1) bezuslovno sushchee, vechno deystvitel'noe sovershenstvo - v Boge 2) potentsial'noe - v chelovecheskom soznanii, vmeshchayushchem v sebe absolyutnuyu polnotu bytiya, kak ideyu, i v chelovecheskoy vole, stavyashchey eë kak ideal i normu dlya sebya; nakonets 3) v deystvitel'nom osushchestvlenii sovershenstva ili v istoricheskom protsesse sovershenstvovaniya.)
(Solovyov's italics)

[10] The care and precision of Solovyov in this task of reformulation may be judged if we recall the fact that he revised 'Justification of the Good' five times: Sob.Sbch.VIII, 7.
See the D.Phil. dissertation on this work of reformulation, under the title "The Russian Text of Vladimir Solov'ev's 'Justification of the Good'" ('Der Russische Text der 'Rechtfertigung des Guten' von Vladimir Solov'ev') Bruno Wembris, Eberhard-Karls Univ., Tübingen, 1973. [B.81]

a refinement, indeed, of the definitions and thoughts contained in 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life'. We argue that Radlov was justified in characterising Solovyov as primarily a 'moral philosopher'.[11] A distinctive feature of Solovyov's conception of moral philosophy is this: he was opposed to those philosophers who described moral philosophy (or ethics) as 'incompatible' with the notion of determinism. In the Introduction to 'Justification of the Good' he writes of man's conscious submission to the idea of the Good as the very highest form of 'determinism':

> '... Ethics is not only compatible with determinism, but even calls forth the highest manifestation of necessity. When a morally highly developed man in full consciousness submits his will to the idea of the Good, [this idea] fully apprehended by him and exhaustively reflected upon, then it is already clear to anyone that in this submission to the moral law there is no kind of arbitrary will, that it is completely necessary.'[12]

This aspect of Solovyov's religious thought is well elucidated in Radlov's article 'Vladimir Solovyov's Teaching on the Freedom of Will', (Uchenie Vladimira Solovyova o Svobode Voli).[13] Radlov argues the case that in his treatment of the themes of free will and determinism Solovyov

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11 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, X, xxxv-xxxvi (from the Biographical Sketch by Ernest L. Radlov).

12 Sob.Soch.VIII, 45.
(... Etika ne tol'ko sovmestima s determinizmom, no dazhe obuslovlivaet soboy vysshee obnaruzhenie neobkhodimosti. Kogda chelovek vysokogo nravstvennogo razvitiya s polnym soznaniem podchinyaet svoyu volyu idee dobra, vsestoronne im poznannoy i do kontsa produmannoy, togda uzhe dlya vsyakogo yasno,chto v etom podchinenii nravstvennomu zakonu net nikakogo proizvola,chto ono sovershenno neobkhodimo.)

13 Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya, 1911. See also Solovyov's articles for the Brokhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia on predetermination, (Sob.Soch.X, 258-259) and on freedom of will (Sob. Soch.X, 272-284, esp.pp.275-277). [Radlov- S.187]

adopts the position taken by St. Augustine.[14] This position, paradoxical in its assertion that the activity of those who tend towards 'goodness' is more circumscribed than the activity of those who tend towards 'evil', is actually tenable and internally consistent. The activity of those who tend towards 'goodness' is increasingly 'circumscribed' precisely on account of their avoidance (their increasing avoidance) of evil; on the other hand, those who tend towards 'evil' do not submit themselves to the moral law (nravstvenniy zakon), and their activity is consequently less 'circumscribed' - it is grounded in self-will, which allows the subject to follow, quite arbitrarily, any course of activity.

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Solovyov's enquiry concerning morality, as presented in his 'Justification of the Good', begins with an extensive analysis of the human feelings of shame, pity and piety, for he claims that these three feelings provide the basis of man's 'moral nature'. Man's capacity to feel shame, pity and piety (especially shame) is, for Solovyov, clear evidence that he does not accept 'given' reality in a neutral or passive way, but that he actively responds to it in a number of appropriate ways.

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[14] Another recent figure to acknowledge St.Augustine's insights into this matter was Ananda Coomaraswamy, although he cites textual evidence to show that St.Augustine was but one of numerous authoritative figures to formulate such a view of 'free will'. See 'Selected Papers', Ananda Coomaraswamy, Princeton University Press (Bollingen Series), 1977, Vol.II, 370-371:

> '... We are, then, at the mercy of our own characteristic willing; when the sensitive powers are given free rein, whenever we are doing what we like or thinking wishfully, insofar as our whole behaviour - whatever good or evil - is unprincipled, we are not free agents, but passive subjects of what are rightly called our 'passions' ... So St.Augustine asks: 'Why, then, should miserable men venture to pride themselves on their 'free will' before they are set free? (De spiritu et littera, 52) ... Thus Free Will is not ours by nature, but only potentially; our self-will is only a wanting, a hunger and a thirst, and anything but a Free Will.' [B.321]

In certain instances he responds to this reality by feeling shame (styd): when confronted with purely material, natural being, he responds by asserting - 'I exist as a natural creature, but I am not only this; I am conscious of something 'other', I am conscious of another level of existence, and therefore I am not able to remain within the confines of purely material, natural being. To remain as such would be shameful for me.'[15] Solovyov defines pity as the appropriate response of man to his fellow men,

and piety (or veneration) as the appropriate response to Divine being.[16] He writes of man's capacity to identify with the sufferings of another being and to feel sympathy with that being (as we shall see below); but he also goes on to define the more specifically religious basis of the feeling of pity:

> '... Pity, which we feel towards a being similar to us, receives another significance when we see in this being the image and likeness of God. Here we admit [acknowledge] the absolute worth in this being, we admit that this being is an end (tsel') for God and must all the more be an end for us - that God Himself does not make him only a means for Himself, - we respect this being since God respects him ...'[17]

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[15] Sob.Soch.VIII, 53-54, et al.

[16] Ibid., 59, 61.

[17] Ibid., 206.

> (Zhalost', kotoruyu my ispytyvaem k sushchestvu podobnomu nam, poluchaet inoe znachenie, kogda my vidim v etom suschestve obraz i podobie Bozhie. Tut my priznaem za etim sushchestvom bezuslovnoe dostoinstvo, priznaem chto ono est' tsel' dlya Boga i tem bolee dolzhno byt' tsel'yu dlya nas,;chto sam Bog ne delaet ego tol'ko orudiem dlya sebya, - my uvazhaem eto sushchestvo, tak kak Bog ego uvazhaet ...) (Solovyov's italics)

In the same passage Solovyov notes that this religious aspect of pity does not negate natural pity or replace it; rather, it strengthens and deepens natural pity. (Ibid.)

The views that Solovyov formulated on shame, pity and piety were intended to serve as a refinement and general correction of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy. He submits Schopenhauer's account of morality to criticism, for he could not accept that he was correct in relating morality to the one principle of pity or sympathy (Mitleid, sostradanie).[18] Solovyov describes Schopenhauer's argument as 'rhetorically' elegant and impressive, but weak from the philosophical point of view. He writes that Schopenhauer has not properly substantiated his claims, namely a) the claim that a total identification between oneself and another, quite separate, alien being who is suffering, is possible; b) that this identification (which entails an elimination of the barriers between the 'I' and the 'non-I') is the sole basis for one's own motivation.[19] Solovyov criticises the German philosopher for resorting to an abstract metaphysical conception in order to account for something quite adequately explained on the purely empirical level.[20] The characteristic quality of pity, that it <u>binds</u> men together and creates unity between them, may be seen on the very simple, empirically observable, level in the relations between a mother and her children. The abstract, metaphysical conception of the elimination of barriers between the 'I' and the 'non-I' is, in Solovyov's view, superfluous.[21] He defines the true essence of pity in the following terms:

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18 Ibid., 96-98.
19 Ibid., 91-95.
20 Ibid., 93-95.
21 Ibid.

'The true essence of pity or sympathy is not at all the immediate identification of oneself with another, but the recognition of the other's own significance - of his right to existence and possible well-being.'[22]

As may be seen above, and from a reading of the entire work 'Justification of the Good', Solovyov brings out the specifically religious or spiritual significance of shame, pity and piety. In his treatment of these, he is able to incorporate a large number of the ideas that he formulated in earlier works: this is especially true of his treatment of pity (zhalost') as a force that unifies mankind. His characterisation of Christianity as the religion eminently concerned with universal salvation - and with the qualitative, radical transformation (preobrazovanie) of the entire human community and of material nature itself - allowed Solovyov to return to these fundamental themes in his treatment of pity.

However, although the religious or spiritual content of this work is very great, we submit that the initial stages of analysis (on the nature of shame, pity and piety, and also on the nature and status of conscience, sovest') give grounds for concern. His purpose in the opening chapters of the work is clear: he wishes to emphasise that in the elaboration of his own moral philosophy he has taken due account of the actual nature of man. He describes those philosophies that fail to recognise man's nature as fundamentally unproductive:

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[22] Ibid., 98.
(Istinnaya sushchnost' zhalosti ili sostradaniya vovse ne est' neposredstvennoe otozhdestvlenie sebya s drugim, a priznanie za drugim sobstvennogo (emu prinadlezhashchego) znacheniya, - prava na sushchestvovanie i vozmozhnoe blagopoluchie.)

> 'Any moral teaching, whatever its internal persuasiveness or its external authority might be, would remain ineffectual and fruitless if it did not find itself firm bases of support in the actual moral nature of man.'[23]

Here, as in other works, he seeks to avoid exclusively abstract argument, and he calls his opening chapter '<u>The Primary Data of Morality</u>', (Pervichnye Dannye Nravstvennosti). He criticised Schopenhauer for the <u>imprecision</u> of his terminology,[24] and intended that his own system, founded on three quite specific human feelings, should yield a more satisfying account of moral principles, values and their application.

Our main grounds for criticism of Solovyov's approach to moral philosophy are as follows.

The feelings of shame, pity and piety which he defines as the 'primary data of morality' prove to be, for him, more than simply 'primary'. They <u>actually</u> assume a greater significance for his system than the 'supporting' function mentioned in the above passage. According to his account, all appropriate and 'moral' actions may be defined by reference to shame, pity and piety. Solovyov amply illustrates the way that man's relations to what is below him, on the same level as him and above him could plausibly be viewed as originating in the human feelings of shame, pity and piety respectively.

We consider that the serious defect in Solovyov's explanation of this subject is that <u>all</u> aspects of the 'moral' or 'good' life are referred back to, or are measured in relation to, these three human feelings. The first part of '<u>Justification of the Good</u>' provides a

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[23] Ibid., 49.
(Vsyakoe nravstvennoe uchenie, kakova by ni byla ego vnutrennyaya ubeditel'nost' ili vneshnyaya avtoritetnost', ostavalos' by bessil'nym i besplodnym, esli by ne nakhodila dlya sebya tverdykh tochek opory v samoy nravstvennoy prirode cheloveka.)

[24] Ibid., 94.

rather striking and exceptional instance where Solovyov proceeds not from the transcendent realm to the human and phenomenal realm, but from the human and phenomenal to the transcendent realm. This may best be established by citing the philosopher's conception of conscience (sovest') at the end of the first chapter (Part I). Even in the Table of Contents conscience appears as 'a modification of shame in a distinct and generalised form' (Sovest', kak vidoizmenenie styda v otchëtlivoy i obobshchennoy forme).[25] In the text itself, Solovyov explicitly writes of conscience as being 'only [sic] a development of shame' - '... tak kak sovest' est' tol'ko razvitie styda ...'[26] This represents an unacceptable diminution of the value and, indeed, of the mystery of conscience. This is so, despite Solovyov's assertion that 'only the voice of conscience' gives moral significance to our relations to our neighbour and to God.[27] In this important passage on shame and conscience it is conscience that is assigned a secondary status. The distinctly human feeling of shame is viewed, here, as 'the one root' of man's moral life.[28] In effect, the phenomenon of human shame is given ultimate moral significance by Solovyov, and conscience is described as derived from shame. Here his approach to the question of morality is very much more that of the empiricist than that of the mystic.

There are numerous features in Solovyov's religious thought that

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25 Ibid., xi.

26 Ibid,, 64.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

(... Tak kak sovest' est' tol'ko razvitiya styda, to takim obrazom vsya nravstvennaya zhizn' cheloveka, vo vsekh svoikh trëkh sferakh, vyrastaet kak by iz odnogo kornya, i pri tom chisto-chelovecheskogo, po sushchestvu chuzhdogo miru zhivotnomu.) (Solovyov's italics)

permit one to describe it as 'mystical' in character. He acknowledged mystical apprehension as the foremost means of acquiring knowledge of reality.[29] He especially valued faith as a means of gaining certainty about the deepest truths accessible to man.[30] His observations upon the nature of faith itself, and upon its importance for the prophetic type of man, strike us as firmly founded on Solovyov's personal experience. The philosopher's writings on 'sacred corporeality' (svataya telesnost') especially in 'Judaism and the Christian Question' and in 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', convey a very deep awareness of the essential unity of the cosmic order, and of the penetration of matter by spirit. The receptivity of the created order to spiritual influence is indicated by Solovyov in his writings on Sophia and the World Soul (mirovaya dusha).[31] It is in his treatment of this theme that Solovyov's name has become especially celebrated in the field of mystical religious thought.

Thomas Masaryk and Lev Shestov came to describe Solovyov's philosophy as flawed by inner contradictions.[32] Masaryk and Shestov argued, quite independently, that in Solovyov's writings free speculative enquiry (epitomized by Kant's critical philosophy, according to Masaryk) conflicted with acceptance of the authority of revealed Scripture.

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[29] Sob.Soch.I, 303-306 (The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge).

[30] Sob.Soch.IV, 146 (Judaism and the Christian Question).

[31] Here Solovyov's preoccupation with the notion of perfectibility, (Sovershenstvovanie), is also directly relevant: following Schelling, he viewed the increasing perfection of the world order as a gradual process realised precisely in the historical development of conscious, self-aware man. Thus, there are good grounds for considering Solovyov's emphasis upon the perfectibility of the world order as an important aspect of his mystical outlook.

[32] 'The Spirit of Russia', T.G. Masaryk, London 1955 edition, Vol.II, Chap. XVII; 'Thought and Apocalypse' (Umozrenie i Apokalipsis), Lev Shestov, first published in 1927, but contained in Shestov's collection of essays 'Thought and Revelation' (Umozrenie i Otkrovenie), Paris 1964.

[B.307 and 234]

Shestov was aware that Solovyov wished to appeal to reason so as to support his religious views, but writes that the actual result of this endeavour was unfortunate and costly for Solovyov. According to Shestov, reason, in Solovyov's system, adopted the role of ultimate authority; in Shestov's chosen phrase, religious beliefs treated by Solovyov appeared 'in the court of reason', 'pod sudom razuma'. The crisis and tension of the philosopher's very last years sprang from his belated realisation that this constant appeal to reason was misconceived and fruitless.[33]

The conclusions of Masaryk and Shestov are, in our view, acceptable although the former critic's negative assessment of Solovyov's personal character is over-stated.[34] There were truly conflicting tendencies within Solovyov, and these are also embodied in his philosophical system. He accorded Scripture and revealed religious teachings a high status that philosophers generally do not assign to Scripture. His reliance upon Scripture is clearly evident in 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life', but it may especially be seen in his 'The History and Future of Theocracy' and in 'Russia and the Universal Church'. In 'The History and Future of Theocracy' he used Books of the Old Testament as reliable sources in his account of the development of the Judaic theocratic ideal. In the analysis he provided, his concern with the spiritual destiny of the Jewish people is very clear to see. He accepted many fundamental features of Judaic religious thought as valuable, most notably the Judaic view of the Absolute as Personal, the Jews' messianism (when freed of its exclusive emphasis upon national interests) and their

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33 'Thought and Apocalypse', Lev Shestov, Paris 1964 edition, pp.42, 88.

34 'The Spirit of Russia', T.G. Masaryk, London 1955 edition, p.277. Masaryk describes Solovyov as 'a decadent struggling for regeneration'.

understanding of 'sacred corporeality'. His desire to defend spiritual values is clearly evident in the philosopher's whole treatment of Judaic spirituality, the Tradition with which he felt such a deep and extraordinary affinity.

Solovyov's exposition of central Christian teachings inevitably draws greatly on Scriptural sources, primarily on the New Testament itself. He was exceptionally familiar with the writings of the Church Fathers, and he frequently cited Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Maxim the Confessor and others. He was able to show the major developments in Christian theological thought, and was well informed on the various heretical movements that challenged the Church especially during the 4th and 5th Centuries.[35] His expert knowledge of Latin and Greek made many West European and Catholic sources accessible to him (Scriptural literature, exegesis and critical literature, and the works of mystics such as Jacob Boehme). It is clear that Solovyov was immensely gifted as a scholar, and this enabled him to pursue more effectively the lines of study that his chosen task of religious-philosophical synthesis required. His early letters to his younger cousin, Katya Romanova,[36] express the confidence he felt in his ability to set out the major lines for a synthesis of traditional Christian teachings and the findings of contemporary philosophy and science.

