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NEW TRANSLATION

F.W.J. Schelling's *Monument to Jacobi's Work on the Divine Things* (1812) (excerpts)

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The text offered here in translation is extracted from Schelling's *Monument to Jacobi's Work on the Divine Things* (1812), his last major work published during his lifetime.[1] Written in under two months, the book is a response to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's *On the Divine Things and their Revelation* (1811).[2] Schelling's cutting rejoinder appeared only a few weeks after Jacobi's book, resulting in what came to be known as the "controversy concerning the divine things."[3]

[1] The full German title is *F.W.J. Schellings Denkmal der Schrift von den göttlichen Dingen u. des Herrn Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi und der ihm in derselben gemachten Beschuldigung eines absichtlich täuschenden, Lüge redenden Atheismus*. All references to Schelling's works are from Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings *Sämmtliche Werke* [=SW], Bd. I–XIV, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–1861). The text of the Denkmal is found in SW VIII: 19–136. Jacobi's text can be found in *F. H. Jacobi, Schriften zum Streit um die göttlichen Dinge und ihre Offenbarung* (Werke, Bd. 3), ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2000).

[2] Schelling's letter to Windischmann on February 27, 1812, in *Aus Schellings Leben. In Briefen*, Bd. II, ed. G. L. Plitt (Leipzig: G. Hirzel, 1870), 294.

[3] A recent treatment of the controversy can be found in Gunther Wenz, *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung: Zum Streit Jacobis mit Schelling 1811/12* (München: C. H. Beck, 2011). The classic account is Wilhelm Weischedel, *Jacobi und Schelling: Eine Philosophisch-Theologische Kontroverse* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969). See also

Despite the *Denkmal*'s polemical character—Xavier Tilliette referred to it as the *Annihilationsschrift*—it provided Schelling an opportunity to clarify and develop his philosophical views. Shortly after its publication, in a letter to his friend Georgii on January 14, 1812, Schelling wrote:

> It is only now that I can finally say that I am finished with my predecessors. The appearance of this book has been an epochal point in the evolution of my system and in its victory over former laziness of heart and intellectual nullity, which was being passed off as faith, or even as some sort of superior philosophy. Hardly anything happier could have happened to me.[4]

Schelling considered the *Denkmal* as the starting point of a new development in his philosophical system. Later, in his lectures on the *Philosophy of Revelation*, he said: "I did not reveal the positive philosophy—even after it had been discovered—except in an elusive manner (on the occasion, among others, of the well-known paradoxical theses formulated in the polemic with Jacobi)."[5]

The *Denkmal* is divided into two parts, with the second part making up the bulk of the book. In the first part, titled "Provisional explanation of the accusations made against me in Mr. F. H. Jacobi's work," Schelling viciously attacks Jacobi, whom he accuses of maliciously misrepresenting his ideas to make him seem like an atheist. The second part is titled: "Contributions toward an assessment of the polemic started by Mr. Jacobi and its relation to science, theism, philosophy, and religion, as well as literature in general." It contains a preface and provisional explanation (here translated), as well as three chapters titled, respectively, "The Historical," "The Scientific" (offered here in translation), and "The Universal (An Allegorical Vision)." The latter chapter is a kind of literary comedy in which Jacobi is satirically put on trial before a large crowd and unmasked as an impostor. He is interrogated, in turn, by philosophers, religious leaders (represented by the figure of Luther), writers, and an otherworldly "stranger." The scene culminates in a blindfolded Jacobi performing his famous *salto mortale* by jumping in the air only to land in the same spot. While the narrative includes philosophical and theological

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Claudio Ciancio, *Il Dialogo polemico tra Schelling e Jacobi* (Torino: Italia, 1975), and Walter Jaeschke (ed.), *Religionsphilosophie und spekulative Theologie: Der Streit um die Göttlichen Dinge (1799–1812)* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1994).

[4] Letter to Georgii on January 14, 1812, in *Aus Schellings Leben*, II, 281.

[5] SW XIII: 86. See a similar statement in the Paulus edition: "the *Denkmal auf Jacobi* (1812) contains the beginning of the positive philosophy" (in Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841–1842*, ed. Manfred Frank [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977], 138).

arguments, Schelling's cruel representation of his adversary is also evidently intended as an attack on his character.

In the first chapter, "The Historical," Schelling presents a satirical account of Jacobi's philosophical career and of what he regards as Jacobi's central idea, namely, that any scientific demonstration inevitably leads to atheism and to fatalism. With his principle that "philosophy is *necessarily* atheistic," Schelling argues, Jacobi has "solemnly proclaimed, publicly declared war on scientific knowledge and promulgated a general hatred of reason" (SW VIII: 47). Jacobi's claim that knowledge of divine things is inaccessible to science, according to Schelling, falls back on its author, who has "generously spread out the miserable limitation of his spirit to the entire human species," and whom Schelling compares to "those great Pharisees who not only took away the key leading to knowledge and could not access it themselves, but *also tried to block those* who *sought to* access it" (SW VIII: 44). Schelling, by contrast, maintains that it is the proper task of philosophy to produce rational and demonstrable knowledge of God:

> Philosophy is truly philosophy only so long as the idea or certainty remains that it is possible through it to assert something scientific regarding the existence or non-existence of God. The moment it appeals to pure and simple faith, it loses itself in the general and what is simply human. (SW VIII: 42–43)