Although Solovyov's first major work, 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' contains lengthy criticism of Hegel for an unwarranted elevation of human reason, it is apparent that Solovyov's own reliance

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35 See Sob.Soch.IV, 33-48 (The Great Controversy and Christian Politics); see also Solovyov's articles for the Brokhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia on Manichaism, Monophysite and Monothelite heresies, Sob.Soch.X.

36 Pis'ma III, 881-89, 105-106.

upon (and confidence in) reason is very considerable. The form and style of his early works (1874-1880) reveal a mind well trained in the procedures of rational, speculative thought. Solovyov used the forms and categories of rational thought extensively. While this frequently enabled him to make lucid analogies and to explain one field of knowledge by reference to another (often using examples in mathematics or in the natural sciences), Solovyov tended towards an over-schematised presentation of his ideas. It is very noteworthy that at the end of his life he still maintained a very profound confidence in the worth of philosophical thought as a means to attain the truth. In the first chapter of his uncompleted work 'Theoretical Philosophy', (Teoreticheskaya Filosofiya, 1897-1899) he writes:

> 'For the philosopher by calling there is nothing more desirable than truth comprehended and verified by thought; for this reason he loves the very process of thought as the unique means to attain the desired goal, and he gives himself to it without any outside reservations or fears.'[37]

Our examination of Solovyov's opening arguments in 'Justification of the Good' establishes that in following the path of thought (myshlenie)

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37 Sob.Soch.IX, 93.
(... Dlya filosofa po prizvaniyu net nichego bolee zhelatel'no, chem osmyslennaya, ili proverennaya myshleniem istina; poetomu on lyubit samiy protsess myshleniya, kak edinstvenniy sposob dostignut' zhelannoy tseli, i otdaetsya emu bez vsyakikh postoronnikh opaseniy i strakhov.)

he was not wholly free of problems or dangers. He appeals both to empirical evidence and to logical argument[38] in his attempt to justify the founding of his moral philosophy upon three principles. And his attempt to classify the various virtues and human feelings as aspects of the three fundamental 'moral' feelings (shame, pity and piety) poses problems. He proceeds from the fact that men experience shame and feel pity and piety, and constructs his moral system by continual reference to those three human feelings. He does not proceed from the transcendent realm. This is nowhere more apparent than in his arguments concerning conscience, sovest'.[39] Conscience is viewed, in Solovyov's argument, as an aspect of shame (vidoizmenenie styda), and in the same passage all of man's moral life is said to originate in the feeling of shame.

Solovyov's reliance upon rational thought and argument may be seen in his 'Lectures on Godmanhood', especially in the 6th and 7th Lectures, which are devoted to lengthy explanations regarding the Holy Trinity and the relationships of the Three Persons of the Trinity. Solovyov's belief that these special relationships are a matter for logical proof (as well as being expounded in the teachings of the Church) was reaffirmed a decade later, in 'Russia and the Universal Church' (La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle).[40] Solovyov accepts the Christian

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38 Sob.Soch.VIII, 122.
(Yasno, takim obrazom, chto esli by my dazhe ne nakhodili v psikhicheskom opyte trëkh osnovnykh nravstvennykh chuvstv: styda, zhalosti i blagogoveniya, - uzhe na odnikh logicheskikh osnovaniyakh neobkhodimo bylo by razdelit' vsyu polnotu nravstvennykh otnosheniy na tri sfery, ili prinyat' tri osnovnye vida dobrodeteley ...)

39 Ibid., 64.

40 3rd French edition, pp.212-213. (Russian trans., Sob.Soch.XI, 283).

teaching of the Trinity as a revealed teaching,[41] but he also wanted logical proof of that teaching, or more precisely, he concluded that a full acceptance of the existence of God entailed acknowledgement of certain relationships (i.e. within the Trinity) that could be established by logical proof. This need or desire for logical and other rational means of proof was not wholly reconciled with the philosopher's acceptance of Christian Scripture as 'authoritative'. For Solovyov, revealed Scripture is not the sole basis of 'authority' for ideas, even in the sphere of religion - this is what we are obliged to conclude, when we examine his philosophical system. The concern with speculative reason, a prominent element in the works of his early period, may be detected in the works and unfinished projects of the decade 1890 to 1900. Practical matters were important to Solovyov in that last decade of his life (see Chapter VIII). But, he wrote, apart from practical goals

> '... there exists in our spirit an independent, purely mental or theoretical need, without whose satisfaction the value of life itself becomes dubious...'[42]

It is unfortunate, indeed, that Solovyov should have come to the point where lack of satisfaction in the domain of theory appeared to really jeopardise 'the value of life itself'. In order to rectify matters, Solovyov had no need to adopt a 'philosophy of the Irrational' such as the kind later formulated by his critic, Shestov. Rather, being already extremely familiar with the Patristic literature of the Orthodox Tradition and knowing of the contemplative disciplines developed in that

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41 Ibid.

42 Sob.Soch.IX, 90.
(... sushchestvuet v nashem dukhe samostoyatel'naya potrebnost' chisto-umstvennaya, ili teoreticheskaya, bez udovletvoreniya kotoroy tsennost' samoy zhizni stanovitsya somnitel'noy ...)

Tradition, Solovyov could have derived considerable benefit from a closer practical contact with Orthodox contemplatives. His acute awareness of the spiritual dangers involved in exclusive adherence to 'the contemplative way' suited him for this course of action.[43] The importance of the Transfiguration in his conception of the Christian faith gave him very important common ground with the contemplative monks of Mount Athos.[44] His penetrating insights into the nature of asceticism (in 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life') and his recognition of the need for self-denial (samootrechenie)[45] brought Solovyov even closer to them.

We shall examine Solovyov's actual stance on the subjects of contemplation, active spirituality and quietism in the following two Chapters.

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43 Sob.Soch.IV, 110. (The Great Controversy and Christian Politics). Here Solovyov describes the contemplative ideal of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the active ideal of the Western, Catholic Church as ideals that complement and require one another. At the collective and the individual level, exclusive assertion of contemplation or action is harmful.

44 'Staretz Amvrosy', John Dunlop, Chap.II: 'The Distinctive Features of Orthodox Spirituality', pp.17-38 (Mowbrays 1975 edition).

45 Sob.Soch.III, 314 (The Spiritual Foundations of Life).

CHAPTER VIII

'TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE'

'Reality in general, and in the most direct way human society, becomes for Plato a subject not for denial and avoidance, but for lively interest. The anomalies of the existing order, its lack of correspondence to ideal requirements, are recognised as before, but the relation of the philosopher to this contradiction changes. He wants practically to oppose evil, to rectify worldly falsehoods, to help [alleviate] worldly sufferings.'

From Vladimir Solovyov's article on Plato for the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia, Collected Works of V.S. Solovyov, Vol.X, 470.

'Not to be led astray by the apparent domination of evil, and not to renounce the inapparent good on account of it - [this] is a feat of faith.'

From Vladimir Solovyov's 2nd speech in Memory of F.M. Dostoevsky (February 1882), Collected Works of V.S. Solovyov, Vol.III, 201.

We have already devoted considerable space to an examination of Vladimir Solovyov's views on Judaic and Christian schemes for a theocratic society. We have also seen how the notion of theocracy became closely bound, in Solovyov's mind, with the attempt to define as fully and lucidly as possible the features of a 'spiritual community'.

Solovyov's writings on the theocratic ideal and on the theocratic government of human society belong, primarily, to the decade of the 1880s, and although they reveal certain enduring qualities of his religious

thought, these writings require consideration in the light of his later works. His works of the decade 1890 to 1900 contain detailed and highly consistent statements on culture, government and on the stance of the Christian philosopher that cannot be overlooked. If, during the 1880s, Solovyov found it difficult to defend himself in a convincing way against charges that his theocratic schemes were wholly impractical and 'utopian', he addressed himself to very specific criticisms of Russian society in the course of the following decade, and his observations on that theme allow one to build up a composite picture of his conception of authentic Christian culture.

The works examined in the present Chapter belong to the years 1890 to 1900, the last decade of the philosopher's career. His writings during that period are marked by a high degree of consistency: certain lines of argument reappear in various works during that whole decade, a clear measure of the importance he attached to their clarification and solution.

Here we specially examine two late works by Solovyov. In reverse chronological order these are 'The Drama of Plato's Life', (Zhiznennaya Drama Platona),[1] a 50-page study written in 1898, and secondly, a lecture which the philosopher delivered in 1891, entitled 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview', (Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya).[2] Both these works contain materials that fully testify to his lasting concern with Christian religious values and with

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[1] Sob.Soch.IX, 194-241.

[2] Sob.Soch.VI, 381-393. We actually examine these works in reverse chronological order: it will be clearer to follow Solovyov's conception of Christian society if we first take into account his observations on a non-Christian society. Then we have a clear basis for examining the features that he regarded as distinctive and characteristic of Christian society.

their implementation in the life and organisation of the social community. We submit that these works also reveal part of his methodological approach, for, in expounding his own system, he examined a wide range of other religious and philosophical teachings. He examined the framework of theological beliefs and premises of particular religions, and also their impact (whether favourable or detrimental) on the societies and nations that adopted them. He employed philosophical theological, and cultural-cum-historical criteria in his evaluation of a religious system, and these two works are noteworthy examples of this fundamentally comparative approach.

We argue, here, that Solovyov returned again and again to the question of what constitutes a genuinely Christian society, approaching that question from different points of departure. In the two works to be examined, he reflects on the weaknesses in Ancient Greek society of Plato's time and in Byzantine society, respectively. What he writes serves as a basis for an increasingly refined understanding of the features that distinguish a genuinely Christian society. The pre-Christian community of Athens provided Solovyov with one kind of contrast, while, according to him, the 'nominally' Christian community of Byzantium prior to 1453 was also to be contrasted with the true Christian social ideal.

In 'The Drama of Plato's Life', Solovyov's account of his subject's life and preoccupations focuses on the fundamental crisis of faith suffered by the young Plato when he witnessed the undeserved punishment and execution of Socrates. It was Socrates's consistent inquiries into the nature of justice that had animated the young men of the Athenian community and prompted them to explore philosophy; and it was his evident integrity and his seriousness of purpose that in time provoked

the hostility of the community at large, as he exposed to view the very poverty of their commonly held beliefs and also their lack of concern for pursuing 'the good life'. As his book shows, Solovyov was keenly aware of the tragedy (indeed, the irony also) of this state of affairs - namely, of the unpalatable fact that the best society of the pre-Christian age (the best in Solovyov's account of world history up to that point) - universally hailed for its achievement, in government, in mathematics and the sciences, the arts and in other fields - had proved unable to contain and tolerate a man devoted to the notions of truth and justice.[3] Solovyov maintains it was awareness of this tragic weakness in Greek society that induced a deep crisis of faith in Plato, so that he subsequently denied the worth of a society which destroys a just man (pravednik), and that he (Plato) increasingly affirmed the existence of another, ideal world, where truth lives and remains intact.[4] On Solovyov's account, Plato constructed an idealist philosophy that was to exercise a profound influence on the minds and imagination of men, but a philosophy that - when compared with Christian thought - was flawed by an extreme, virtually irresolvable dualism, a complete severance of the realms of the ideal and the phenomenal. Plato was driven to this extreme (and ultimately untenable) view of the separated ideal and phenomenal worlds, maintains Solovyov, initially on account of his experience in the phenomenal world, that of witnessing the Athenians' proven disregard for justice when they sentenced to death Socrates, his teacher.

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[3] Sob.Soch.IX, 215-216. Solovyov stresses that the tragedy with which Plato was confronted was significantly deeper than the 'personal' tragedy of Hamlet. Plato's question was not merely a personal 'To be or not to be?', but 'Is there or is there not to be truth on earth?'

[4] Ibid., 219.

Commentators on the life and work of Solovyov attribute the writing of 'The Drama of Plato's Life' to two factors; in the first place, to a sense of personal, and to some extent spiritual, affinity that Solovyov felt with the Greek philosopher; in the second place, to a sense of disillusion, and at times world-weariness, which the Russian philosopher appeared to experience in the last decade of his life, when he considered society's resistance to Christian teaching and to the general notion of improvement or perfectibility (sovershenstvovanie), the worth and importance of which he had stressed throughout his own writings. Janko Lavrin writes:

> 'In trying to explain the character and even the sequence of Plato's works by means of the inner drama of Plato's disappointment, he [Solovyov] incidentally clarified and overcame his own pessimistic leanings.'[5]

Although these two aspects of 'The Drama of Plato's Life' are significant - namely, the affinity that Solovyov felt with Plato, and the personal disillusion he was able to articulate in the process of treating Plato's idealism - we argue, here, that this late work reflects, first and foremost, his lasting concern with religious values.

As may be judged from a reading of Solovyov's early correspondence,[6] he conceived his own life's task to be the transmission of Christian truths in a form accessible to a wide section of the educated Orthodox laity, whose active recommitment to Christian faith and practice he most earnestly sought to bring about.

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[5] See Lavrin's Foreword to the English translation of 'The Drama of Plato's Life': 'Plato', trans. by Richard Gill, London 1935. [$.40]

[6] Pis'ma III, 88-89, 91.

These letters quite explicitly reflect Solovyov's search for the most efficacious means to reanimate his prospective readers' concern for the spiritual dimension of their lives.[7] A part of his endeavour to impress upon Christian-educated, but agnostic, Russians the validity and direct import of Christian teaching to them consisted in an extensive examination of values. We submit that he undertook to establish, both from the philosophical and the theological points of view, that the criteria for action and for moral choices which Christianity provides are demonstrably more reliable and well-founded than alternative, non-Christian sets of criteria.

Solovyov's own preoccupation with values appears to have been animated particularly by reflection on the kind of questions which Socrates brought to prominence - concerning virtues, justice and the Good - and also by reflection on the subsequent career of Plato, his outstanding pupil. The Russian philosopher was acutely conscious of the strengths and the attraction of Platonic idealism, and he very readily acknowledged its enduring contribution to human thought and creativity. However, he felt able to show that unqualified assent to Plato's views is not legitimate: even in terms of his own premises, Plato could be faulted. In the second place, Solovyov finds his idealist philosophy deficient when compared to the Christian account of the cosmic order. Briefly, Solovyov's criticisms are these:

a) Plato betrayed the spirit of Socratic teaching, the aims and method of which had elicited such a positive and creative response from him in the initial stage of his career. On Solovyov's account,[8] Plato - in the elaboration

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[7] Ibid., 88.

[8] Sob.Soch.X, 472.

of his political philosophy - arrived at a denial of individuals' freedom to determine questions of religion and social morality independently of the 'authority' of the City. This autonomy and right of free enquiry were the very things which Socrates, his teacher, sought to secure for the citizens of the Athenian City-State, and it is clear from the nature of Plato's first writings that initially he wholly accepted and endorsed the goal pursued by Socrates. Particularly significant and ironic for Solovyov was the consideration that Plato's 'betrayal' of Socratic principles arose precisely from an attempt to determine the optimum arrangement of men's social relations.[9]

b) In his comparative evaluation of Platonism and Christian thought Solovyov concludes that the Christian account of the cosmic order is more satisfactory and internally consistent, for it avoids the problems posed by adherence to Plato's strictly dualistic conception of the universe as ideal and phenomenal.[10]

Solovyov's reflections on the career of Plato provide his educated readers with a stimulating and thought-provoking reappraisal of a familiar figure, and one may suppose that this was a significant part of his educative aim. (He was, also, sufficiently well qualified to address his findings to the specialist in this field.[11])

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[9] Sob.Soch.IX, 239-240.

[10] Ibid., 221, 225, 227, 229-230, 231, 234-235.

[11] In collaboration with his younger brother, Mikhail Sergeevich, he translated some of Plato's Dialogues into Russian and provided commentaries on their exact chronology; Sob.Soch.XII, 360-480, 496-525.

A problem that has faced successive generations of philosophers is the problem of establishing whether their philosophical labours entitle, or indeed, require, them to renounce the world of human affairs. One of the most enduring and widespread views regarding the philosopher is that he is a person distinguished from others by his preoccupation with an order of perceptions that is worthy of man's highest faculties, and by his resistance to transient, purely pleasurable sensations which other men are, generally speaking, unable or unwilling to forego. According to this viewpoint, the philosopher's direct involvement in the normal course of human affairs and activities would make him subject to a variety of distractions, would reduce his capacity for creative, speculative thought, and would tie him too firmly to the phenomenal, time-bound and imperfect world in which men live. In more explicitly religious expressions of that same viewpoint, the philosopher involved in human affairs is said to be subject not merely to distractions, but also to sin, evil and various forms of suffering. It was held, then, that in order to preserve his integrity and his 'gift', the philosopher had to distance himself from 'the world'. A wide range of idealist, ascetical and other schools subscribed to this view of the philosopher, and in many instances they advocated a very uncompromising renunciation of worldly affairs. Too many students of 19th Century Russian intellectual and religious thought associate Vladimir Solovyov's name too readily with these 'world-renouncing' schools of idealist philosophy and asceticism, and tend to overlook the evidence which modifies or even contradicts that aspect of his thought.

The work 'The Drama of Plato's Life' and his article on Plato for the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia[12] reflect Solovyov's awareness of a

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[12] Sob.Soch.X, 453-479.

tension in Plato's life between his commitment to contemplation of the world of ideal forms and, on the other hand, his awakening concern with activity in the political sphere.[13] Solovyov gives prominent significance to the transition in Plato's life from renunciation of worldly concerns to direct involvement in the activities of men. The pessimistic strain in the Greek philosopher's thought which first allowed him to scorn the realm of human affairs gave way to an earnest and active desire for reform. Both the renunciation and, in its turn, the concern with the active reform of men's society, accorded with Plato's understanding of the philosopher's task.

Solovyov's own writings on Platonism, Christianity and on religion generally, show him to have been conscious of the demands made on man by the choice and pursuit of the contemplative life (when it entails renouncing 'the world') and the active life respectively. While he understood that in practice contemplation (philosophical or religious) and activity could appear as two mutually exclusive types of human endeavour,[14] he did not rest content with a characterisation of contemplation and activity as absolutely opposed or necessarily exclusive of one another. Solovyov took their complementarity to be

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13 Sob.Soch.IX, 237.
'Plato is not satisfied with the role of theoretician regarding the social ideal. He wants without fail to begin the practical realization of his plan.'
(Platon ne dovol'stvuetsya rol'yu teoretika sotsial'nogo ideala. On Khochet nepremenno nachat' osushchestvlenie svoego plana.)

14 Op.cit., 466-468, 470, 472 et al.

evidence of the richness of the Christian revelation, where the worth both of contemplative and of active spirituality is fully affirmed.[15]

There are many strands in Solovyov's thought that coincide in their affirmation of the need for practical, reforming activity in the world of men's affairs. His writings on odukhotvorenie, preobrazovanie,* on the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth, on Church unity, on the pernicious effects of nationalism - all these constitute different expressions of the notion that the discrepancy between ideal norms (to,chto dolzhno byt') and actual conditions of life (to,chto est') must be abolished. More precisely, Solovyov strives to show that the attainment of this goal should rightly be a matter for unanimous agreement, and that men should envisage the course of their historical development as leading specifically to that goal. Indeed, on the general Solovyovian account, men's collective morality is to be judged in terms of their enhancement or hindrance of progress towards that goal.[16]

Solovyov's observations on the life of Plato lead one to see that while he deplored the betrayal of Socratic principles entailed in

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[15] Both the active life and the contemplative life are valued in Christianity but, as the episode of Martha and Mary in the New Testament shows (Luke 10, xxxviii-xlii), those leading the active life may fail to recognise the indispensability of the contemplative element, even for a predominantly active life. It may justly be said that - in Christianity and other spiritual Traditions - the contemplative founds his own practice on the principle that his contemplation is actually the source of the most efficacious action. See 'Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action', A Colloquium, 1973, edited by Y. Ibish, Imperial University of Teheran 1976, published in Great Britain by George Allen & Unwin (1976). [8.326]

[16] Conversely, all denials of that goal or of the active efforts to attain it are characterised by Solovyov as deliberate acts of self-assertion (samoutverzhdenie), which simply aggravate men's unsatisfactory, present condition, that of mutual alienation (otchuzhdenie) and struggle.

* Spiritualisation, Transfiguration

the authoritarian scheme of state rule which emerged in the later writings,[17] he approved of the aspiration to reform society. And, furthermore, Solovyov conceived of active involvement in fundamental social reform as being entirely appropriate to the philosopher's calling.

In his Encyclopaedia article on Plato, Solovyov writes of the transition in the Greek philosopher's views, the transition from renunciation to involvement in worldly affairs. The following passage is especially noteworthy and important, because it not only comments on Plato's stance, but ends with a description of the tasks or goals that the philosopher in general should aspire to work for:

> 'Reality in general, and in the most direct way human society, becomes for Plato a subject not for denial and avoidance, but for lively interest. The anomalies of the existing order, its lack of correspondence to ideal requirements, are recognised as before, but the relation of the philosopher to this contradiction changes. He wants practically to oppose evil, to rectify worldly falsehoods, to help [alleviate] worldly sufferings.'

In Russian the last sentence reads:

> 'On khochet prakticheski protivodeistvovat' zlu, ispravlyat' mirskie nepravdy, pomogat' mirskim bedstviyam.'[18]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

This is possibly the most concise definition of Solovyov's own ideal. His seriousness of purpose was very apparent to his contemporaries, and his writings and life amply show that he, like his eminent predecessor, wanted

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17 Sob.Soch.IX, 239.

18 This formula is also included in 'The Drama of Plato's Life' (Sob.Soch.IX, 236).

'to oppose evil, to rectify worldly falsehoods,
to help [alleviate] worldly sufferings.'

On this subject, Fyodor Lvovich Sollogub (1848-1890) attempted a semi-humorous literary portrayal in verse of his friend Solovyov, entitled 'Solovyov in Fivaid' (Solovyov v Fivaide),[19] where the accent is very plainly on showing the youthful philosopher as an inspired champion of the Good. Though never completed nor published separately, the text of this play is given in the three-volume work by S.M. Lukyanov 'About Vl(adimir) S. Solovyov in his Young Years' (O Vl.S.Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody).[20] Here is a typical extract, taken from the opening section, where Satan is speaking:

'... A new enemy has appeared ... the courageous Solovyov ...
Shaking the root of evil - [in this] he has already had success,
Aiming at me with the arrow of knowledge and the javelin of faith,
He endeavours to sweep my throne off the face of this earth.'[21]

Solovyov's personal conduct and life-style were judged by numerous contemporaries to be exemplary, and even saintly, though negative views of him are also recorded. It is significant, however, that even convinced critics of Solovyov's approach to religious philosophy frequently

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19 Lukyanov III, 283-307. TSGALI (The Central State Archive of Literature and Art), Moscow: Archive (Fond.) No.453 - The Sollogub Papers. The Manuscript in its incomplete form is preserved here.

20 Lukyanov's Study also includes information on the relations between V. Solovyov and F. Sollogub, Vol.III, 307-311, and notes that Solovyov was much amused by this portrayal of him (pp.307-308). [8.4-5]

21 Ibid., 284.
(Yavilsya noviy vrag - otvazhniy Solovyov ...
A koren' zla uspel uzh potryasti,
V menya streloy nauk i drotom very tselya,
On tshchitsya moy prestol s litsa zemli smesti.)

modified their attacks by a generous acknowledgement of his aspirations. The changeable Vasiliy Rozanov, who sometimes resorted to bitter attacks on Solovyov's ideas and his personal character, has recorded one strikingly generous assessment of his personal spiritual life and his integrity. The relevant passage, which comes from the Vasiliy Rozanov Archive at TSGALI, reads as follows:

> 'In Solovyov, in the middle of the 70s, emerged a great man, apparent to all, in whom the personal relationship to God was exceptionally strong. In the spirituality of Solovyov there was also this marvellous and firm aspect, [namely], that it was in no way contrived, it did not constitute [simply] a part of his scholarly studies or the fruit of his philosophical reflections; at the same time, it was not a remnant of childish faith. This was the serious condition of a serious man, authentic, controlled; it was, precisely, a form of breathing for his conscience (bylo, imenno, formoy dykhaniya ego sovesti).'[22]

In this Chapter we have tried to show how Solovyov reacted to the problem that has traditionally faced philosophers: namely, the satisfactory resolution of the question whether their work demands involvement in the normal course of human activities or an uncompromising

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22 TSGALI (The Central State Archive of Literature and Art), Moscow: Archive (Fond.) No.419 The Vasiliy Rozanov Papers, Op.1, ed.khr.193. (V Vl.Solovyove, v seredine 70+kh godov, vystupil bol'shoy, vsem vidniy chelovek, v kotorom chrezvichayno sil'no bylo lichnoe, svoe otnoshenie k Bogu. V religioznosti Solovyova i byla eta prekrasnaya i prochnaya storona, chto ona niskol'ko ne byla nadumana, ne sostavlyala chasti ego uchënykh zanyatiy ili ploda ego filosofskikh razmyshleniy; v to zhe vremya ne byla ostatkom detskoy very. Eto bylo ser'eznoe sostoyanie ser'eznogo cheloveka, nastoyashchee, neuderzhimoe; bylo imenno formoy dykhaniya ego sovesti.)

' By the Church Walls ' (Okolo Tserkovnykh Sten), Petersburg 1906, Vol.I,p.241.

renunciation of those activities. We view 'The Drama of Plato's Life' and his Encyclopaedia article on Plato as short, but lucid essays that present the salient arguments for and against renunciation. Plato's biography serves as a focus for Solovyov's resolution of this general question, and on the basis of his evidence he concluded that the aspiration to improve society, and active involvement in human affairs, are entirely appropriate to the philosopher's calling.

Solovyov was personally concerned with a variety of causes and reforming campaigns, in some of which he played a prominent part. His contribution to the debate on the abolition of capital punishment, and his advocacy of a more liberal interpretation of law are noteworthy, and his writings on these questions fill more than 70 pages in the Collected Works.[23] He was similarly active in criticising state and Church censorship,[24] and his support for the Jews against the officially condoned anti-Semitic campaigns and pogroms is one of the most widely known facts of his biography. Here he enlisted Lev Tolstoy's support,[25] and he also produced a petition headed by Tolstoy's name when he urged the Tsarist government to donate adequate finances for the relief of the 1891 famine victims. Indeed, his rigorous application of philosophical principles to contemporary problems facing man, and his activism in the field of social reforms, call to mind recent figures of the 20th-Century who have used philosophical or religious criteria as a reliable guide to human action: Bertrand Russell, Mahatma Gandhi, Aldous Huxley

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23 Sob.Soch.VIII, 332-360, 551-600.

24 Sob.Soch.III, 235-236, 239-240. 'Concerning the Clerical Power in Russia' (O dukhovnoy vlasti v Rossii) III, 227-242; 'Pamyati Vl.S', A.F.Koni, p.38.

25 Pis'ma, Appendix (Prilozhenie) pp.254-255, Correspondence between V. Solovyov and L. Tolstoy, Feb.-March 1890. (Foyer Oriental Chrétien edition, 1970).

(whose book 'Ends and Means', 1938, merits special attention in this context), Dr. Martin Luther King and Hannah Arendt.

We have already drawn attention to the distinction Solovyov so frequently made between that which is and that which ought to be, to,chto est' and to,chto dolzhno byt'. Our considered view is that the energy and sense of dedication with which he turned to active campaigning for social and ecclesiastical reform derive, to an important extent, from this consciousness of the discrepancy between the actual imperfect state of humanity and its potential ideal state. Consciousness of this discrepancy is an important theme in the second of the philosopher's 'Three Speeches in Memory of Dostoevsky' (Tri Rechi v Pamyat' Dostoevskogo), 1882.[26] There he stresses that the Christian ideal of universal harmony still remains a task to be accomplished in the future; by contrast, our general tendency to order politics, economics, international relations, even art and learning, upon the basis of self-interest, competition, mutual hostility and struggle, gives rise to oppression and violence, the oppression and violence that we know in our actual, present life. 'Such is reality, such is fact', (Takova deystvitel'nost', takov fakt). He continues with the following affirmation:

> 'But in just that is the achievement, in just that rests all the significance of such people as Dostoevsky, that they do not bow down before the force of fact and do not serve it. Against [this] crude force of that which exists, they have [they posit] the spiritual force of a belief in truth and goodness - in that which ought to be.'[27]

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[26] Sob.Soch.III, 185-223.

[27] Sob.Soch.III, 201. '...No v tom-to i zasluga, v tom-to vsë znachenie takikh lyudey, kak Dostoevskiy,chto oni ne preklonyayutsya pred siloy fakta i ne sluzhat ey. Protiv etoy gruboy sily togo,chto sushchestvuet, u nikh est' dukhovnaya sila very v istinu i dobro - v to,chto dolzhno byt'.'

Solovyov appears prompted as much by faith as by the conviction that the Gospels preach an active love - deyatel'naya lyubov'. He continues to value the notion of perfectibility (sovershenstvovanie), and maintains his faith in the ultimate victory and assertion of truth. His poem 'If desires take flight ...' (Esli zhelaniya begut ...),[28] composed during the 1890s, questions the worth of life and of eternity 'if desires take flight' and if words prove deceptive, but the poem ends with the lines:

> 'Life is just a feat - and living truth
> Shines with eternity in decayed coffins.'

This positive outlook accords well with an earlier general affirmation of faith that we find in the 2nd Speech in memory of Dostoevsky:

> 'Not to be led astray by the apparent domination
> of evil, and not to renounce the inapparent good
> on account of it - [this] is a feat of faith.'[29]

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Vladimir Solovyov's loss of confidence in the readiness of Russians who professed the Christian faith to work actively for the betterment of society and for justice became apparent to the public when, on 19 October 1891, after a long, officially imposed absence from the lecturer's platform, he read a Paper at a session of the Moscow Psychological Society entitled: 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview',

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[28] Sob.Soch.XII, 35.
'Zhizn' tol'ko podvig - i pravda zhivaya
Svetit bessmert'em v istlevshikh grobakh.'

[29] Op.cit., 201.
'Ne iskushat'sya vidimym gospodstvom zla, i ne otrekat'sya radi nego ot nevidimogo dobra - est' podvig very.'

(Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya).[30] The argument advanced in that lecture, the text and more or less distorted verbal reports of which reached wide circles of the public not present on the occasion, elicited an exceedingly hostile response in the Press. The official authorities demanded assurances from the speaker that he had not personally circulated the text of his lecture, nor encouraged others to do so on his behalf. Official action against Solovyov for this expression of his views was a distinct possibility.

This new notoriety (succeeding a 10-year period in which he was prevented from lecturing on theological matters) was due to the argument put forward in this 1891 lecture. The considerable scandal which ensued is perhaps the best indication that the speaker had been all too accurate in his observations on an evidently sensitive subject.[31]

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[30] See Note 2, above.

[31] On 22 October Konstantin Leontyev wrote from the Sergiev-Posad monastery to Anatoliy Alexandrov, asking for a copy of the lecture:

> 'Dear Anatoliy Alexandrovich,
> Can't you somehow get me the original of the terrible paper by Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov? I am reading [about it] in 'Moskovskie Vedomosti', and I do not want to believe my own eyes. Surely not? So completely directly and impudently - in the Russia of the 90's? And no one at all has the strength to reply as is necessary.'

(Nel'zya li kak-nibud' dostat' mne podlinnik uzhasnogo referata Vladimira Sergeevicha Solovyova? Chitayu v 'Moskovskikh Vedomostyakh' i glazam svoim vsë ne khochu verit'! Neuzheli? Tak vsë pryamo i derzko - v Rossii 90-kh godov?! I ni u kogo ne naydëtsya sily kak sleduet otvetit'.')

'Pamyati K.N. Leontyeva', A. Alexandrov (Pis'ma K.N. Leontyeva k A. Alexandrovu), Sergiev-Posad, 1915, p.122.

V.O. Klyuchevsky wrote dismissively of an attempt by Solovyov to link Christian principles to Socialism, and called it the product of unclear, feverish thought and of rhetoric:

> '... Navyazyvaet Khristianskie osnovy sotsializmu. Napolovinu pripadok neyasnoy i vospalënnoy mysli, napolovinu ritoricheskaya igra slovami'.

'Pis'ma, dnevniki, aforizmy, i mysli ob istorii', V.O. Klyuchevsky, Moscow, 1968, 258-259.

Solovyov introduced his lecture by pointing out that to equate the Mediaeval worldview and Christianity itself is misguided, because, contrary to the popular view, these are actually diametrically opposed to each other - 'mezhdu nimi est' pryamaya protivopolozhnost''.[32] His argument proceeds thus:

> 'By this very [opposition] it becomes clear that the causes of the decline of the Mediaeval world-view are contained not in Christianity, but in the distortion of it, and it emerges that for authentic Christianity this decline is in no way fearful.'[33]

The philosopher's certainty regarding the ultimate inviolability of Christian truth is at this point in his career (Solovyov was aged 38) no less strong than at the beginning of the 1870s. If pressed either by Alexander III or by the State Procurator to find evidence that Solovyov had maligned the religion of the Russian state, officials would have looked in vain. Five years previously, in 1886, in response to charges of unorthodoxy in religious matters that were published in the journal 'Blagovest'' and elsewhere, Solovyov wrote an explicit profession of his belief in the Orthodox Church:

> 'I remain and hope always to remain a member of the Orthodox Church, not only formally but actually, in no way invalidating my confession of faith, and fulfilling all the religious duties associated with it.'[34]

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31 (cont'd) A.A. Kireev wrote to the editor of 'Moskovskie Vedomosti' (Petrovsky) on 4 November (1891):
'I would not wish Solovyov any personal harm, but it would be very undesirable if his theories remained unpunished.'
(Ya by ne zhelal lichnogo vreda Solovyovu, no bylo by ochen' nezhelatel'no, chtoby ego teorii ostalis' bez nakazaniya.')
Lenin State Library (Moscow) Petrovsky Archive I, 64.