The second chapter contains the philosophical gist of the *Denkmal*. Schelling aims to justify the "scientific" character of theism by "grounding" it in naturalism, all the while showing that Jacobi's faith-based theism is conducive to atheism. For Schelling, "real philosophy" is a "scientific theism," and the ultimate object of scientific research is to demonstrate the existence of God as a personal being (SW VIII: 42; 54–55; 82). The fundamental and original insight of philosophy is precisely the idea of a personal being, "the hidden, inscrutable One" (SW VIII: 54), who is the originator and governing principle of the world. The system reaches toward the justification of that personal God as its teleological end, conceived as something "real," "living." In this sense, "true objective science" is "a progression and development of the object itself"; its method is "ascending" (SW VIII: 59). Just as God can leave no contradiction outside Himself, so "the true doctrine of God cannot be at odds with Nature, nor suppress any system" (SW VIII: 55). Here, however, we encounter again the same oppositions that Schelling had earlier resolved in absolute identity. How to surmount the dualities without suppressing them? As Xavier Tilliette points out, Schelling's solution can be summed up in one word: "explication," that is, the "passage" from the implicit to the explicit, from the potential to the actual. This procedure allows Nature

to evolve from its primitive stage to more developed and accomplished forms. Horst Fuhrmans rightly described this phase in Schelling's thinking as "explicatory theism."[6] The Absolute, from this perspective, is development, evolution, and ontogenesis.[7]

Schelling rejects Jacobi's claim that naturalism and theism are incompatible. He sees in this alleged irreconcilability the main cause for the ruin of theism and the real source of atheism (SW VIII: 67–68). He affirms instead a "living conjunction" between naturalism, i.e., "the system that asserts a nature in God," and theism, i.e., the system that "asserts consciousness, intelligence, and free will in God" (SW VIII: 69). Why does Schelling seek to combine the two? First, as already mentioned, he thinks that, if the two systems cannot be reconciled, naturalism is indelible and cannot be suppressed, which therefore leaves open the source of scientific atheism (SW VIII: 69). Secondly, he argues that theism cannot subsist by itself. Alone, it is without force, empty, intangible, fragile; it is afraid of science and terrified by the living, physical reality of God. For this reason, it seeks refuge in feeling, nostalgia, and "non-knowledge" (SW VIII: 69–70).

Not only is theism incapable of suppressing naturalism, it further cannot exist on its own: "theism … cannot even begin without naturalism; it hovers completely in the void" (SW VIII: 69). By severing God from nature, and positing a purely spiritual idea of God, theism tries in vain to pass from God to nature (SW VIII: 70). For Schelling, beginning with a moral cause, an intelligent creator before—and to the exclusion of—nature, is untenable. Theism forgets to specify whether the original Being, *necessarily* anterior to all things, is anterior *insofar* as He is Perfect (SW VIII: 65–66). It runs into difficulties when it asserts that "the One, the good and wise in itself, is also the *beginning of all things*, the *original beginning*; that the One is also *actu before* the many" (SW VIII: 77). In this case, God has no reason to create; creation would be a loss. In language recalling the alchemical imagery of the *Essay on Human Freedom*, Schelling writes:

> What could possibly move the living to create the dead, if indeed God is a God of the living and not of the dead? It is absolutely more conceivable that life emerges from death—which, of course, cannot be an absolute death, but only a death containing life within itself—than the other way round, that life descends into death, loses itself. (SW VIII: 77)

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[6] Horst Fuhrmans, "Das Gott-Welt-Verhältnis in Schellings positiver Philosophie," in *Kritik und Metaphysik*, eds. Friedrich Kaulbach and Joachim Ritter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1966), 198.
[7] Xavier Tilliette, *Schelling: une philosophie en devenir*, vol. 1 (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 577.

Unlike theism, naturalism can at least begin by itself (SW VIII: 68–69). Naturalism offers the possibility and the foundation of a development in God, or an ascent from the less perfect to the more perfect (SW VIII: 70). But how is the conjunction of naturalism and theism accomplished? God contains nature as His ground (*Grund*). God makes Himself His own ground by subordinating a part or a potency of His essence (the non-intelligent part) to the superior part, "just as man only truly transfigures himself into intelligence, into a moral being, by subordinating the irrational part of his being to the higher" (SW VIII: 71–72). Thus, God separates in Himself light from darkness. It is the same God who is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, but He is not the same at the beginning as He is at the end: as alpha, He is *Deus implicitus*, the yet non-developed God—and He cannot even be called God, strictly speaking, whereas, as omega, as *Deus explicitus*, He is God in the eminent sense, the God of theism proper (SW VIII: 81). Since what constitutes the beginning cannot be completely blind, like a stone or a wood block, Schelling conceives an intermediary term between intelligence and non-intelligence: an "innate, instinctive, blind, not yet conscious wisdom," which he associates with divine inspiration (SW VIII: 66). This rapid sketch illustrates what Sean McGrath describes as Schelling's struggle to "break through to a *religious naturalism*, a theory of nature that is not only *compatible* with monotheism, but is systematically and essentially related to a conception of a free and personal divine creator."[8] Thus, more than just a polemical text, the *Denkmal* is indispensable to understanding the foundations and aims of Schelling's later philosophical project.

[8] Sean J. McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling: The Turn to the Positive* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 63.

[SW VIII: 19][9]

F. W. J. Schelling's Monument to Mr. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's Work "On the Divine Things, etc." and to the Accusations Made in It Concerning a Deliberately Deceptive and Lying Atheism[10]

Distressingly, it has now come to the point that people who freely admit that they do not possess the idea of God and know him only through created things (whose causes they are ignorant of), do not hesitate to accuse philosophers of atheism.
—Benedict De Spinoza[11]

[21] Preface

The *scientific* reader would adopt the most correct point of view for this short work by regarding it as the settlement of an old debt to science incurred by me long ago, and at the same time as the preface to a work in which many things that could only be hinted at here will receive the precise and detailed explanation they deserve.

I have only one request to make of the *non-scientific* reader: not to mix in any matters foreign to this subject, since here we are only speaking of scientific matters, and I make use of no other freedom than that which cannot be taken away from the scholar without immediately suspending all literary activity.