32 Sob.Soch.VI, 381.

33 Ibid.

34 Pis'ma III, 172. (A letter to the editors of the newspaper 'Novoe Vremya'.)

In his 1891 lecture, Solovyov asserted that the regeneration of humanity, which is the essence of true Christianity, is a complex and long process, and has therefore rightly been compared, in the Gospel teachings, to the growth of a tree. But Christian regeneration is not merely a natural process:

> 'The Christian transformation of mankind cannot be achieved by itself, by way of unconscious movements and changes [putëm bessoznatel'nykh dvizheniy i peremen].'[35]
>
> 'Humanity itself must certainly participate in it with its own forces and its own consciousness.'[36]

In fact, Solovyov takes the active co-operation of men in the spiritual transformation of earthly existence to be the positive factor which sets Christianity above the other religious revelations, notably above Islām.[37]

So it is that, according to Christian teaching, humanity's regeneration involves God and involves man in its realization. Reiterating the view which he held throughout his life, Solovyov said that the process cannot take place if man is passive, and it cannot be <u>imposed</u> as an external fact or condition that man is obliged to accept as 'given'.[38] Even the Apostles, who were so very close to Christ that we might expect them to have grasped this aspect of His teaching, initially thought in terms of a regeneration immediately established, a condition which man was simply called to accept as 'given fact'.[39]

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[35] Op.cit. 381-382.

[36] Ibid., 382. See also the Preface to '<u>The Spiritual Foundations of Life</u>', where the same idea is stressed. (Sob.Soch.III, 301).

[37] Ibid., 388.

[38] Ibid., 382.

[39] Ibid., 382.

This attitude still prevailed in the early Christian communities, for whom the real possibility of persecution and the expectation of an imminent end to the world contributed to such an interpretation of the Christian message.[40]

Solovyov observes that Christian believers found themselves in a distinctly different situation when their faith was accepted as the official religion of the Byzantine state and when, eventually, non-conformity was punishable. This development was undesirable in that the citizens of Byzantium in many cases professed the official state religion so as to avoid hardship and persecution. The result achieved by the institutionalising of the Christian faith was to reduce critically the genuine allegiance to that faith.[41]

Solovyov's critical observations regarding the nominally Christian society of Byzantium are many: they re-emerge, in fuller form, in a 40-page essay under the title '<u>Byzantinism and Russia</u>' (Vizantizm i Rossiya), written in 1896, which makes the historical connection with Russia explicit.[42] But, already in 1891, the audience at Solovyov's lecture, and then the wider public who read the hostile press reports, could not doubt that the philosopher deplored the nominal conformity to a Christian code of behaviour and values, and the maintaining of an attitude that <u>actually</u> belied those values. Even before he referred to any comparison with contemporary Russia, the intended parallel between the Byzantine and the Russian states must have been especially hard to overlook.

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[40] Ibid., 384.
[41] Ibid., 385.
[42] Sob.Soch.VII, 285-325.

Solovyov's thesis is that the sizeable majority in Byzantine society, who paid only nominal allegiance to the officially established faith (because impelled by fear of punishment) had little interest or cause to order their society on truly Christian bases.[43] This marked lack of concern for reform, on the part of the majority, was aggravated by two other elements in society:

a) by the Church leaders and hierarchy who, according to Solovyov, neglected this social side of their responsibilities, or else, through a very deficient understanding of their own faith, did not deem Christian values to be applicable in the ordering of men's general social relations;[44]

b) by those sincere believers who recognised that dogma alone could not save men, but who mistakenly considered that their task was to achieve personal salvation and wholly to abandon worldly concerns. This false and absolute separation of 'the spiritual' from 'the world',[45] on the part of the genuinely committed believers, had very detrimental effects on the secular society which they foresook; that society lacked sufficient numbers of leaders with integrity who might discern men's needs (material needs and spiritual ones) and work to provide them.[46]

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[43] Op.cit., 385-387.

[44] Sob.Soch.VI, 390.

[45] Another instance where the philosopher attacks one-sided, exclusive spirituality (isklyuchitel'naya dukhovnost') is in his 1886 article 'The Talmud, and the Newest Polemical Literature about it' (Talmud, i Noveyshaya Polemicheskaya Literatura o nëm), Sob.Soch. VI, 7, 8-9.

[46] Op.cit., 389.

Solovyov notes that

> 'With the single exception of St.John Chrysostom, the preaching of the Eastern [Orthodox] ascetics did not envisage any Christian transformations of the social order.'[47]

The thesis developed by Solovyov in 'The Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' does not - until we reach its concluding section (vii) - present us with ideas substantially different from those expressed in the later essay 'Byzantinism and Russia', (1896). The second of these is a less widely known work, but it is no less representative of its author's thought or of his method of argument. Indeed, here, in 'Byzantinism and Russia', Solovyov could set down a fuller account of the historical circumstances surrounding the decline of Byzantium, and he could clearly establish the parallel with 19th-Century Russia, both of which tasks were rather unsuited to the limited form of a lecture. To show that Solovyov's subject matter and major preoccupations in 1896 were very close to those of 1891, we cite the following excerpts from 'Byzantinism and Russia':

> 'Byzantium ... considered herself saved by the fact that she covered up her pagan life with an external cloak of Christian dogmas and religious rites - and she perished.'[48]

> 'Byzantium perished not, of course, because she was imperfect, but because she did not wish to perfect herself.'[49]

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47 Ibid., 390.
48 Sob.Soch. VII, 285.
49 Ibid., 287.

The same moral tone of the author is evident here as in the lecture and in the poem 'Panmongolism' (1894). Other recurring elements are these:

i) Solovyov's attack on nominal Christianity that shrouds a real contempt for the actual values inherent in the Christian teaching Cf.Sob.Soch.VI, 385-387

ii) Reference to the Byzantines' lack of readiness to reform their way of life; Cf.Sob.Soch.VI, 385-387

iii) The characteristically Christian notion of perfectibility (sovershenstvovanie) is again applied to the collective, not solely to the individual. Cf.Sob.Soch.VI, 389

An impassioned attack on nominal Christianity in contemporary 20th-Century society may be found in Lev Tolstoy's short work 'The Law of Violence and the Law of Love' (Zakon Nasiliya i Zakon Lyubvi) (1908):

> 'This phenomenon has occurred several times in the history of humanity; but never, I believe, has the discord between the mode of life of our societies and the religious ideals they have formally adopted been so great; they continue to live a life which is in effect pagan.
> In my opinion, this disagreement is so marked because the Christian view of life at the moment of its formation went far beyond the moral and intellectual level of the peoples who acknowledged it at that time. That is why the code of conduct which it recommended was too greatly

> opposed not only to the habits of individual people but to the whole social organization of pagans, who had become Christian in name only.'[50]

It is very noteworthy that Tolstoy and Solovyov, who disagreed so profoundly about the most central religious questions,[51] should have viewed nominal Christianity in such similar terms.

Briefly summarising the content of the 1891 lecture, we can state that Solovyov presented his audience with an account of the decline in Christian belief that so adversely affected Byzantine society, and he identified those elements (Church hierarchy and ascetic hermits), whose unduly narrow interpretation of the fundamental Christian teachings had contributed to this erosion of belief on the popular level. We now come to the conclusion of Solovyov's argument,

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50 'The Law of Violence and the Law of Love' (Zakon Nasiliya i Zakon Lyubvi), Lev Tolstoy, 1908. Collected Works of L. Tolstoy, Vol.XXXVII pp.151-152. English trans. by Mary Koutouzow Tolstoy, pub. by Anthony Blond, London, 1970. (The above passage is taken from p.2 of the English translation, under the title 'The Law of Love and the Law of Violence', (sic)). [B.312]

51 Pis'ma Vladimira Solovyova, III, 38-42. (A letter to L.N. Tolstoy, 1894).
'All our disagreement may be concentrated in one concrete point - the resurrection of Christ'.
(Vsë nashe raznoglasie mozhet byt' sosredotocheno v odnom konkretnom punkte - voskresenii Khrista), p.38.
Solovyov affirms his own belief in the resurrection of Christ, connecting that affirmation specifically with his conviction that the history of the world and of humanity has meaning (p.41). Tolstoy did not favour historically-based interpretations of Christianity. He also differed from Solovyov in his view of the Church: while Solovyov defended the Church and considered it to be God's instrument for the salvation of collective humanity, Tolstoy questioned the Church's integrity, and viewed the Church's acquisition of power (and wealth) as a betrayal of the fundamental Gospel teachings.
See also: 'From the History of the Polemics involving Lev Tolstoy: L. Tolstoy and Vl. Solovyov' -
(Iz Istorii Polemiki vokrug L'va Tolstogo: L. Tolstoy i Vl.Solovyov), Zinaida Minz,
'Trudy po Russkoy i Slavyanskoy Filologii', Univ.Tartu, 1966. [B.154]

the conclusion upon which the fame of this lecture actually rests. In the final section of the lecture he asked who or which group in society it was that kept the Christian 'spirit' alive, and thus compensated for the negligence of the purely nominal believers.[52] Indeed, Solovyov attracted much animosity when he asked his audience to surmise that it may be the non-believers who have played the greater role, over the centuries, in introducing enlightened and far-reaching social reforms. Furthermore, commented Solovyov, the fact that these reformers, these initiators of true progress, do not consider themselves to be Christians should not obscure their actual achievement in adhering to the Christian spirit.[53]

> 'It is impossible to deny the fact that the social progress of the last centuries has been accomplished in a spirit of love of mankind and justice, that is, in a Christian spirit'.[54]

Citing specifically the efforts to abolish torture, persecution of heretics and feudal forms of slavery, Solovyov viewed it as entirely reasonable to accept that those who are not Christian by choice, but who aspire to improve society, can really achieve Christian goals.

It is plain to understand how the expression of this viewpoint gave rise to feelings of self-reproach, vulnerability and shaken confidence, at least among those who recognised that, for all their professions of faith, they had - conspicuously - 'sinned' by their omission to act. Even if Vladimir Solovyov never deliberately aimed

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52 Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova, VI, 391.

53 Ibid., 392.

54 Ibid.

to fulfil such a function, he was in certain respects eminently well qualified to act as contemporary Russian society's 'sore conscience'. In his capacity as a scholar and an educator, he successfully induced large numbers of people to attempt a serious revaluation of the framework of traditional Christian ideas. And in this enterprise of revaluation his own writings form a major contribution. that has itself generated a literature of informed discussion and commentary. But the importance and worth he was known to assign to Christian moral precepts as a decisive means of transforming the very structure of society (not on the lines of exclusive class or national interests, but according to an ideal of unanimity generally cast as 'utopian') - this led a wary public, and a yet more suspicious government to view Solovyov as an isolated figure, the speaker of distinctly uncomfortable truths, rootless, without an easily identifiable following - in the scholarly world or outside it - a man 'not of this world', 'ne ot mira sego'.

We have concentrated upon examination of two works belonging to the last decade of the philosopher's career, namely 'The Drama of Plato's Life' and 'The Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview'. We believe that both these works merit treatment in any serious evaluation of Solovyov's conception of Christian culture. A close reading of these works enables one to discern the comparative method employed by Solovyov as he continually sought to delineate the character of that culture, to restate and simultaneously to refine definitions which might allow his readers to appreciate the intrinsic strengths of their heritage, 'the faith of their fathers'.[55]

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[55] Note Solovyov's words in the Introduction to his important but uncompleted work 'The History and Future of Theocracy' (Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii):

> 'To justify the faith of our fathers, raising it to a new level of rational consciousness ... here is the general task of my labour.'
>
> Sob.Soch.IV, 243.

On the basis of their actual chronological order we should first have discussed the 1891 lecture and then 'The Drama of Plato's Life', written in 1898. The advantage to be had from treating them in reverse order is this: we first see Solovyov apply his comparative method to a non-Christian (pre-Christian) culture. Then - as he approaches what he held to be the authentic Christian 'norm' the task of comparison becomes, in a sense, more exacting - and we see him present the cultural and historical circumstances of the 'falsely' Christian society, the debased society of the 'false Christians', the 'lzhekhristiane'.

For Solovyov the model of a falsely conceived Christian theocracy was invariably Byzantium. Writing in 1884, in the essay 'Judaism and the Christian Question' (Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros),[56] he criticised the nominally Christian Byzantine rulers and clergy, and compared their actual views unfavourably with those of the misled, but morally superior Muslims.[57] In Solovyov's view, the Byazntine Empire manifestly deserved to 'fall', and he endeavoured to show that its loss of inner vitality - due to the alleged spiritual complacency and reliance upon ritual of the professed believers - was in effect too devastating to allow the Empire's continued survival, even on a most rudimentary level.

The works that we have examined in the present Chapter provide Solovyov's reflections on the culture and values of Ancient Greece and, in turn, of Byzantium. This material was used for the purpose of an instructive comparison with the framework of values that Solovyov

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[56] Sob.Soch.IV, 135-185.

[57] Ibid., 165.

himself held to be authentically 'Christian', that is, the code of values founded on the revealed teaching of Jesus Christ, presented in the New Testament. The method of comparison relies much upon history (and, in the second work, on Church history also). When we come to consider their content, we find that these works share one important element in common; each work contains an explicit critique of the attempt to renounce the secular sphere of human life and separate it in some absolute way from spiritual aspirations. This wish to separate the two spheres, and to entirely discount the worth of the secular sphere, constituted the weakness of Plato's idealist philosophy and of the Mediaeval worldview - such is Solovyov's argument. He referred to this tendency or attempt at separation as 'false spirituality' (lozhniy spiritualizm),[58] and he makes clear the direct opposition between this and the very basis of Christianity:

> 'In this ... one-sided spirituality, the Mediaeval worldview came into direct opposition with the very basis of Christianity.'[59]

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In the 1890s Solovyov was extremely preoccupied with the state of Russian society. We have already enumerated some of the aspects of Russian life that he especially deplored: censorship, nationalism in its various forms, and anti-Semitism. The existence of censorship in religious and political matters obviously impeded the solution of problems and the correction of misunderstandings. But, Solovyov

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58 Sob.Soch.VI, 391.

59 Ibid.

believed that, in the final analysis, a greater obstacle to the attainment of fundamental Christian goals was complacency. Both in the poem 'Panmongolism' and in the essay 'Byzantinism and Russia',[60] written in the years 1894 and 1896 respectively, Solovyov suggested that the ideal of Moscow as the Third Rome was increasingly remote and deceptive - an ideal that only Russia's flatterers wish to perpetuate. As the decade unfolded, the philosopher's misgivings about the various unsatisfactory features of contemporary life in Russia became greatly accentuated by his belief that the complacency of his compatriots was the most insidious force of all. The very fact that he came to equate Russia with 'fallen', defeated Byzantium must strike one as a profound and difficult admission for him to make, regarding the religious faith of the Russian people.

Indeed, Solovyov had earlier, during the previous decade of the 1880s, envisaged an exceptionally glorious role for Russia as the guardian of authentic Christian faith, a point confirmed by two scholars, Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy and Dmitry Stremoukhov. The latter of these, Stremoukhov, author of an illuminating study entitled 'Vladimir Soloviev and his Messianic Work' (Vladimir Soloviev et son Oeuvre Messianique) observes how closely this conception of Russia's glorious future was bound with criticism of its present conditions:

> 'Basically, never did the Slavophiles in their most developed views predict that Russia would have a role of greatness [and] historical importance similar to the one that Solovyov promises for it. But the fulfilment

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[60] Sob.Soch.VII, 285-286.

> of this glorious future is based on a severe criticism of the Russian realities.'[61]

When we look at the figure of Solovyov during the 1890s, and at the sequence of his critical statements about Russia which so entirely accord with the motif of retribution in 'Panmongolism', it becomes possible to appreciate the perceptive insight of Vasiliy Rozanov as he wrote:

> 'If anyone increasingly lacked reasons to 'live happily in Russia', then this was Solovyov.'[62]

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61 'Vladimir Soloviev et son Oeuvre Messianique', Dmitry Stremoukhov, Univ. of Strasbourg, 1935. [B.76]
'Au fond, jamais les Slavophiles dans leurs vues les plus hardies n'avaient prédit à la Russie un rôle d'une magnificence et d'une ampleur historique semblable à celui que lui promet Soloviev. Mais l'accomplissement de cet avenir est fondé sur une critique sévère des réalités russes.' (p.199)
English translation by Elizabeth Meyendorff, Nordland Books, 1980, p.223.

62 'By the Church Walls', (Okolo Tserkovnykh Sten), Vasiliy Rozanov, Petersburg, 1906, Vol.1, pp.239-242.
(Esli komu usilenno ne bylo prichin 'veselo zhit' na Rusi', to eto Solovyovu), p.240. [B.192]

ПАНМОНГОЛИЗМ

Панмонголизм! Хоть имя дико,
Но мне ласкает слух оно,
Как бы предвестием великой
Судьбины Божией полно...

Когда в растленной Византии
Остыл божественный алтарь,
И отреклись от Мессии
Народ и князь,иерей и царь,

Тогда поднялся от Востока
Народ безвестный и чужой,
И под ударом тяжким рока
Во прах склонился Рим второй.

Судьбою древней Византии
Мы научиться не хотим,
И все твердят льстецы России:
Ты третий Рим! Ты третий Рим!

Ну, что ж ? Орудий Божьей кары
Запас еще не истощен...
Готовит новые удары
Рой пробудившихся племен.

От вод Малайских до Алтая
Вожди с восточных островов
У стен восставшего Китая
Собрали тьмы своих полков.

Как саранча неисчислимы
И ненасытны как она,
Не здешней силою хранимы,
Идут на север племена.

О Русь! Забудь былую славу.
Орел двуглавый сокрушен,
И желтым детям на забаву
Даны клочки твоих знамен.

Смирится в трепете и страхе,
Кто мог завет любви забыть,
И третий Рим лежит во прахе,
А уж четвертому не быть.

CHAPTER IX

'PANMONGOLISM', AND VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S ESSAY 'CHINA AND EUROPE' (1890)[1]

In the preceding Chapter we examined two works by Vladimir Solovyov from the thematic point of view, and that examination assisted our attempt to characterise his historically-based comparative method for evaluating non-Christian, nominally Christian and actually Christian societies respectively. The works treated above, namely 'The Drama of Plato's Life' (Zhiznennaya Drama Platona) and 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' (Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya), can rightly be said to operate as studies which, by delineating certain features of the non-Christian (pre-Christian) and of the nominally Christian society, and then by differentiating these forms of society from an authentic Christian norm, direct the reader - if Solovyov has perceived the matter correctly - towards an increasingly fine appreciation of the society that most adequately exemplifies the Christian ideal. In other words, Solovyov employs a negative process of elimination to help him clarify the salient features of authentically Christian society or culture. We sought to show that the two works under discussion achieved that limited purpose.

The two works examined also allowed the author to determine criteria that define the philosopher's stance in these matters. The options before the philosopher are these: renunciation of worldly and social concerns in the name of a more complete and effective contemplation of the ideal, and, on the other hand, an active interest and participation

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1 'Panmongolizm', Sob.Soch.XII, 95-96.
'Kitay i Evropa', Sob.Soch.VI, 93-150.

in the qualitative improvement of the imperfect, existing social order so as to reduce, as far as possible, the discrepancy between the existing order and the ideal paradigm. Through his portrayal of Plato, Solovyov showed that the philosopher's commitment to one or other option is not fixed once and for all, that - as in the case of Plato himself - the philosopher may at different stages in his career deem either renunciation or participation to be his proper response. The foregoing Chapter notes the consistency of Solovyov's views on this question, specifically as reflected in his essays and lectures of the decade 1890 to 1900. To that last period of his life belong these inter-related items: 'China and Europe' (Kitay i Evropa), 1890; 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview', (Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya) 1891; the poem 'Panmongolism', 1894; 'Byzantinism and Russia' (Vizantizm i Rossiya), 1896; 'Justification of the Good' (Opravdanie Dobra), 1897, (Part III of which treats moral philosophy in the context of society); 'The Drama of Plato's Life', (Zhiznennaya Drama Platona) 1898; and 'Three Conversations', (Tri Razgovra), 1899-1900, a work that presents in more widely accessible dialogue form many of the issues under discussion in the earlier works.

The emphasis that Solovyov places upon the notion of perfectibility (Sovershenstvovanie) and upon its application to all of men's social inter-relations and organisation is evident in works of the last decade of his life, but also in the preceding years. In the view of Solovyov the notion of perfectibility is, and should be, of paramount importance to the philosopher. One might say that the line of inquiry pursued by the pre-Christian philosopher Socrates was eminently well conceived, concentrating, as it does, on the virtues; it evoked a creative response in successive generations of philosophers and other men. But Solovyov

argued that with the inauguration of the Christian teaching, men are yet better equipped to resolve the central recurring problems of philosophy and the related questions of value.

In the conclusion of the previous Chapter we showed that Solovyov's 1891 lecture and his 1898 biographical study of Plato coincide in providing a critique of the attempt to separate the ideal and the existing spheres in an absolute way, and of the philosopher's attempt to devote his attention and powers exclusively to the former of these. As the Russian philosopher demonstrated through personal example, there are many practical matters whose solution could be assisted by the philosopher's attention to polemical writing and by his active advocacy of social, legal and other reforms. In that context we mentioned Solovyov's writings concerning the abolition of capital punishment, and also his petitions to aid the victims of the 1891 famines in Southern Russia. It would be quite appropriate to cite also, under this heading, the articles he wrote between 1883 and 1891 with the collective title 'The National Question in Russia' (Natsional'niy Vopros v Rossii), for in these writings Solovyov seriously examined the grounds of the long-lasting dispute between Westernizers and Slavophiles. Conscious though he was of Russia's history and of its possible lessons regarding the country's future destiny as a guardian of Christian truth, Solovyov regretted that concern for the nation's past and for traditionally 'Russian' virtues should have led to any extremism, and he denounced the growing nationalism of the later generation of Slavophiles, whose writings and activities harmed prospects of any reconciliation between the hostile camps.

In the present Chapter we extend our examination of the historical comparative method employed by Vladimir Solovyov in his survey of the

world's influential religious and philosophical teachings. We have already alluded to the historical parallel drawn by him between Byzantium in the years immediately prior to its 'fall' and contemporary Russia. From a reading of the poem 'Panmongolism' it is clear that the motif of retribution[2] was at the very basis of this historical-cultural parallel. The poet already envisages the destruction of Russia, cultural and physical:

'... And the Third Rome lies in ashes.'[3]

It can even be argued, on the basis of the poem's first stanza, that Solovyov had reached the point of 'resignation' in the face of God's wish to punish complacent and faithless Russia:

'Panmongolism! Although the name is savage,
The hearing of it is sweet to me,
As if it were filled with the portent
Of a great Divine destiny.'

The apparent explanation for this resignation is given in the lines:

'From the fate of fallen Byzantium
We do not want to learn ...'[5]

However, the complexities involved in correctly interpreting the ambiguous attitude of the poet to his subject may, to a quite considerable extent, be clarified by a detailed analysis of the essay 'China and Europe'.

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2 'Russian Thinkers on China' (Russkie Mysliteli o Kitae), N.A. Setnitsky, Kharbin, 1926, p.18. [S.198]

3 '... I tretiy Rim lezhit vo prakhe'.

4 'Panmongolism! Khot' imya diko,
No mne laskaet slukh ono,
Kak by predvestiem velikoy
Sud'biny bozhiey polno ...'

('Although the word is savage' - 'Khot' slovo diko' is an accepted alternative, line 1)

5 'Sud'boyu pavshey Vizantii
My nauchit'sya ne khotim ...'

This essay, whose very title suggests a comparative study of some kind, furnishes us with a body of historical information (and the inferences drawn by its author) that allows us to discern how it was that Solovyov arrived at the views expressed in poetic form in 'Panmongolism'. We shall duly proceed to an examination of 'China and Europe'.

'China and Europe' raises certain questions about the validity of Solovyov's method of procedure that are not applicable in the context of either 'The Drama of Plato's Life' or 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview'. We provide textual evidence to support the view that this historical account of the growth and development of religious belief in China and of its determining influence on Chinese culture and social organisation, is marked by a lack of objectivity.

In our estimation, this essay is not in the least characteristic of a philosopher reputed for receptivity to a wide scope of ideas and for his readiness to overcome cultural differences. The following examination will reveal that Solovyov approached his subject matter from a European viewpoint, from within the horizons of a Western, 'Christian' culture.

In 'China and Europe' Solovyov provides criticism on two levels:

i) Taking Taoism to be the most consistent expression of the Chinese instinct to live in the past and to endow that past with an 'absolute' value, he examines the theoretical, philosophical basis of Taoism itself;

ii) He considers the consequencesof Taoist beliefs for Chinese culture.

Solovyov views Taoism as a teaching that emanates quite naturally from the established Chinese cult of ancestor worship.[6] He explains that family life and the political state rule were founded on this cult, and that in both spheres (family interests and state interests) important decisions were taken only after the wishes of the 'ancestors' had been ascertained.[7] Thus, the code of conduct for the Chinese is determined entirely by reference to the past.[8] Even the isolated instances of reforms (instigated by Confucius) represent not change, but rather, an effective means to prevent innovation and thus guarantee the most complete return to antiquity.

Solovyov further observes that this very conservatism, this exclusive attachment to traditional bases of life, was the point of departure for a speculative philosophy that was distinctly Chinese in its character.[9] The exclusivity already apparent in the Chinese preoccupation with the past (and that rendered the Chinese ideal <u>false</u> precisely because it was 'exclusivity'), argues Solovyov, was taken to its extreme and absurd conclusion in the doctrine of Lao-Tzu.[10]

He contends that Lao-Tzu was able to provide a more effective 'absolutisation' of the past than was possible through the private family cult of ancestor worship, or the same cult on the state level.[11]

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[6] Solovyov is mistaken in his view that Taoism emanates from the cult of the ancestors. It is actually Confucianism which developed from that cult.

[7] Sob.Soch.VI, 117.

[8] 'Idealy kitaitsa vsetselo prinadlezhat proshedshemu', (Ibid.)

[9] '... umozritel'noy mysli sovershenno kitaiskoy po svoemu sushchestvennomu kharakteru'. Ibid., 118.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

The opening lines in Solovyov's critique of Lao-Tzu's ideas do not wholly inspire confidence in the objectivity of the observations to follow:

> 'As a speculative philosopher Lao-Tzu seeks an absolute principle; as a genuine Chinese, he seeks it exclusively in the past - he seeks, therefore, the absolute past, that which precedes all existing being.'[12]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

This does not constitute a serious basis for philosophical argument. Correct as Solovyov may have been in holding that Lao-Tzu sought an 'absolute principle', (that designated as Tao), to claim that he sought it exclusively in the past is, at the very least, misleading. Solovyov appears to confuse the issue further in his reference to 'the absolute past' (bezuslovnogo proshedshego), 'that which precedes all existing being'.

A speculative philosopher may indeed seek an absolute principle, one that 'precedes all existing being'. However, that precedence is not solely a matter of chronological time, as Solovyov's words really appear to suggest; Lao-Tzu's designation of Tao as an absolute principle did not merely entail a retreat into remoter and remoter chronological time. Solovyov's words lead one to think that this is precisely what was entailed. The kind of precedence actually denoted by 'that which precedes all existing being' is, we submit, a matter of philosophical status; it is akin to the precedence denoted in the Aristotelian term 'the Unmoved Mover'.

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12 Ibid. 'Kak umozritel'niy filosof, Lao-Tzu ishchet absolyutnogo nachala;kak istiy kitaets, on ishchet ego isklyuchitel'no v proshedshem, - on ishchet, sledovatel'no, bezuslovnogo proshedshego, takogo, kotoroe predshestvuet vsemu sushchestvuyushchemu.'

Aside from this suggestion that Lao-Tzu sought to place the central term of his speculative system in a remote chronological past, Solovyov writes that he conceived this attempt on the basis of his being Chinese (istiy kitaets). Such argument is not acceptable as serious or objective criticism of a philosophical system: even if one concedes that the Chinese as a race may have tended to look to the past for their values (a generalisation that cannot be made absolute, in any case), such a criticism as Solovyov made still excludes the possibility that Lao-Tzu saw the limitations of his compatriots and sought to overcome the exclusivity of their commonly held views.

From the above brief examination of Solovyov's opening attack on the Taoist view, it may be seen that his initial arguments lack a secure objective basis.

We proceed to Solovyov's criticisms of the Taoist ideal of the Sage. In considering how the sage is depicted in the work entitled 'Tao Te Ching' (the primary text in Taoism), Solovyov confines himself to a negative evaluation of Lao-Tzu's ideal. He gives a summary of material found in Chapter LVI of the 'Tao Te Ching' (working from a French translation by Stanislas Julien, Paris 1842):

> 'The man who knows Tao does not speak; he who speaks does not know Tao. The man who knows Tao closes his lips firmly, closes his ears and eyes, he suppresses his own activity, he severs himself from all ties, he restrains his own light, he simulates fools; then it is possible to say that he resembles Tao; he is not accessible either to kindness or cruelty, to gain or loss, honour or

dishonour, and for this very reason he is the most respected man in the entire universe.'[13]

Solovyov does not provide a very extensive discussion of this ideal: having located references to 'inaction', he appears satisfied that this inaction and avoidance of desire (because conducive to suffering) comprises the whole ideal of the Taoist sage.[14]

We wish to suggest that the passage cited above offers scope for alternative interpretations regarding Lao-Tzu's view of the Sage, but the text of 'China and Europe' leads one to conclude that Solovyov himself was not prompted even to explore the possibilities of an alternative evaluation of this Taoist ideal.

We submit that Solovyov dismisses the figure of the Taoist Sage without raising or considering any of the following points:

i) the question is: Is it possible that Lao-Tzu has managed to express an ideal of disinterest or impartiality with regard to action?

ii) Has he portrayed a man able to rise above thoughts of gain and merit and loss? (The text examined by Solovyov suggests that such an interpretation is at least plausible; 'he is not accessible ... to gain or loss', Sob.Soch.V, Sol.,VI, 119).

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[13] Ibid., 119.
'Chelovek,znayushchiy Tao, ne govorit; tot,kto govorit, ne znaet Tao. Chelovek, kotoriy znaet Tao, zamykaet svoi usta, zakryvaet ushi i glaza, on podavlyaet svoyu deyatel'nost', on otreshaetsya ot vsekh svyazey, on umeryaet svoy svet, on upodoblyaetsya idiotam; togda mozhno skazat', chto on pokhozh na Tao; on nedostupen dlya milosti i dlya nemilosti, dlya vygody i dlya ubytka,dlya chesti i bezchest'ya, poetomu-to on i est' samiy pochëtniy chelovek vo vsey vselennoy.'

[14] Ibid., 120.
'A bezdeystvie est' nastoyashchaya tsel' mudretsa ...'

iii) Has the Sage, here depicted, achieved what is taken to be an indication of wisdom in numerous other Traditions, namely, the ability to go beyond thinking dualistically, beyond thinking in terms of opposites? (Again, the text allows for such an interpretation; 'he is not accessible either to kindness or cruelty, to gain or loss, honour or dishonour ...', Ibid.)

iv) Is the marked reluctance to speak, on the part of Lao-Tzu's Sage, any reflection on the difficulty inherently involved in communicating and affirming truths about the essential First Principle from which all else originates?

v) Does Lao-Tzu's Sage represent a <u>spiritual type</u> in any respect? For instance, he is ready to appear a <u>fool</u> in the eyes of the world (the text says: '... he simulates fools'). So, could he be viewed as an example of that spiritual type, the 'holy fool'? Secondly, could there be a valid comparison between Lao-Tzu's Sage and the ironic Socratic Sage who teaches partly through a guise of 'foolishness'?

vi) Does the 'Tao Te Ching' bear out the teaching of most Traditions about the intimate link between personal self-mastery and 'skilful' government of the state, the Body Politic?

It seems to us that the points enumerated above warrant some treatment in an assessment of Lao-Tzu's ideal; in view of the fact that Solovyov had appropriate translations of the text at hand, his failure

to follow even one of these several lines of enquiry seems indicative of a reluctance, on his part, to accord these materials the scholarly attention needed for a balanced cultural survey of Christian and non-Christian societies.

A further relevant point, in this context, is the following one: Solovyov notes that when Lao-Tzu disparages learning, this involves a contradiction, or undermining of, his own position -

> 'He denied the 'light of the mind', [while] being himself a deep and subtle thinker.'[15]

Yet Lao-Tzu was aware of the paradox involved in the wise man's claim of ignorance. Of all the above-mentioned six points missing from Solovyov's consideration of the Taoist Sage, it is curious that he should have failed to discern the theme of what we may call 'wise foolishness'. In at least two respects his own cultural background provides for familiarity with this idea:

a) the figure of the 'holy fool' was particularly known to Russians, and significant in their Tradition. This recognition of the fool has a textual basis in the Bible, <u>1. Corinthians 3, xviii-xx</u>:

> 'If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise, For the wisdom of this world is folly with God ...'

b) Solovyov personally had the highest regard for the Greek philosopher Socrates (an attitude evident in the work '<u>The Drama of Plato's Life</u>', examined in our previous Chapter).

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[15] Ibid., 123.

This was a figure who, according to the records provided in the Platonic Dialogues, did not assert himself as a bearer of specific wise teachings, but who, rather, was conscious of the scope of his ignorance and measured any seeming wisdom of his simply in relation to the greater ignorance of others. And on occasions when he did feel qualified to instruct others, by exposing the weaknesses of his opponents' arguments, he used irony and seeming 'foolishness' as his methods of instruction. Solovyov did not take any of Socrates' assumed 'foolishness' at face value, but consistently treated him as a man who spoke with authority on philosophical questions and their solutions.

It is difficult to determine what, apart from the cultural difference, allows the Russian philosopher to accept Socrates as authoritative and to dismiss Lao-Tzu as obscurantist.

We pass, now, to the reasoned criticisms that Solovyov levelled against Lao-Tzu's philosophy.

He detected in Lao-Tzu's fundamental position a 'hostility towards reason and learning (nauko)'; and observes in his essay that:

> 'Hostility towards reason and learning is characteristic of many mystical thinkers. But with Lao-Tzu, as a genuine Chinese, this obscurantism based on principle [etot printsipial'niy obskurantizm] has its own distinctive character and special significance.'[16]

We come to Solovyov's description and treatment of the central term in the Taoist scheme. For the Taoist, indeed,

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[16] Ibid., 121.

> 'The first absolute principle of all existing being has <u>in itself</u> no positive definition or name, it <u>is</u> <u>unspoken</u> or <u>unuttered</u>.'[17]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

The Tao cannot be apprehended by sole means of definitions or distinctions, for positive definitions rule out the applicability of their contrary terms to the Tao. And, further, the ineffable nature of the principle that contains within it all potentialities of being is conveyed by the designation 'the unspoken' or 'the unuttered'. No limiting attribute is found to apply to this first absolute principle, and Lao-Tzu's system is consistent in withholding all such terms from its characterisation of that absolute principle. It may be said that any 'description' of the Tao is of a distinctly <u>provisional</u> nature.