On the whole, I ask you not to regard this essay as an *appeal to the (present) public*. The dispute I had to settle with Mr. Jacobi cannot be settled according to the concepts prevalent today. By its circumstances it pertains to the general literary history of the nation, and by its subject, to the special history of world wisdom; both will not forget our quarrel and will pass the final judgment between us. He with me, or I with him: either way, we will both stand together before the judgment seat of posterity.

Munich, December 13, 1811

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[9] Page numbers from Schelling's *Sämmtliche Werke* will be indicated between brackets throughout the text.

[10] I thank Kyla Bruff, Paolo Livieri, Sean McGrath, Matthew Nini, Birgit Sandkaulen, and Leo Weiß for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this translation.

[11] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27.

[22] Contents of this work

Provisional explanation of the accusations made against me in Mr. F. H. Jacobi's book.

Contributions toward an assessment of the polemic started by Mr. Jacobi and its relation to science, theism, philosophy, and religion, as well as literature in general:

1) The Historical
2) The Scientific
3) The Universal (An Allegorical Vision)

[23] Provisional Explanation

In the just published work of Mr. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *On the Divine Things and their Revelation* (Leipzig, 1811), the following assertions are made with regard to the so-called *doctrine of all-unity*, *the doctrine of identity*, *the philosophy of nature*, etc.:

1) "Twelve years ago, when the natural daughter of critical philosophy, the doctrine of science [*Wissenschaftslehre*], claimed that the moral world order alone is God, this assertion at that time caused quite a *stir*"; (as is well known, the civil authorities were called upon by several governments against the author of *The Doctrine of Science,* and he lost his public teaching position, at least indirectly, as a result of this quarrel.) But "what is said in an Italian proverb: *una meraviglia dura tre giorni* [*a wonder lasts three days*], could hardly have been more strikingly confirmed on any occasion than when, shortly afterwards, the *second* daughter of critical philosophy (the above-mentioned doctrine of all-unity) completely, that is, *explicitly* abolished the distinction which the first had left standing between the philosophy of nature and moral philosophy, between necessity and freedom." (From this one could conclude that it had in fact already been abolished by Fichte). "For this abolition, even by name, *no longer aroused any astonishment*" (pp. 117, 118).

It is difficult to say what, in the opinion of this pragmatic narrative, should have happened to the author of the second doctrine after Kant [24] to make the *surprise* at his undertaking comparable to the sensation caused by Fichte's undertaking. At the very least he should have been removed from his position. Unfortunately, this did not happen. The narrator testifies that *he* has no part in this indifference. He washes his hands—in innocence.

As regards the content of the philanthropic statement concerning my doctrine, the author owes nothing but—the proof that it, namely the

distinction between the philosophy of nature and moral philosophy, between necessity and freedom, is abolished *in the sense in which he wants it to be taken*. Namely, in such a way that instead of moral freedom only natural necessity or necessity in general remains.

This ambiguous way of expressing my actual thoughts is one of the tricks that have been so abundantly used against my doctrine before the uninformed part of the public.[12]

2) This second daughter of critical philosophy (!) declared, "without further elaboration, that *above nature there is nothing*, and *nature alone is*," or, in another phrase, that "*nature is the One and the All, above it there is nothing*" (p. 118 ff).[13]

What does the sentence just cited represent for the author? Either the characteristic doctrine of the whole system, or a result which must first be drawn from it, brought out through deductions. I shall explain in a later section this form of polemic, of drawing conclusions at random from the statements (whether or not they are understood) of an author, in order to present them as his *real assertions*. The above assertion cannot be given by the author himself as a mere consequence. It cannot be so by its nature; if it is a doctrine of my system at all, it must be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of it. The whole tone, the typographical emphasis which [25] Mr. Jacobi always uses for quoted words, shows, in fact, that he wishes to present it as a literal assertion.

From this one should conclude that the sentence, "*above nature there is nothing*, and *nature alone is*," is to be found everywhere in my writings. I assure you *that it is not to be found in any of my writings*.

That would be enough, but I prove in addition that it *cannot* be found in them, because it goes against the nature and fundamental concept of my whole system.

This cannot be denied so long as the fundamental explanation of *nature*, which was given in the first detailed exposition of my system, is not ignored.[14] This explanation is formulated on page 114 [SW IV: 203] in the following terms: "we understand by nature the absolute identity, to the extent that it is

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[12] Compare with the explanation found in the first tome of my *Philosophical Writings* (Landshut 1809), pp. 406–407 [SW VII: 341–42; *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006), 13].

[13] This page number is from Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's *Von den göttlichen Dingen, 1811* (it can also be found in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Werke*, Vol. 3 [*Schriften zum Streit um die göttlichen Dinge und ihre Offenbarung*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Meiner: Fromann-Holzboog, 2000), 76]). Trans. note.