Solovyov views this approach to philosophy as an attempt to retreat to a stage of 'primordial indifference' before the process of defining and distinguishing concepts was initiated. If this is the true nature of Lao-Tzu's enterprise, then, argues Solovyov, <u>thought</u> is not operative in the approach to Tao. The 'way of thought' (put' myshleniya) tends in quite the opposite direction, for it is dependent on the drawing of distinctions, the maintenance of distinctions between mutually exclusive terms, etc.:

> 'If the real principle of all is absolute indifference, then the way of thought and knowledge is least applicable of all for uniting or conforming oneself with that principle; for these activities [i.e. thought and speculation] consist precisely in emergence from primordial indifference, in the affirmation of known

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[17] Ibid., 119.

> definitions and distinctions. The condition of the thinking and understanding mind is [that of] direct opposition to the condition of Tao.'[18]

From the above passage it is clear that, in Solovyov's view of the matter, philosophical thought cannot concern itself with provisional descriptions, but must provide fixed distinctions and definitions if it is to impart knowledge. This is the procedure characteristic of rational, discursive thought; this is the procedure recognised by Solovyov, and the task of imparting knowledge is associated explicitly with this procedure (see above). The advantages to be gained by working with provisional descriptions, or the possibility that they may afford an intuitive type of apprehension, are not admitted by Solovyov in this essay on Chinese philosophical and religious beliefs. If rational, discursive thought and Tao diverge, one from another, Solovyov sees value residing in the former.

Solovyov's critique of Taoism (pp.116-124) constitutes part of an attempt to determine 'the essence of the Chinese spirit', or of 'sushchnost' kitaizma' (p.122). He summarises his conclusions in this way:

> 'Absolute emptiness or indifference as a speculative principle, and the denial of life, knowledge and progress as an inevitable practical result - here is the essence of the Chinese spirit, erected into an exclusive and consistent system.'[19]

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[18] Ibid., 120-121.
See also Sob.Soch.III, 155-156 (10th Lecture on Godmanhood); there Solovyov writes of Indian religious and philosophical thought generally as manifesting this same kind of merging and indistinctness of concepts. (See our Chapter VI, Section iii).

[19] Ibid., 122.

We have sought to show, in the preceding pages, that Solovyov's examination of Taoist beliefs and values was less rigorous and painstaking than one might reasonably expect to find in a study of this scope. In his assessment of the Taoist ideal of the Sage there appears to be minimal examination of alternative views, and therefore it seems to us that he was not truly in a position to offer the firm conclusions that one finds in this important section of his essay.

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We proceed to Solovyov's view of Chinese achievements in the cultural field, for this is the second level on which he provides criticism of the Chinese nation. The textual references cited in the following part of our argument belong to Section VIII of '<u>China and Europe</u>'.[20]

In the context of some observations on the Chinese ideal of longevity of life,[21] we come upon a series of value-judgements that are presented by Solovyov as statements of acknowledged fact that simply require our assent. That Solovyov takes his own judgements to be matters of indisputable fact may be seen from the text (p.139); '.... There remains the similarly undoubted fact that ...' - Ostaetsya drugoy stol' zhe nesomnenniy fakt, chto ...; 'It is equally beyond dispute that ...' Tak bessporno, chto ...' The subject of these various value-judgements is the extent and alleged poverty of Chinese artistic expression:

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[20] Ibid., 135-143.
[21] Ibid., 138-139.

'The gift of earthly well-being and longevity undoubtedly testifies practically in favour of the Chinese life principle. But alongside this, there remains the similarly undoubted fact that Chinese culture, for all its firmness and material fullness, has proved spiritually fruitless and useless for the rest of mankind. It is good for the Chinese themselves, but it has not given to the world one solitary great idea, nor a single lasting and absolutely valuable creation in any sphere at all [ni v kakoy oblasti]. The Chinese are a huge nation, but not a great nation. And in this nation there have not been any great people. The sole exception is Lao-Tzu.'

In more specific terms Solovyov mentions the various arts:

'With the exception of a few genuinely poetic songs and fairy-tales, such as all nations have, even the completely uncultured ones, all the rest is devoid of any aesthetic significance and can have merely historical and ethnographic interest.'[22]

'It is equally beyond dispute that in music, painting, and likewise in positive science, the Chinese have remained on the lower elementary levels, although in some cases they have manifested a great capacity for minor work.'[23]

However much one makes allowances for the scarcity of reliable information available to Solovyov, regarding the development and actual state of the arts in China, it is plain that the categorical

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22 Ibid., 139.

23 Solovyov's claim regarding the 'indisputable' poverty of Chinese achievements is effectively countered by Sir Joseph Needham's multi-volume study (still being completed) 'Science and Civilisation in China', Cambridge University Press (Vol.I, 1945).

tone of his conclusions on this subject is to be regretted. His view that the lives of the Chinese are long but unproductive cannot be substantiated; and this remains the case, even if one does not hold the ideal of longevity to be, in itself, the most profound and worthy of ideals for men to pursue.

Our view is that, purely in his capacity as an 'historian', Solovyov should have thought it at least <u>implausible</u> that the Chinese people had failed to produce a single great idea or lasting creation 'in any sphere at all' (ni v kakoy oblasti). However, of the great number of cultures and societies, Christian and non-Christian, considered by the Russian philosopher, it is Chinese culture alone that elicits such condemnatory and largely unsubstantiated conclusions as we find in this essay.

The two concluding sections of '<u>China and Europe</u>' (IX-X) contain Solovyov's expression of his belief in the rightness and efficacy of the Christian, European (or, more precisely, the Judaeo-Christian) idea of Universal progress. As we shall see below, he is concerned to show the validity of the European perspective and of the Christian emphasis upon universal salvation.

It is also significant that, in the last stages of his argument, Solovyov <u>modifies</u> his criticism of the Chinese and of their preoccupation with the past. There is actually a transition from criticism of Chinese religious conceptions to partial acceptance, (see below). This transition allows Solovyov to put forward his central concluding idea, which is as follows: On the account that Solovyov provides, the fundamental Chinese religious ideal has to some extent served the Chinese themselves, but is found, upon examination of its central premises, to be deficient and not wholly satisfying. The conclusion which Solovyov

offers in this essay is that the Christian, European view, centred on the ideas of progress and change, can 'complete' the Chinese ideal and life principle:

> 'We, Europeans, must offer China not a denial, but a completion of its life principle.'[24]
>
> (Solovyov's italics)

This essay shows the Russian philosopher to have been a conscious apologist for the European view, for the European view as offering the final realization of men's religious aspirations:

> 'If attachment to the past, service to the ancestors, constitutes the truth of the Chinese worldview, then this truth attains its own fulfilment only in the Christian, European idea of universal progress, as the path for the attainment of true life.'[25]

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[24] Op.cit., 146-147.

[25] In the context of his affirmation that the European ideal of Universal salvation is the only ideal that answers man's needs adequately, Solovyov provides a footnote in his own article to say that the ideal of universal salvation is absent from Eastern philosophies:

> 'The idea of true life is not alien to Buddhism (in its latest form) nor even to Taoism. But true life presents itself to the followers of Buddha and Lao-Tzu as the condition of separate enlightened beings, but not as the collective task of all mankind; the idea of world-wide progress and the Kingdom of God we find solely on Judaeo-Christian ground.' (VI, 146)

This assertion on Solovyov's part, ignores the very great emphasis that central Buddhist teaching places on collective responsibility in the moral sphere, on the conscientious avoidance of violence towards all sentient beings, and on the import of Right Livelihood (again, non-injurious) in the Buddhists' Eightfold Path; Mahayana Buddhism's ideal of Bodhisattvahood, and the literature on that ideal, give a most eloquent expression to the characteristic Buddhist concern for universal well-being and integration. The ideal of Bodhisattvahood can be, and is, distinguished from the earlier Indian ideal of the Arhat: according to Prof.T.R.V. Murti, in 'The Central Philosophy of Buddhism' (1st ed.1955)-

> 'The Arhat rests satisfied with achieving his own private salvation; he is not necessarily and actively interested in the welfare of others... the Bodhisattva makes the salvation of all his own good'. (p.263 in 1980 reprint). [S.S.R.]

See also, Murti, pp.265-266. We recognise that this is one instance where Solovyov's evaluation of Eastern philosophies and spiritual disciplines was hampered by the limited extent of available literature and commentary, literature available to us today (e.g. Murti's outstanding study cited above). Our general impression is that Solovyov read a much greater proportion of Buddhist literature from the Hinayana Tradition (Theravada, the earlier School) than from the Mahayana Tradition.

This affirmation is immediately preceded by Solovyov's reference to the idea that Christian goals cannot be realized without man's active work and efforts. This true life of the future must be earned by man.[26] An idea of the consistency of Solovyov's views in this matter may be had if one turns to an almost identical expression of this idea one year later, in the 1891 lecture 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' (Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya).[27]

Convinced as Solovyov was that this stress on active work was indeed the true response required of Christians, and of religious believers generally, it is understandable that he really failed to find much sympathy with the spirit in which Lao-Tzu propounded the principles of Taoism. It must not be overlooked that his critical view of Lao-Tzu's speculative philosophy, and the 'alien' Chinese attitudes that philosophy represented for him, was maintained throughout the entire last decade of his life. That ten-year period, 1890 to 1900, not only saw the publication of some of the philosopher's major works (including 'Justification of the Good' and 'Three Conversations'), but itself represents a significant proportion of a twenty-six-year-long writing career.

We here adduce substantial biographical evidence to show that the critical view of China expressed in the philosopher's essay 'China and Europe' coincides with the historian Sergey Solovyov's negative evaluation of that country. In our view, the possibility of direct paternal influence here should be given serious consideration. How far a clear 'intellectual' debt can be established is a problematic point,

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26 '... ono dolzhno byt' dobyto pri deyatel'nykh usiliyakh samogo chelovechestva'. (Sob.Soch.Vladimira Solovyova, VI, 146). The same idea is expressed in a letter that the philosopher wrote to L.N. Tolstoy in 1894 (Pis'ma, III, 42).

27 Ibid., 381-382.

and we do not press such a claim very far. The philosopher certainly acknowledged that his father played a significant role in his own development,[28] but his words '... an influence on my spiritual development' (vliyanie na moё dukhovnoe razvitie) do not make it plain that it was an 'intellectual' influence.

The matter may to some extent be clarified by reference to another case where the views of father and son are, in substance, extremely similar, and where paternal influence is highly plausible: the historian's and the philosopher's very positive attitudes to Peter the Great and to the Petrine Reforms.[29]

From a reading of Solovyov's article 'Some words in Defence of Peter I', (Neskol'ko slov v zashchitu Petra I) and of his 'Byzantinism and Russia' (Vizantizm i Rossiya), as cited in Note 29 below, one may judge how very much Vladimir Solovyov admired Peter the Great; he thought of his achievements as being akin to the achievements of Alexander Pushkin in the field of literature. Such a stance is noteworthy and incongruous in a man who was in so many important

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28 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov' (Zhizn' i Tvorcheskaya Evolyutsiya Vladimira Solovyova), Sergey M. Solovyov (the younger), p.53. [B.48]

29 'Public Lectures on Peter the Great' (Publichnie Chteniya o Petre Velikom) Sergey M. Solovyov (the Historian) University Press, Moscow, 1872; Collected Works of Sergey M. Solovyov, Tipografiya Obshchestvennaya Pol'za, Petersburg (?1900), 969-1116. [B.299]
'The History of Russia from most Ancient Times' (Istoriya Rossii s Drevneyshikh Vremen), Vol.XVIII, Sergey M. Solovyov. (See 1963, 15 volume edition, Moscow, Vol.IX, 541-553.
'Sergey Solovyov's view of the Petrine Reform', (Vzglyad Sergeya Solovyova na Reformu Petra), anon.article in 'Notes of the Fatherland' (Otechestvennye Zapiski), 1865, 2, pp.497-520. [B.300]
'Some Words in defence of Peter I' (Neskol'ko slov v zashchitu Petra I), Vladimir Solovyov, Sob.Soch., V, 161-180.
'Byzantinism and Russia', (Vizantizm i Rossiya), Vladimir Solovyov, Sob.Soch.VII, 300, 325.
'Concerning the latest events' (Po povody poslednykh sobytiy) Vladimir Solovyov, Sob.Soch.X, 225-226.

respects a 'Slavophile'. It may be that the historian Sergey Solovyov played a part in guiding his son toward that appreciation of Peter I. In 'Byzantinism and Russia' the philosopher specifically cites his father's History of Russia (10 times) as an authoritative source of information on Peter I. But aside from this, the likelihood is considerable that at home Sergey Solovyov expressed views that happened to appeal to his son Vladimir's temperament and mind. We submit that in the case of their antipathy towards Chinese culture, the influence of father upon son may well be of the same kind, a temperamental appeal as well as an intellectual influence.

In two biographies of Vladimir Solovyov we find strong evidence in support of this viewpoint. The younger Sergey Solovyov[30] describes the historian (his own grandfather) in the following terms:

> 'Considering activity and struggle to be the basis of life, he had an aversion to the East, and was a convinced European.'

S.M. Lukyanov, in his three-volume biographical study of the philosopher,[31] confirms the point about the growing closeness of outlook between father and son:

> 'As Vladimir Solovyov became a man, he made himself a more and more conscious participant in the spiritual life of his father [delalsya vsë bolee i bolee soznatel'nym uchastnikom v dukhovnoy zhizni otca], who, in his turn, became increasingly convinced that in this son of his there was a particularly fortunate combination of the good hereditary traits of the Solovyovs and the Romanovs [the mother's family]'.

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30 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov' (Zhizn' i Tvorcheskaya Evolyutsiya Vladimira Solovyova), 36-37. [B.48]

31 'About Vl.S.Solovyov in his Young Years', (O Vl.S.Solovyove v ego Molodye Gody) S.M. Lukyanov, (1916), Vol.I, 234. [B.45]

The resemblance in temperament between Vladimir Solovyov and his father is in actual fact made explicit in 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', where the author describes the very dissimilar Vsevolod Sergeevich (1849-1903):

> 'Vsevolod Sergeevich was of entirely different material from his father and brothers. And perhaps only he interpreted Russian Orthodoxy in its Eastern aspect [v ego vostochnoy stikhii], with its 'Tsar-Batyushka', with complete passivity, meekness, with an awareness of the radical flaw in human nature, of the weakness of the [human] personality in the face of fate, and with hope in the mercy of God. He did not like Peter the Great - the favourite hero of his father and his brother - his [own] ideal was the 'most meek' Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich.'[32]

In the light of these materials, we argue for a due recognition of the temperamental affinity between the historian Sergey Solovyov and his son Vladimir. As regards the coincidence of their intellectual goals, the following two items merit attention:

i) Dmitry Stremoukhov[33] explicitly mentions identical outlook and goals of Sergey and Vladimir Solovyov in relation to Slavophile teachings:

> 'In short, the son will criticise the philosopy of the Slavophiles from the same point of view as the father had criticised their historical theories.'

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32 Op.cit., 44.

33 'Vladimir Soloviev and his Messianic Work', (Vladimir Soloviet et son Oeuvre Messianique), 19-20.
'En somme, le fils critiquera la philosophie des Slavophiles du même point du vue que le père avait critiqué leurs theories historiques.'
English trans. by Elizabeth Meyendorff, Nordland Books, Massachusetts 1980, p.25. [3.76]

ii) Vladimir Solovyov's father wrote a short auto-biographical work 'Notes for my Children', (Zapiski dlya moikh Detey),[34] and in the context of describing the various ideas that influenced him in his student years, he wrote of aims that one may identify precisely in the works and life of his philosopher son:

> 'The time passed not so much in a study of facts as in reflection about them, for a philosophical orientation predominated with us: Hegel turned everyone's head. And this thought occurred to me - to study philosophy in order to use it as the means for the affirmation of religion, of Christianity.'

Our last biographical reference[35] that relates to the attitudes and premises underlying Vladimir Solovyov's study 'China and Europe' indicates how far back in his life his generally antipathetic view of China may be traced:

> 'At the age of 12 and 13 he would animatedly prove what a great danger China presents for Russia and for all Europe in the future. Thus, in the boy Vl[adimir] Solovyov there are already found all the seeds of his future: the fear of Antichrist, and his notion of the 'Yellow Peril', and the militarism of 'Three Conversations' - the conviction that 'the sword and the cross are one'.[36]

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34 'Notes for my Children', (Zapiski dlya moikh detey) Sergey Solovyov, Petrograd 1914, p.60. [S.298]

35 'The Life and Creative Evolution of Vladimir Solovyov', Sergey Solovyov (the younger), 57. [S.298]

36 '... The sword and the cross are one'; see the last line of the poem 'Drakon', Sob.Soch.XII. 97.