[14] It is found under the title of the second booklet in the second tome of my Journal of Speculative Physics (Jena and Leipzig, 1801) [Schelling is referring to his 1801 *Presentation of my System,* SW IV—a foundational text of his Identity Philosophy period].

not regarded as *being* [*seyend*], but *as the ground of its own being*." Here the *existing* [*seyende*] absolute identity is distinguished from the non-*existing* one, which is only the *ground* (in my language this means the "foundation") of its existence [*Existenz*], and the latter alone is declared to be nature. I thus assert that nature is the (as yet) non-*existing* (or purely objective) absolute identity. Mr. Jacobi, however, has me assert that it alone is, which is tantamount to saying that it alone has the predicate of existing.—Since, furthermore, that which is [*Seyende*] must generally be *above* that which is only the ground (or foundation) of its existence, it is obvious that, according to this very explanation, the *existing* absolute identity (God in the eminent state, God as *subject*) is placed above nature as the non-*existing*—merely *objective*—absolute identity, which behaves only as the ground of being.—The following words leave no doubt about this: "we foresee from this that we will call nature everything that lies *beyond the absolute being* of absolute identity" [SW IV: 203–204]. Common sense indicates that differentiation by appeal to what is *beyond* a given thing [26] cannot apply to *everything* there is, *for there is nothing outside this totality*. But these words also define what is outside of nature. Nature, they claim, is everything that (from the highest standpoint of the already existing absolute identity) lies *beyond* its *absolute*—namely, subjective—being; the same thing expressed from the human standpoint would have to be formulated as follows: nature is everything that for us is situated *below* the existing absolute identity, *below* its absolute—that is, subjective—being. From this it is clear that, from the standpoint of nature or even our own present existence, the *existing* absolute identity, i.e., God as subject, must be a *beyond*, i.e., probably also a beyond situated *outside* and *above* nature.

But there is no need to go into it so deeply. That such a proposition is completely impossible in my system is already evident from what everyone knows who has only read about it in learned journals, namely, that from the very beginning the real world has been opposed to the ideal world, and nature to the world of spirits.

3) "The same doctrine of all-unity was practically forced to abandon the doctrine of God, immortality and freedom—all that remained was *a doctrine of nature, a philosophy of nature*" (p. 139).

That the *philosophy of nature* is only one side of the whole system is known to every beginner in the study of it. Mr. Jacobi alone is pleased to ignore it for the sake of his polemic. It would be ridiculous to cite a passage to prove this assertion.

As regards the first part of the proposition (that the doctrine of all-unity *practically* must abandon the doctrine of God, etc.), nothing more can be said than simply that it contains an unprovable falsehood.

4) "The system of absolute identity is, *in fact and truth*, only one with Spinozism" (which Mr. Jacobi has been declaring to be *atheism* for 25 years) (p.

193).—In the introduction to the first presentation of my system I have explained that Spinozism [27], in a certain (by no means Jacobi's[15]) sense, is the primordial, real side of all true philosophy, which must necessarily be subordinated to the ideal [side]. I have stuck to this assertion until now, and have sought to verify it in reality. To this extent the statement that the doctrine of identity is Spinozistic has nothing against it, provided one adds that it is so from the point of view of one of its parts or elements, just as there is nothing objectionable in saying that man is a physical being provided this is not taken to mean that he is *only that*.—But that the doctrine of identity is *nothing other than* Spinozism remains to be proved by Mr. Jacobi.

5) "The philosophy of nature asserts that *all* dualism, however it may be called, must be annihilated (p. 118), and therefore asserts *in truth* (Mr. Jacobi always adds this) the identity (or one-and-the-same-ness) of reason and unreason, of good and evil" (p. 160). The first part of this sentence could perhaps be excused by the crudest, most general appearance. The philosophy of nature recognizes only *a single and unique supreme principle* and thus abolishes *all* dualism except the one in the supreme principle itself. But as far as the dualism that derives from it is concerned, which only appears in the physical and moral world, it would be odd if the author of the philosophy of nature, who started out by establishing dualism as a *fundamental law* of all reality, were the very one who had annihilated it. As regards the recognition of dualism also as a fundamental law of the moral world, he has explained himself clearly enough in his *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*. Thus it is for Mr. Jacobi to show where, how, and by which reasons drawn from my doctrine [28] I have *in truth* abolished all distinction between reason and unreason, right and wrong, good and evil.

6) According to this same doctrine, "the coral that produces islands in the sea is more similar to God than the man striving for virtue and holiness" (p. 186).—Although these words are not designated in print as being quoted, the fact that they are linked to words I have actually used gives rise to the possibility—who knows if not intentional?—of also taking them as such.

Of course, the whole turn of this sentence is too Jacobian—too *lachrymose* in its polemical genre—for an intelligent person to attribute it to me.

7) To make the following stunt comprehensible, the two related passages must be seen side by side:

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[15] A claim in the Introduction clarifies this last point: "It almost seems to me—as if the present exposition were its proof—that, until today, in *all* publicly known views, realism in its most perfect and accomplished form (I mean in *Spinozism*) has been completely *misjudged* and *misunderstood*" [SW VII: 110]. In this manner, Jacobi's presentation of Spinozism was perfectly well-understood, not only in its general lines, but owing to the completely mechanical, lifeless, and abstract concepts which it made of it.

Schelling *Discourse on the Relation of Fine Arts to Nature* [SW VII: 293]	Jacobi *On the Divine Things* p. 157
"For the enthusiastic researcher alone, nature (to the one this, to the other that) is the sacred, eternally creative primordial force of the world, which generates all things from itself and brings them forth by its own activity. This principle of imitation probably had great significance when it taught the art of emulating this creative force, etc."	"If we were told, as a higher and deeper revelation of doctrine, that nature, or absolute productivity, is *the sacred, eternally creative primordial force of the world, which generates all things from itself and brings them forth by its own activity*; that it is *the only true God, the Living One*; that the God of theism, on the other hand, is only a tasteless idol, a figment of the imagination which dishonors reason, we would not be allowed to fall silent immediately upon hearing this."

The reader who is only a little attentive will see that the words *added* by Mr. Jacobi—"it (nature) is [29] *the only true God*, *the Living One*"—which were *added* out of his own invention, not only appear in the context of the discourse as a *continuation* of the previous words, but by the same typographical emphasis are also *placed completely on a par with them externally*, i.e., they are also presented as literally cited words.[16]

But also the following words, "the God of theism, etc., is a figment of the imagination," are not emphasized in print, but continue in the same context, in the same construction with the previous words, in such a way that every unsuspecting reader, who is not familiar with my way of thinking, must also take them for my own words.