The foregoing sections of this Chapter treat Solovyov's investigation of religious beliefs in China, as presented in his essay of 1890 'China and Europe'. Our major criticism of that work is that Solovyov was not consistently rigorous and objective in examining his materials; in some instances, as we have shown, value-judgements about the cultural achievements of the Chinese are offered as matters of established fact, and a number of inferences and conclusions drawn by Solovyov are not sufficiently supported by argument to be acceptable. These considerable weaknesses put in question the reliability of his cultural-cum-historical comparative method for the examination of philosophical and religious beliefs. In our previous Chapter we examined and illustrated Solovyov's application of that method in his evaluation of Ancient Greek and of Byzantine ideals; in these two rather different cases (one non-Christian and one 'falsely' Christian, but both with a European heritage), his comparative method was seen to work conspicuously well. The biographical section of this Chapter (see immediately above) establishes that a good case can be made for viewing the flaws in 'China and Europe' as at least partly attributable to a temperamental antipathy of the author towards the culture examined in that essay.

Having seen how 'alien' and worthless Solovyov considered Chinese values to be (those emanating from 'ancestor worship', Taoism and the various 'magical' and 'shamanistic' forms of a later, debased Taoism, as well as from Confucianism), we are in a good position to appreciate the force of the philosopher's message in the poem 'Panmongolism'. The remaining observations in this Chapter refer specifically to the historical parallel between the threatened Byzantine society in the last years before the Empire fell and its 19th-Century equivalent, Russia.

It has already been shown, in our previous Chapter, how greatly Solovyov deplored merely nominal allegiance to Christian values. Also, it was stressed that in his view the society which abandons the notion of perfectibility endangers its very existence, as the historical example of Byzantium testifies. This general point is made in the essay 'Byzantinism and Russia' (Vizantizm i Rossiya):

> 'In an imperfect world only he who frees himself from imperfection is worthy of existence. Byzantium perished because it shunned the very idea of perfection. Any being, single or collective, which rejects this idea inevitably perishes.'[37]

When one reflects how much significance Solovyov assigned to Russia's 'Christian' virtues and character, her capacity for self-denial (evident in the Russians' invitation to the Varangians to rule over them), and to her decisive future role as a guardian of true Christian teaching[38] - all of which ideas featured prominently in his optimistic writings on Church unity during the 1880s - the fact that he came to equate Russia with 'fallen' defeated Byzantium must strike one as a profound and difficult admission regarding the faith of the Russian people. The extent of Byzantium's apostasy (otstupnichestvo) is uncompromisingly shown in the second stanza of 'Panmongolism', and the aptness of these words to contemporary Russia is made plain:

> 'When in corrupt Byzantium
> The sacred altar grew cold
> [And] the people and prince, the priest and ruler
> Denied the Messiah ...'[39]

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37 Sob.Soch.VII, 299.

38 See previous Chapter, Note 61 (Stremoukhov).

39
> 'Kogda v rastlennoy Vizantii
> Ostyl bozhestvenniy altar',
> I otreklis' ot Messii
> Narod i knyaz',ierey i tsar''.

In accordance with his long-established procedure of comparing that which is (to,chto est') and that which ought to be (to,chto dolzhno byt'), the philosopher found many features of contemporary Russian life as cause for serious concern and criticism. Realities such as the limitations imposed on the exchange, expression and publication of ideas; the regrettable growth of nationalism; the active discrimination against minority groups and nationalities within the Empire; and the extent of misunderstanding, indifference or prejudice that large numbers of educated Russians showed in their relation to religious matters and the affairs of the Orthodox Church - all these persuaded him that his compatriots barely aspired to live by Christian ideals.

All the normal causes that operate to reduce commitment to spiritual practice and concerns (the variety of distractions offered by secular life, intellectual fashions and so forth) were reinforced by a specific tradition of historical thought that applied to the Russians' conception of themselves. This was the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome.[40] This idea, which had over a considerable period of time gained a hold over the imagination of Russians, now required re-examination. Solovyov suggested that this historically-based idea was a likely source of self-deception and self-flattery, however understandable the origin of that idea:

> 'In the Russian national consciousness, inasfar as it was expressed in the thoughts and writings of our men of [letters], there emerged after the fall of Constantinople the firm conviction that the meaning of Christian rule would from that point transfer to Russia,

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40 'Moscow the Third Rome', Nicolas Zernov, 1938 (Fellowship of St.Alban and St.Sergius). [B.316]

that she is the Third and last Rome. For our forefathers it was permissible to stop at this idea in its initial aspect [form] of an unconscious feeling or presentiment. From us it is required to test it by consistent thought and experience, and through this to either put it on the level of rational awareness or to reject it as a childish dream or an arbitrary pretension.'[41]

Solovyov's suggestion that the ideal of the Third Rome was becoming increasingly remote and deceptive - one that only Russia's flatterers wish to perpetuate - finds expression both in 'Byzantinism and Russia' (just cited) and in 'Panmongolism':

> 'And all Russia's flatterers repeat:
> You are the Third Rome! You are the Third Rome!'[42]

Vasiliy Rozanov's assessment of Solovyov's place in Russian culture includes the following characterisation, and conveys a degree of anguish in the philosopher's writings, to which N.A. Setnitsky also refers (in his article 'Russian Thinkers on China'):

> 'From behind the priest and professor there emerged the personality of a journalist, the most animated, changeable one, now stabbing, then crying, shouting and [also] presumptuous a genuine Parthian horseman, who did not give any peace to the sleeping, complacent Rome.'[43]

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41 'Byzantinism and Russia', (Vizantizm i Rossiya), Sob.Soch.VII, 285-286.

42 Sob.Soch.XII, 96.

43 'By the Church Walls' (Okolo Tserkovnykh Sten) Rozanov, P'burg 1906, Vol.I, see pp.239-242, esp. p.241. [B.192]

('Iz-za svyashchennika i professora u nego vyryvalas' lichnost' zhurnalista, samaya boykaya, peremenchivaya, to kolyushchaya, to plachushchaya, kriklivaya, samonadeyannaya: nastoyashchiy parfyanskiy naezdnik, kotoriy ne daval uspakayvat'sya dremlyushchemu, i samodovol'nomu Rimu.')

Setnitsky writes of how, in the last days of his life, the philosopher felt confronted with the possibility that authentic Christianity has not survived - 'There is no Christianity ...' (Khristianstva net ...):

> 'Thus in the last days was uttered that word which had perhaps not been pronounced aloud earlier anywhere in the writings of V.S. Solovyov, but which, if one judges by his last works, was present in his consciousness in a veiled form, bringing a special tension into his condition and his creative work.'[44]

Setnitsky appreciates that, on the Solovyovian account of these matters, the critical point when China becomes a threatening enemy for Russia and West Europe is:

> 'when we ourselves prove not to be in a condition to attain and accommodate the fullness of the Christian truth and by the same token [are unable] to bring, transmit and give to the East the vital and living [zhiznennoe i zhivoe] completion of the truths worked out by it.'[45]

Here is a summary of the very conclusion offered by Solovyov's essay '<u>China and Europe</u>'[46]; but also, Setnitsky discerns a <u>transition</u> in the philosopher's outlook between 1890 and 1894. In 1890 the possibility of a conflict between China and Europe is thought to depend on Europe's failure to accomplish her mission (... v sluchae neispolneniya Evropoy svoey missii), whereas by 1894 the conflict becomes merely a question of <u>time</u> (... stolknovenie eë s Zapadom stanovitsya dlya nego voprosom lish' vremeni).[47]

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44 '<u>Russian Thinkers on China</u>', 20. [S.Ris]

45 Ibid., 18.

46 Sob.Soch. VI, 146-147.

47 Op.cit., 17-18.

One more important element in Solovyov's criticism of complacent Byzantine society requires mention. It occurs in two important sets of articles that Solovyov wrote during the early 1880s: 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics', (Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika), 1883, and 'Judaism and the Christian Question', (Evreystvo i Khristiansky Vopros), 1884. That the idea expressed there still holds validity for Solovyov in the 1890s (the period examined in this Chapter) is testified by the fact of its re-emergence in the 1891 lecture 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview';[48] in 'Mahommed, His Life and Religious Teaching', 1896[49] and in 'Byzantinism and Russia', 1896.[50]

Considering the fate of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Solovyov proffered the view that defeat at the hand of the Muslims was appropriate and even logical. The idea finds possibly its most explicit expression in 'Judaism and the Christian Question',[51] and is dependent on his description of the Islāmic religion as a partial revelation of the Divine truth and of Christianity as a complete and adequate revelation of that truth. Lacking the teaching of 'Godmanhood', Islām is on a lower level of religious understanding than Christianity, in Solovyov's scheme; however, the degree of faithful adherence to the Qur'anic Law was conspicuously greater than the Byzantines' adherence to their Christian code.

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48 Sob.Soch.VI, 388.

49 'Magomet, ego Zhizn' i Religioznoe Uchenie': Sob.Soch.VII, See esp. pp.230-231, 279, 280-281.

50 Sob.Soch.VII, see esp. pp.286-287, 288-289, 294, 300-301.

51 Sob.Soch.IV, 165.

'The Muslim, believing in his own simple and not too great religious moral law, conscientiously fulfils it both in his personal and his social life: he judges civil and criminal matters according to the Qur'an, conquers according to the direct commandment of the Qur'an, treats alien and conquered people, again, according to the directions of the Qur'an, and so forth.'[52]

Solovyov felt convinced that the Christians of Byzantium erred more seriously than did true followers of Islām. On the basis of that conviction he wrote that the defeat of the Byzantine Empire precisely at the hands of the morally consistent Muslims represented a justifiable and symbolic, retribution.

> 'The victory of Islām, that almost eradicated Christianity from Asia and Africa, was in the first place a matter of crude force, but as well as this it had some moral justification ...'[53]
>
> 'Thus, the triumph of the Muslims was a just punishment of the Christian East.'[54]

The highly significant point here is that Solovyov deemed consistent adherence to a partial truth to be more valuable than inconsistency in the application of a complete or absolute truth. It was on such grounds that he criticised his own compatriots, and professed believers in the Orthodox faith, for their complacency.

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[52] Ibid., 165-166.
[53] Ibid., 165.
[54] Ibid., 166.

In the present Chapter we have sought to set the celebrated poem 'Panmongolism' in the context of essays that Vladimir Solovyov wrote during the decade 1890 to 1900, notably of 'China and Europe' (Kitay i Evropa), a work which has received minimal critical attention to date.

In this Chapter the poem has been shown to contain ideas that appear prominently and frequently in the philosopher's writings of that last period in his life. Further, explicit references to central ideas for this poem may be traced back as far as Solovyov's work 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' (Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika),[55] written in 1883, that is, eleven years prior to the poem.

The materials examined in this Chapter also afford a fuller understanding of Solovyov's concern with cultural comparisons, a concern that forms an important element in his religious philosophy and that was the subject of our previous Chapter. There is further scope for research into questions regarding the application and validity of Solovyov's comparative method, and we offer this Chapter as preparatory ground for such research. We have provided a detailed examination of the essay 'China and Europe', and after presenting what we feel to be the strengths and merits of Solovyov's method (namely, his employment of the method in the Judaeo-Christian and European context) we show that this method did not yield uniformly objective results when applied by him to a non-Christian and also non-European culture.

Solovyov explicitly censured apologists for the Oriental philosophies,[56] which, for him, remained 'alien'. The attraction that these philosophies held for his one-time philosophical 'mentor', Arthur Schopenhauer, certainly leaves no trace in Solovyov's writings of 1890 to 1900.

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55 Ibid., 41-43.

56 Sob.Soch.VI, 149.

CONCLUSION

Our purpose in this Study has been to reassess the religious philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov. We have shown that he confronted, and attempted to resolve, many of the central questions that face theologians and philosophers. To fully establish this point, it has been necessary to provide a lengthy exposition of his central teachings (in our Chapters IV and V). It has also been necessary to take into account Solovyov's criticism of foregoing philosophers (in works such as his 'The Crisis of Western Philosophy'), and to show how he sought to rectify the imbalance and defects of their speculative systems (in our Chapters II, IV, VI and VII). He himself aimed to provide not simply a speculative system of his own but, rather, a major synthesis of the chief branches of knowledge. From the very earliest years of his scholarly career he believed that the findings of philosophy and of natural science support traditional Christian views, and, while he looked to the New Testament as the source of our most reliable knowledge concerning God and Divine-human relations, he examined contemporary theories of evolution, and especially contemporary theories of knowledge, for evidence that might illuminate the central Christian account of the world.

Solovyov personally accepted the Christian Gospels and the whole of the New Testament as the Word of God, fully revealed to man through Jesus Christ. He took Christianity to be the religion most directly and consistently concerned with the welfare of man: he argued, in his writings, that Christianity values the freedom of man and that, unlike other religions (notably Islām), Christianity provides for man's active participation in the spiritual transformation and redemption of the

created order. Solovyov accepted the Church's teaching that Christ Himself, through His Incarnation and sacrificial death, and through His victory over death, effectively restored the Divine image in natural, 'fallen' man.

Seriously dismayed by the widespread resistance to traditional Christian teachings among the educated Orthodox laity of his own day, Solovyov undertook to formulate a rationally coherent account of Christian teachings, an account that avoided the defects and one-sidedness of standard interpretations. This very ambitious enterprise appeared to him as a necessary task to accomplish: he devoted his energies to that goal at the very outset of his scholarly life, and he sought a variety of ways to affirm the worth and truth of Christ's teachings.

Partly, this variety of approach reflected the philosopher's personal cast of mind: his very considerable reliance upon <u>historical</u> argument is an important distinctive feature of his religious philosophy. This variety of approach was also partly determined by the time he was writing in. His writings on mysticism were the fruit of long study of the early Church Fathers, but he also considered mysticism in the light of contemporary scholarly debate regarding Empiricist and other accounts of human knowledge, (see our Chapter VI,ii). It is clear, from his treatment of Empiricism and other accounts of knowledge, that Solovyov was very familiar indeed with these schools of philosophical thought. Although critical in his conclusions, he did treat the premises of Empiricism and of Rationalism seriously, and he devoted numerous pages of his early works to reasoned criticism of these major schools.

In our Study we take into account such centrally important works as Solovyov's '<u>Lectures on Godmanhood</u>' and the critical literature on these works. We have also examined the following works: '<u>Three Speeches</u>

in Memory of Dostoevsky', 'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics', 'Judaism and the Christian Question', 'The Talmud and the Newest Polemical Literature about it', 'China and Europe', 'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview', 'Byzantinism and Russia' and 'The Drama of Plato's Life'. Examination of these particular works has enabled us to establish the extent of Solovyov's reliance upon historical argument in treating religious questions. In his defence of Christianity he employed not just theological and philosophical categories, but also historical argument and cultural comparisons. In our Study we draw attention to his preoccupation with values. This preoccupation becomes most noticeable in the works that contrast Christian societies and non-Christian societies. Through his extensive use of cultural-historical parallels and contrasts he intended to impart to his readers an increasingly refined understanding of the inherent strengths of their Christian faith and traditions.

We examine Solovyov's comparative method in detail: in Chapter VIII we trace his successful application of this method. In Chapter IX, however, we show how cultural considerations (in this case, a clear antipathy towards Chinese culture) could adversely affect his evaluation of a people's religious ideals and practices. We supplement these two chapters with an extensive examination of Solovyov's assessment of the major non-Christian religions (Chapter VI.iii). We argue that he classified the various religions in an hierarchical order, describing Buddhism, for instance, as 'superior' to nature worship but as 'inferior' to the Christian revelation. It emerges that Solovyov was a quite conscious apologist for West European values, for a religious tradition closely linked with the notions of progress, change (see his essay 'China and Europe' and other works). Although he recognised that the contemplative ideal and the active ideal complement one another (and wrote of them as

complementary within Christianity), he was unprepared to recognise the merits of Taoist philosophy in China and he portrayed Lao-Tzu, its leading exponent, as an advocate of complete quietism. He characterised Indian spirituality in broadly similar terms to this (in his 'Lectures on Godmanhood', the 10th lecture). We noted a significant difference in Solovyov's treatment of Indian spirituality on the one hand, and of Judaic spirituality on the other. His writings and his personal life reveal a strong, deep-lying affinity with the Jewish people, and a respect for their historical and cultural achievements. He readily devoted his energies to study of their religion. His appreciation of the Jewish people, and his concern for their welfare, were entirely commendable. But it needs to be noted, in the context of his comparative evaluation of non-Christian religions, that his appreciation of the Jews induced him to view even their faults in a positive light, whereas the very highest achievements of the religious philosophers in India and China (especially the latter) became the subject of Solovyov's criticism. Consequently, we hold that the typological classification of religions devised by Solovyov is too subjective to be safely employed by students of religion. The part of Solovyov's typological scheme which remains valid is, in our view ,his treatment of the continuity between Judaism and Christianity and of the essential differences between them. Here we find, on the one hand, a very profound knowledge of Old Testament and New Testament Scripture and exegesis and, on the other hand, numerous inspired passages on 'sacred corporeality' (svyataya telesnost') and its religious significance for Jews and Christians respectively.

An aspect of Judaic spirituality that requires separate mention, and that was accorded a prominent place in Solovyov's own religious thought,

is the theocratic ideal. Solovyov associated the theocratic ideal with two central notions in Christianity: first, with the notion that the Kingdom of God must be realized on earth (affirmed by the Lord's Prayer, Luke 11, ii); second, with the notion of a 'spiritual community'. Although Solovyov's major work on theocracy remained uncompleted, the existing chapters allow us to gauge how profoundly he had studied and reflected upon theocracy as a religious and social ideal, both from the Judaic and the Christian points of view. His writings on theocracy also yielded valuable insights regarding three 'spiritual types' of man: the Priest, the King, and the Prophet. Here Solovyov stressed the Christian symbolism according to which Christ is viewed as Priest, King and Prophet, the ultimate figure of authority, from Whom any temporal rulers derive their authority. Though Solovyov himself resembled the 'prophetic' type of man in a number of respects (e.g. his position outside the established hierarchy of the Church), his personal integrity may be gauged by his reluctance to consciously and publicly adopt the role (and the high status) of the prophet.

We argue (in Chapter VI) that there are good grounds for accepting Ernest Radlov's description of Solovyov as first and foremost a moral philosopher. His works 'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' and 'Justification of the Good' treat individual morality and collective morality very extensively. Solovyov's acceptance of the idea that the Christian Church on earth is a living organic body (symbolically designated as the Bride of Christ and as the Body of Christ) caused him to lay much emphasis upon universal salvation and upon collective responsibility. He regarded it as inappropriate for the Christian philosopher to confine himself to the sphere of the individual's subjective morality. He was deeply concerned for the spiritual health of Russian society itself, and this was very

clear in his writings and activities of the decade 1890 to 1900. We pay special attention to those years of the philosopher's life: an examination of the celebrated poem by Solovyov 'Panmongolism' (1894) and of numerous essays belonging to that decade (see our Chapters VIII and IX) shows that he was making consistent and very specific criticisms of Russian society.

Vladimir Solovyov experienced three mystical visions in his life-time, which permitted him directly to sense the condition of harmony that now eludes humanity, but that may be attained 'in the fullness of time'. Solovyov personally regarded these three visions not as a right or privilege for him, but as experiences that called forth a moral response from him. He consistently wrote of the moral preparation that the prophet must undergo if he is properly to follow his calling and to speak with authority. It would be broadly correct to say that, according to Solovyov, what is required of the individual Christian believer is required of the prophet and of the Christian philosopher a fortiori. If the prophet's perception of life and of spiritual values is generally more penetrating than that of the ordinary believer, his responsibility in the service of the truth is correspondingly greater. The 'prophetic' type of man is particularly associated by Solovyov with the faculty of believing, or <u>faith</u>. The positive value and the role of faith are explicitly reaffirmed in '<u>Three Speeches in Memory of Dostoevsky</u>', in '<u>Judaism and the Christian Question</u>', and in '<u>The History and Future of Theocracy</u>'. According to Solovyov, the prophet is sustained by Divine grace and by his faith in the ultimate triumph of the Good.

Solovyov died at the comparatively young age of forty-seven. He did not wholly overcome the conflicts within him. His tendency to seek logical, rational confirmation of revealed religious teachings could be

seen in those 'Lectures on Godmanhood' dealing with the mystery of the Holy Trinity. It is common among critics and other readers to juxtapose the poetry and the philosophy of Solovyov as representing his intuitive and his rational sides respectively. (The poet A.A. Blok and also G.I. Chulkov offer this interpretation of Solovyov's writings.) However, we argue that it is not necessary to turn to Solovyov's poetry to find expressions of his intuitive nature. The philosophical works and the theological works themselves contain valuable expressions of deeply and intuitively felt religious experience. His insights into the nature of asceticism are especially relevant in this connection, and these may prove among the most enduring features of his religious philosophy. Solovyov considered that religion enables man to attain his full and rightful stature; he further believed that Christianity in particular awakens in man the aspiration to perfect himself, and to look to God for guidance and grace in this task of perfection. Spiritual growth is frequently presented, in the New Testament, as a radical transition from sickness to health and wholeness. The impaired faculties of the natural man are restored to their fullest and most intense power. For Solovyov, just as for Dostoevsky, the foundation and also the pre-condition of this growth is man's full acceptance of freedom and of moral responsibility.

A LIST OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S WORKS EXAMINED OR REFERRED TO IN OUR THESIS

VOLUME I

'The Mythological Process in Ancient Paganism' - Mifologicheskiy Protsess v Drevnem Yazychestve. 1873.

'The Crisis of Western Philosophy' - Krizis Zapadnoy Filosofii. 1874.

'Three Forces' - Tri Sily. 1877.

'The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge' - Filosofskie Nachala Tsel'nogo Znaniya. 1877.

VOLUME II

'A Critique of Abstract Principles' - Kritika Otvlechënnykh Nachal. 1877-1880.

VOLUME III

'Lectures on Godmanhood' - Chteniya o Bogochelovechestve. 1877-1881.

'Three Speeches in Memory of Dostoevsky' - Tri Rechi v Pamyat' Dostoevskogo. 1881-1883.

'On the Clerical Power in Russia' - O Dukhovnoy Vlasti v Rossii. 1881.

'About the Schism in the Russian Nation and Society' - O Raskole v Russkom Narode i Obshchestve. 1882-1883.

'The Spiritual Foundations of Life' - Dukhovnye Osnovy Zhizni. 1882-1883.

VOLUME IV

'The Great Controversy and Christian Politics' - Velikiy Spor i Khristianskaya Politika. 1883.

'Judaism and the Christian Question' - Evreystvo i Khristianskiy Vopros. 1884.

'The History and Future of Theocracy' - Istoriya i Budushchnost' Teokratii. 1885-1887.

VOLUME V

'The National Question in Russia' - Natsional'niy Vopros v Rossii. 1883-1888/ 1888-1891.

VOLUME VI

'The Talmud and the Newest Polemical Literature about it in Austria and Germany ' - Talmud i Noveyshaya Polemicheskaya Literatura o nĕm v Avstrii i Germanii. 1886 (We provide an abbreviated form of this title in our Thesis.)

'China and Europe' - Kitay i Evropa. 1890.

'On the Decline of the Mediaeval Worldview' - Ob Upadke Srednevekovogo Mirosozertsaniya. 1891.

VOLUME VII

'Mohammed, his Life and Religious Teaching' - Magomet, ego Zhizn' i Religioznoe Uchenie. 1896.

'Byzantinism and Russia' - Vizantizm i Rossiya. 1896.

'Sergey Mikhailovich Solovyov'. 1876.

VOLUME VIII

'Justification of the Good' - Opravdanie Dobra. 1897.

VOLUME IX

'Theoretical Philosophy' - Teoreticheskaya Filosofiya. 1897-1899.

'The Idea of Humanity according to Auguste Comte' - Ideya Chelovechestva u Avgusta Konta. 1898.

'The Drama of Plato's Life' - Zhiznennaya Drama Platona. 1898.

VOLUME X

'Three Conversations' - Tri Razgovora. 1899-1900.

'A Short Story about Antichrist' - Kratkaya Povest' ob Antikhriste. 1899-1900.

'Concerning the latest events' - Po povodu poslednikh sobytiy. 1900.

Encyclopaedia articles for the Brockhaus-Ephron Encyclopaedia.

'The Russian Idea' - L'Idée Russe. 1888. (Russian translation in Volume XI of Solovyov's Collected Workd.)

'St. Vladimir and the Christian State' - St. Vladimir et l'Etat Chretien. 1888 (Russian translation, Volume XI.)

'Russia and the Universal Church' - La Russie et L'Eglise Universelle. 1889. (Russian translation, Volume XI.)

Selected poems from Volume XII of Solovyov's Collected Works.

For archival materials consulted, see our Bibliography.

APPENDIX

ТРИ СВИДАНИЯ

Поэма.

Заранее над смертью торжествуя,
И цепь времен любовью одолев,
Подруга вечная, тебя не назову я,
Но ты почуешь трепетный напев...

Не веруя обманчивому миру,
Под грубою корою вещества,
Я осязал нетленную порфиру
И узнавал сиянье божества...

Не трижды-ль ты далась живому взгляду -
Не мысленным движением, о, нет! -
В предвестие, иль в помощь, иль в награду
На зов души твой образ был ответ.

I.

И в первый раз, - о, как давно то было! -
Тому минуло тридцать шесть годов,
Как детская душа нежданно ощутила
Тоску любви с тревогой смутных снов.

Мне девять лет, <u>она</u> ... ей - девять тоже.
"Был майский день в Москве", как молвил Фет.
Признался я. Молчание. О, Боже!
Соперник есть. А! он мне даст ответ.

Дуель, дуель! Обедня в Вознесенье.
Душа кипит в потоке страстных мук.
<u>Житейское</u>...<u>отложим</u>...<u>попеченье</u> -
Тянулся, замирал и замер звук.

Алтарь открыт... Но где-ж священник,дьякон?
И где толпа молящихся людей?
Страстей поток, - бесследно вдруг иссяк он.
Лазурь кругом, лазурь в душе моей.

Пронизана лазурью золотистой,
В руке держа цветок нездешних стран,
Стояла ты с улыбкою лучистой,
Кивнула мне и скрылася в туман

И детская любовь чужой мне стала,
Душа моя - к житейскому слепа...
А немка-бонна грустно повторяла:
"Володинька - ах! слишком он глупа`!".

II.

Прошли года`. Доцентом и магистром
Я мчуся за границу в первый раз.
Берлин,Ганновер,Кельн - в движеньи быстром
Мелькнули вдруг и скрылись из глаз.

Не света центр,Париж, не край испанский,
Не яркий блеск восточной пестроты, -
Моей мечтою был Музей Британский,
И он не обманул моей мечты.

Забуду-ль вас, блаженные полгода?
Не призраки минутной красоты,
Не быт людей, не страсти, не природа -
Всей, всей душой одна владела ты.

Пусть там снуют людские мириады
Под грохот огнедышащих машин,
Пусть зиждутся бездушные громады, -
Святая тишина, я здесь один.

Ну, разумеется , cum grano salis :
Я одинок был, но не мизантроп;
В уединении и люди попадались,
Из коих мне теперь назвать кого-б ?

Жаль, в свой размер вложить я не сумею
Их имена, не чуждые молвы...
Скажу: два-три британских чудодея
Да два иль три доцента из Москвы.

Все-ж больше я один в читальном зале;
И верьте, иль не верьте, - видит Бог,
Что тайные мне силы выбирали
Все, что о ней читать я только мог.

Когда же прихоти греховные внушали
Мне книгу взять "из оперы другой", -
Такие тут истории бывали,
Что я в смущеньи уходил домой.

И вот однажды - к осени то было -
Я ей сказал: о, божества расцвет!
Ты здесь, я чую, - что же не явила
Себя глазам моим ты с детских лет ?

И только я помыслил это слово, -
Вдруг золотой лазурью все полно,
И предо мной она сияет снова, -
Одно ее лицо, - оно одно.

И то мгновенье долгим счастьем стало,
К земным делам опять душа слепа,
И если речь "серьезный" слух встречала,
Она была невнятна и глупа .

III.

Я ей сказал: твое лицо явилось,
Но всю тебя хочу я увидать.
Чем для ребенка ты не поскупилась,
В том - юноше нельзя же отказать !

"В Египте будь!" - внутри раздался голос.
В Париж ! - и к югу пар меня несет.
С рассудком чувство даже не боролось:
Рассудок промолчал как идиот.

На Льон,Турин, Пьяченцу и Анкону,
На Фермо, Бари, Бриндизи - и вот
По синему трепещущему лону
Ужь мчит меня британский пароход.

Кредит и кров мне предложил в Каире
Отель "Аббат", - его уж нет, увы ! -
Уютный, скромный, лучший в целом мире...
Там были русские, и даже из Москвы.

Всех тешил генерал - десятый номер -
Кавказскую он помнил старину...
Его назвать не грех - давно он помер,
И лихом я его не помяну.

То Ростислав Фаддеев был известный,
В отставке воин и владел пером.
Назвать кокотку, иль собор поместный, -
Рессурсов тьма была сокрыта в нем.

Мы дважды в день сходились за табль-д'отом;
Он весело и много говорил,
Не лез в карман за скользким анекдотом
И философствовал по мере сил.

Я ждал меж тем заветного свиданья,
И вот однажды, в тихий час ночной,
Как ветерка прохладное дыханье:
" В пустыне Я - иди туда за мной".

Идти пешком (из Лондона в Сахару
Не возят даром молодых людей, -
В моем кармане - хоть кататься шару,
И я живу в кредит ужь много дней).

Бог весть куда, без денег, без припасов,
И я в один прекрасный день пошел, -
Как дядя Влас, что написал Некрасов.
(Ну, как-ни-как, а рифму я нашел).

Смеялась, верно, ты, как средь пустыни,
В цилиндре высочайшем и в пальто,
За чорта принятый, в здоровом бедуине
Я дрожь испуга вызвал и за то

Чуть не убит, - как шумно, по-арабски
Совет держали шейхи двух родов,
Что делать им со мной, как после рабски
Скрутили руки и без лишних слов

Подальше отвели, преблагородно
Мне руки развязали - и ушли.
Смеюсь с тобой: богам и людям сродно
Смеяться бедам, раз они прошли.

Тем временем немая ночь на землю
Спустилась прямо, без обиняков.
Кругом лишь тишину одну я внемлю
Да вижу мрак средь звездных огоньков.

Прилегши на-земь, я глядел и слушал...
Довольно гнусно вдруг завыл шакал;
В своих мечтах меня он, верно, кушал,
А на него и палки я не взял.

Шакал то что! Вот холодно ужасно...
Должно быть - нуль, - а жарко было днем...
Сверкают звезды беспощадно ясно;
И блеск, и холод, - во вражде со сном.

И долго я лежал в дремоте жуткой,
И вот повеяло:"Усни,мой бедный друг!"-
И я уснул: когда ж проснулся чутко, -
Дышали розами земля и неба круг.

И в пурпуре небесного блистанья
Очами полными лазурного огня
Глядела ты, как первое сиянье
Всемирного и творческого дня.

Что есть, что было, что грядет вовеки -
Все обнял тут один недвижный взор...
Синеют подо мной моря и реки,
И дальний лес, и выси снежных гор.

Все видел я, и все одно лишь было, -
Один лишь образ женской красоты...
Безмерное в его размер входило, -
Передо мной, во мне - одна лишь ты.

О, лучезарная! тобой я не обманут:
Я всю тебя в пустыне увидал...
В моей душе те розы не завянут,
Куда бы ни умчал житейский вал.

Один лишь миг! Видение сокрылось -
И солнца шар всходил на небосклон.
В пустыне тишина. Душа молилась,
И не смолкал в ней благовестный звон.

Дух бодр! Но все-ж не ел я двое суток,
И начинал тускнеть мой высший взгляд.
Увы! как ты ни будь душою чуток,
А голод ведь не тетка, говорят.

На запад солнца путь держал я к Нилу
И вечером пришел домой в Каир.
Улыбки розовой душа следы хранила,
На сапогах - виднелось много дыр.

Со стороны все было очень глупо
(Я факты рассказал, виденье скрыв).
В молчаньи генерал, поевши супа,
Так начал важно, взор в меня вперив:

"Конечно, ум дает права на глупость,
Но лучше сим не злоупотреблять:
Не мастерица ведь людская тупость
Виды безумья точно различать.

" А потому, коль вам прослыть обидно
Помешанным, иль просто дураком, -
Об этом происшествии постыдном
Не говорите больше ни при ком."

И много он острил, а предо мною
Уже лучился голубой туман,
И, побежден таинственной красою,
В даль уходил житейский океан.

Еще невольник суетному миру,
Под грубою корою вещества
Так я прозрел нетленную порфиру
И ощутил сиянье божества.

Предчувствием над смертью торжествуя
И цепь времен мечтою одолев,
Подруга вечная, тебя не назову я,
А ты прости, нетвердый мой напев !

I898. Соб.Соч.XII,80-86.

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The following items of the preceding list of archival materials have been published in books or articles. The bibliographical details are provided below:

* Poems by Vladimir Solovyow
  - Sob.Soch. Vladimira Solovyova,XII.

* 5 letters from Anna Schmidt to Solovyow
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* 'Beauty and Formlessness in Art' - Vladimir Solovyov
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* Three Speeches in Memory of F.M.Dostoevsky,1881-1883, Vladimir Solovyov,
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* 39 Letters of Vladimir Solovyov to his brother Mikhail, 1880-1896
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* Manuscript copy of 'The Idea of Humanity according to Auguste Comte',(1898)
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Vladimir Solovyov,
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So far as we are aware, the bibliographies compiled by S.A.Sidorov and K.Shlapakov remain unpublished, as do the 'Random impressions of Vladimir Solovyov', recorded by I.E.Repin. G.I.Chulkov's notes for a Paper on Solovyov's 'automatic writing' also come in the category of unpublished archival materials. We have been unable to trace any published text of Vladimir Solovyov's 'Lectures on the History of Philosophy'(1880-1881)(item xxviii), and we believe that this lithographic edition of the Lectures may be the only

extant version. We believe that F.L.Sollogub's letters to Vladimir Solovyov still remain unpublished, and likewise, the correspondence between Prince Evgeniy Trubetskoy and M.K.Morozova, that between N.Ya.Grot and N.N.Strakhov, and between A.A.Kireev and N.N.Strakhov.