The announcement of a higher and deeper revelation! This is how Mr. Jacobi ought to describe my *actual* words.—A higher and deeper revelation! A speculative doctrine in a speech on fine arts delivered before a mixed assembly! What must that poor speech have been guilty of, that its innocent words are taken *so* highly, that Mr. Jacobi himself drags *it* before his own tribunal! He would gladly put it under torture to force words from it that it did not say! Is

[16] Perhaps that slippery man will plead that between the genuine words and the made-up ones there is a further unitalicized "it is." Now it would not in itself be a very honest method to distinguish what is genuine from what is made-up by a boundary so fragile, which no reader can easily perceive; but it should be mentioned that earlier in the sentence, only the *predicates* are typographically emphasized—not the subject (nature or absolute productivity), nor the auxiliary (*is*)—from which it is clear that the made-up words are placed on an equal footing with the authentic ones.

this academic speech, which is still often discussed, perhaps the main source from which Mr. Jacobi drew his knowledge of my system?

That nature generates all things (surely by this is meant the things of nature?) from itself and brings them forth by its own activity: this sentence is probably one of the most innocuous ones, to which even the blindest zealot could take no offense, since even Mr. Jacobi himself, on p. 165 of his book, provides an edifying commentary on the words of Genesis: "and God said: let the *earth* [30] *bring forth* living animals, etc." What makes this sentence, which in itself is quite unsuspicious and does not contain anything striking or new, reprehensible—what makes it *truly atheistic*—is the *addition* by Mr. President that "it (nature) is the only true God, the Living One."

These are the means the fine man uses to make his accusations credible to the public.

8) "The naturalist who dogmatically asserts that everything is nature, and that nothing exists apart from and above nature"—that is, the naturalist, according to the passage quoted above under 2), who is one *only in a very specific sense*, namely, to the extent that he is the author of the second system after Kant's, the author of the doctrine of identity, of the philosophy of nature—that naturalist, "when he uses the words: God, freedom, immortality, good and evil, seeks only to deceive." This is stated in clear words on pp. 153–154. According to a parallel passage (p. 113), which is unmistakable, this is also to be expressed in this way: "the naturalist in this sense only uses these words *to deceive* and *play games*"; and according to a passage (p. 183) which also obviously belongs here: "he wants to know nothing of the true God, but nevertheless shies away from denying Him—*with his lips*." He is not in a (still forgivable) self-deception, his use of these words is a scientific fraud intended *to mislead* (p. 158).—"Naturalism in this sense must never want to speak—even (!) of God and of divine things, not of freedom, of moral good and evil, of actual morality; for, according to his (whose?) *innermost conviction*, these things do not exist, and in speaking of these things, he says what he does not *really* mean. But one who does so, speaks a *lie*" (pp. 154–155). In this passage only the system is spoken of at first, but as if this were not enough, by speaking of an innermost conviction, the discourse artificially plays the meaning over into the personal, and thereby prepares the very personal conclusion: he who does this, etc.—who denies God on principle, who denies all difference between right and wrong, good [31] and evil—is the naturalist in the sense explained above, and, moreover, a public *deceiver* and *liar*.

Let Mr. Jacobi say, if he can, that by naturalism he did not definitely understand *the system of the philosophy of nature*, and by the naturalist not definitely *the one who asserts the system of the philosophy of nature*. For Spinoza, the only one who could possibly still be meant—inasmuch as he too is a naturalist in Mr. Jacobi's sense, and yet has given the first book of his *Ethics* the title *De Deo,*

and a subsequent one *De libertate humana*—is already excluded in advance by an earlier explanation[17]: *he* had the right to use those words, *he* was not a deceiver.

If Mr. Jacobi already had this principal and universal method in readiness, he would not have needed any of the above. Nor did he have the right to invent words and add them *untruthfully* to mine, so as to make me say that I do not recognize any God but nature; he could have left my statements as they were, even cited theistic ones recognizing a true God. Because the *one* radical method abolished everything, he only had to add at the end that all this was only lies and deceit.

The last attack is of such a nature that it becomes impossible to find epithets and words to describe it.—He who allows himself to be taken so far in a scientific dispute as to attack the innermost part of his adversary, which he does not know, nor is even capable of knowing, and which only God knows, needs nothing but his own action to bring *stigma* upon himself; and he who still believes in glory and honor, in the judgment of posterity, would infinitely prefer to be the target of such an attack than to be the attacker, provided also that—in an incredible way—the attacker would find means of evading the utterance of the *disgrace* due to him in life.

[32] Man is by nature a good-natured being. Readers who merely recall the first accusations (Nos. 1–6), and remember how each one had to be answered *invariably with* "*this is not true*," will not comprehend, will hardly be able to *believe*, that a man who still claims some literary dignity could not only forget himself so far—could even be *satisfied with bringing* his adversary *into disrepute* by using untruthful rhetoric, with *defaming* him (there is no other word), regardless of whether it was later found to be an utterly vulgar falsehood—provided he was only able to vent his anger. I myself, after writing the foregoing, went back several times to verify, to convince myself again.

For a number of years now, a similar web of untruths about my doctrine has been running through public papers. All at once the source is revealed, the purposes for which it has been spun, the way of thinking for which it has been defended.

Mindful of the dignity that is due to the scientific man in the face of the rabble of nameless scribblers, I had to consider it beneath me to take note of it. Now a name suddenly appears at the top—the name Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. The public will excuse me from discussing the reasons—for they are

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[17] Cf. *Against Mendelssohn's Accusations,* p. 84, compare with *Jacobi to Fichte,* p. 41.—(In his *Letters concerning Spinoza* (p. 228), he makes the following remark about the statement that Spinozism is atheism: "I am far from claiming that all Spinozists are atheists." But as regards his contemporary, whom he accuses of Spinozism in his latest work, he knows that he is well aware of himself, and that he is also an atheist "according to his most intimate conviction" (added in the author's manuscript)).

several and varied—that led me to make a public declaration at this time: partly because every intelligent reader can easily imagine those reasons for himself, partly because it might seem as if I only wanted to raise a great clamor about injustice done to me, which is entirely against my nature. I shall content myself with saying flatly that all the statements in that book concerning my scientific convictions are bold fabrications on the part of their author which cannot be substantiated by anything.

Although this characteristic of those statements is sufficiently obvious for me personally, fair consideration demands that I not make the final statement on my own behalf, so as to leave open to Mr. Jacobi the possibility of producing any evidence he might have for his statements.

I only have to explain myself about the *kind* of proof that could take place here alone.

[33] It is not a question of the value of my philosophical assertions, nor of whether the statements attributed to me by Mr. Jacobi are atheistic—nor whether those which may appear in the following work are theistic; it is merely to do with the scientific-historical question of knowing *what I have really asserted, what not,* whether *the assertions attributed to me are in truth my assertions, whether the passages presented as literal quotations from my writings are really to be found in my writings or not*. This question is of such a kind that only admits of a scholarly decision, but yet one that is perfectly settled, in that it rests merely on the existence or non-existence of certain philosophical assertions which can either be attested or not in the entirety of the available record (my writings).

For this very reason it goes without saying that, in regard to these questions, the testimonies or assurances of others (which could basically only be repetitions of the same untruths, all the more *dishonorable* if they were presented by unnamed persons) can prove nothing, just as it is generally appropriate that the person who makes the attacks should also personally provide the evidence.

I am willing to submit to all the consequences that must result for me from the evidence actually given by my adversary, just as I am convinced that in the event of the evidence not being given, public opinion will treat Mr. Jacobi with the same degree of well-founded contempt with which, in the opposite case, it would have been entitled to regard me.

No one will blame me for pushing the matter to this point. It is to be assumed that whoever ventures to come out with public accusations has also equipped himself with the necessary evidence in case it is required. If he cannot produce them, he deserves neither pity not consideration; even his friends cannot but condemn him, at least for his imprudence. For one thing is certain: attacks on another's personality are not to take lightly, [34] and there is hardly any other likely means of bringing slander back to its senses after it has become insolent through long, undisturbed habit. It is impossible even for a depraved

public to take long pleasure in seeing a single person always challenged in this way. Even if one wishes to see him refuted, one wants it to be done soundly, not with the weapons of ignorance or lies, but with those of the spirit and of truth.

If, after this explanation, any harshness should still be found in my chosen manner of proceeding, I only wish that the public, who are somewhat familiar with the nature of my opponent, may ask themselves what Mr. Jacobi would have done in my place, and whether it could be assumed that he, attacked in this way and by such means, would have shown even the tenth part of the moderation that I have shown toward him.

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With this in mind, I leave it to Mr. Jacobi, first of all, to provide evidence for all the statements and allegations contained in citations 1 to 6—for which, however, exclamations, accusations, and other rhetorical devices, still less the contemptible tactics of the art of drawing conclusions [*Consequenzmacherei*], cannot be used. If Mr. Jacobi intends to provide evidence, he can only do so through the expressed principles of my system, through clear statements of my public writings.—Meanwhile, and until Mr. Jacobi provides this evidence, truth and justice demand that all the statements and allegations contained in citations 1 to 6 be taken as *one*—and, in any case, to be declared as *worthless slander*—regardless of whether they were produced intentionally or by delusion.

Since, with the intention of making me out to be an atheist, a sentence is also given under No. 2 as a literal assertion, at least as a sentence in one of my writings, a sentence that I assure you [35] does not appear in any of my writings and cannot possibly appear in any of them, Mr. Jacobi will have no choice, in order not to be found out as a man of obvious, deliberate untruth, but to prove the existence of this sentence in my writings.

In the same way, because of the passage quoted under No. 7, Mr. Jacobi has only one kind of justification still available to him: to prove that the words "*nature is the only true God, the Living One*" are really contained in my academic speech or in any of my writings. Until he has given this proof, no one will have any hesitation in declaring that passage to be a *falsification* of my words and ideas.[18]

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[18] According to the Campe dictionary, "to falsify" means "to make inauthentic, to make worse with a *foreign addition*." The above case fits entirely under this definition, with the only difference that *by the foreign addition* (made by Mr. Jacobi), my discourse is not made worse but *completely bad*, namely atheistic, and, it should be noted, not by chance, but in a book and in a context that have the specific *intent* to portray me as an atheist.—As is well known, the juridical concept of *Falsum* expressly requires, in addition to the material aspect of the action,

Given the resentment and the personal attitude with which Mr. Jacobi has conducted all his literary disputes (of which there are not a few), it has long been assumed that he has a particular opinion of his profession. Since he has really tried to develop the quality of an appointed Grand Inquisitor toward me, I will indicate a means by which this quality could be combined with that of a scholar.

If, by the fact that I have dwelt for a long time on the most general principles, that from the beginning I have preferred to devote my diligence to the part of my system dedicated to the philosophy of nature—if thereby [36] any uncertainty or ambiguity could ever have arisen in regard to my convictions of the highest ideas—inasmuch at least as most are incapable of developing even the already existing seeds independently—I have removed this ambiguity in every respect with the treatise *On the Essence of Human Freedom*, written already three years ago. *Ignorance* (always a deplorable means) is here as *wrong* as the addition above (No. 7). Since in that treatise I have not only explained the concept of moral freedom, as well as that of the personality of the supreme being, but have sought to give them an objective foundation, *the least* that I can demand of Mr. Jacobi in regard to the accusations contained in No. 8 is the proof that the concepts in that treatise are not taken in the sense in which the common man, the natural human understanding, takes them, and that therefore, in truth, I have only sought through them to deceive and play games.

Here the question is not whether Mr. Jacobi considers those concepts and doctrines to be really justified by the principles developed there (which is of no consequence at all), but only *whether I have sincerely considered the former to be justified by the latter, and whether I had to do so*, since I am speaking here only of my inner conviction.

As long as Mr. Jacobi has not really proved what is demanded (what is called proving), the disgust naturally provoked by the odiousness of this unscientific attack, this attempt *to murder morally* the opponent's person, if it were possible—this disgust will remain in the breast of every honest man, without this being my fault. No man of honor will think of calling this act a

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the characteristic of *specific intent*. As soon as this characteristic is present, that concept is decided; it is not mere forgery, but falsification (*Falsum*).—In the *lege Cornelia* [Cornelian law] the present case is also definitely provided for: cf. LXVI, paragraph 2, *Dig. de lege Cornelia de falsis* [Concerning the Cornelian law on deceit]: "And also others who have made false entries in registers, public documents, or anything else of the kind, without sealing them, or, in order to prevent the truth from being known, have concealed or stolen anything, or made a substitution, or unsealed a paper, there is no doubt that it is customary for them to be punished with the same penalty [the Cornelian law]" [Book XLVIII, Title X (Concerning the Cornelian Law on Deceit and the Libonian Decree of the Senate), Paragraph 16 (*Paulus, Opinions, Book III*) §2, in S.P. Scott, *The Civil Law, Including The Twelve Tables, The Institutes of Gaius, The Rules of Ulpian, The Opinions of Paulus, The Enactments of Justinian, and The Constitutions of Leo*, 17 Vols. [ref. in Vol. XI] (Cincinnati: The Central Trust Company, 1932)].

literary disgrace, which I would not wish to do for the sole reason that it must seem doubtful whether an *act* can ever be attributed to a man who has so little power over himself.[19]

[37] With the foregoing explanation, I have fulfilled what I could seem to owe to external circumstances. If there I was in a sense compelled to respond personally to an unknown figure, from here on I stand as a scholar purely opposite the scholar. I am again in my own element: from now on I speak in a different tone, from a different standpoint, that of the freethinker, the independent, scientific researcher.

Since I have been compelled to stand up personally against a strange, indeed, to tell the truth, distasteful attack, the scholarly world cannot find it undesirable that I should use the occasion given me to argue fully with Mr. Jacobi on the subject of science, as has long been desired.

Being accustomed to use disdainful spitefulness and all attempts to stop me only for the higher and stronger development of science, I had not to be content with what was merely outwardly demanded, but to think of transforming what was meant maliciously into something good for myself and others at the same time.

To a certain extent, the public had a right to demand that such a conspicuous way of acting as that described in the previous section be made reasonably comprehensible to them. This could only be accomplished by a historical exposition of the relation which the opponent has always held to theism and science. This first of the following chapters will be devoted to this purpose.

A second good deed was made possible insofar as the opponent had interspersed his attack with individual scientific arguments, by means of which he partly wanted to defend his old, long-known opinion, [38] and partly to support his polemic against my philosophical assertions. By subjecting these to examination in turn, I had at the same time the opportunity to express myself indirectly on some of the most important scientific points, which will soon be addressed in a more serious and direct manner.

The third, and if successful, best work, was finally to help my opponent, after the public had been made properly aware of him, where possible to come to a more correct understanding of himself, an aim with which the third chapter will be primarily concerned.

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[19] It remains to be seen for what reason, administrative or otherwise, Mr. Jacobi, who in other circumstances distinguishes sufficiently between the person and the subject matter, refrained from expressing my name. To imitate him in this, I have found neither compatible with my straightforward manner, nor even in general: through me, he is confronted with a subject matter [i.e., my system], whereas through him, I am only confronted with a person. What would have been gained if, as he only ever spoke of the author of the philosophy of nature, I had only spoken of the author of *Woldemar*?

[…]

[54] 2. THE SCIENTIFIC

The first person who, in the course of pure rational research, was struck by the thought that a personal being might be the originator and ruler of the world as the all-reconciling solution to the great puzzle, was indisputably moved by it as if by a miracle, and was astonished to the highest degree. It was not only a bold idea, it was absolutely the boldest of all thoughts. Just as this thought gave everything a human significance, the first to discover it (if there ever was one) certainly had a completely human idea of this personal being. He certainly did not just sit back and relax, but went out under the open sky and asked all of Nature, the stars and the mountains, the plants and the animals, whether they would give him any information about the hidden, inscrutable One; or, he went into distant lands to search among unknown people, tribes and nations for signs or historical traces of this being.

But it was precisely he, who was led to this thought by scientific research, who had to recognize most definitely that the perfectly founded insight into the existence of this being could only be the final fruit of the most thoroughly developed, most comprehensive science.

This remains basically the case to this day. The reality of such a being and its relationship to the world are still the subject of scientific research.

[55] Even without taking into account the results of a so-called rational critique, which in other respects are false, it is clear from the ongoing dispute between, on the one hand, the prevailing theism, and on the other, naturalism, pantheism, and other systems, that scientific theism has not yet been found, or, if found, that it has in no way been recognized. For scientific theism can no more leave a contradiction outside itself than can God Himself, and just as God allows Nature and the World to exist without being dependent on them for His existence, so the true doctrine of God cannot be at odds with Nature, nor suppress any system. It must reconcile everything, just as God reconciles everything, and just as, according to some, in the most distant future, when God gathers all His works together again, Satan himself will appear before the throne of the Eternal in order to submit to Him with all his hordes, so before true theism, if only it appeared in all its perfection, even the most determined scientific atheist would have to fall down and worship.

It is mankind's duty to ensure that this faith, which until now has remained mere belief, is transfigured into scientific knowledge. Man should not stand idle, but grow in the perfection of knowledge, until he becomes like his archetype.

Whoever claims that this goal is not only unattainable now or in the near future, but that it is absolutely and intrinsically unattainable, deprives all scientific endeavors of their highest, their ultimate direction. From the moment that the object is taken away by which alone the human spirit is truly set *outside* itself and lifted above itself, the prophecy would be fulfilled that science recognizes nothing more than *ghosts*.

The scientific spirit is too stimulated in our time for such a doctrine, which strips man of his nobility, to announce itself with open freedom, as it did not so long ago. Even Mr. Jacobi, whose exultation at the supposed ignominious end of science through Fichte knew no bounds, feels that something more than his mere assertion is needed to prove such an opinion. But [56] where are the arguments to be found now?—In this distress, as once Samuel's spirit at Endor [1 Samuel 28], so now Kant's letter is conjured up from the dead. Mr. Jacobi assures us that Kant has *irrefutably* demonstrated the impossibility of arriving at a scientific understanding of God and divine things (p. 115). What is this assertion supposed to mean? It either means this: that the propositions, the conclusions by which Kant arrived at that conclusion are irrefutable; in which case Mr. Jacobi must declare the whole Kantian critique irrefutable, which not long ago he thought he could even refute himself. Or else it means only this: the result Kant had reached is irrefutable, even if his arguments are not. In the first case, it is nothing but a repetition of his own assertion in a different form; in the second case, nothing but an attempt to encourage himself by the great name of Kant.

After these cries for help, Mr. Jacobi finally decides to try some proofs from the treasure of his own wisdom, and indeed the scientific effort behind his latest work cannot be mistaken.

The arguments are partly direct, in that they logically demonstrate, from the nature of the proof itself, that a scientific knowledge of God is impossible; and partly indirect and only, as it were, instinctively defensive, in that by positing an absolute opposition between nature and God, and thus by similarly holding naturalism and theism apart, the latter is deprived of any scientific ground.

Knowledgeable readers will hardly find anything significantly new, no argument that has not already been put forward in one way or another and refuted directly or indirectly long ago.

No matter! We are glad that it is only a question of arguments, that it has at last become possible to drag that unscientific talk, which seeks to borrow a semblance of reason itself, before the judgment seat of science.

As we are ourselves compelled, by going through the individual arguments, [57] to express some things individually, we certainly expose ourselves to the possibility of new misunderstandings. But it is enough for me if, by discussing those arguments, only my *true* and *real* atheism—namely in

relation to the theism of my opponent, to which it relates as a true anti-theism—is put in the proper light.

The reader may be assured of finding in what follows the gist of the philosophical and dialectical wisdom of our author's latest work. Whoever compares it with the present exposition will not be able to deny that I have reproduced the proposed arguments faithfully, without distortion or misrepresentation, and that I have refuted them just as honestly and without falsehood.

The proposition cited at the beginning of each section, and otherwise excellent, is each time a literal excerpt from the latest revelations of Jacobian non-knowledge.

1) "The ground of proof [*Beweisgrund*] is always and necessarily *above* that which is to be proved by it; it *comprehends* it *under* itself; truth and certainty flow down from it to that which is to be proved; it borrows its reality from it as a fief" (p. 136).

This proposition, stated as a self-evident truth that requires no proof, provides the most profound insight into the author's logical and scientific concepts, which is why it has been appropriately placed at the beginning of all other propositions.

According to this axiom, the number 3 will in the future be regarded *as higher* than the number 9; for the number 9 requires the number 3 for its proof, it borrows its reality from it: 3 is therefore more than 9 and all the potencies resulting from it.

In geometry, the theorem that the longest side of a triangle is opposite the largest angle is higher than the Pythagorean theorem: the latter is below it, for truth and certainty flow from the former to the latter. It is true that Euclid placed it as if intentionally at the end of his first book to indicate that it is the culmination, as it were, of all that preceded it. But what does Euclid know about scientific form?—The theorem of the tenth book, that [58] there can be only five regular bodies, is regarded by the Ancients, as by Kepler, as the crowning achievement of all geometry.[20] But according to our logician, even the most trivial theorem belonging to the elementary principles stands *above* that theorem, because the former serves to prove the latter.

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[20] "Proclo non credidit affirmanti, quod erat *verissimum*, scil. *Euclidei operis ultimum finem,* ad quem referrentur omnes omnino propositiones omnium librorum (exceptis quae ad Numerum perfectum ducunt), esse quinque Corpora regularia" (*Joh. Kepleri Harmonice Mundi*, L. I). ["as (Ramus) knew that Proclus was a member of the Pythagorean sect, he did not believe him when he asserted, which was quite true, that the ultimate aim of Euclid's work, to which absolutely all the propositions of all its books were related, was the five regular solids" (Johannes Kepler, *The Harmony of the World*, trans. E. J. Aiton, A. M. Duncan, and J.V. Field [Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1997], 11).]

This axiom is certainly not abstracted from common experience or the method of all true sciences; rather, it is a true *a priori* proposition, which produces in all our views a reversal of the same kind as the Copernican system does in our views of the heavens.—Since, for example, in the construction of a house, I must of necessity begin from the foundation, and thus the foundation is the true *ground* of proof of a house, it is evident that we are mistaken in looking for the foundation *below*; for the ground is necessarily above that which is founded by it. To be sure, the words "ground" [*Grund*], "principle" [*Grundsatz*] and also the expression "establishing a truth" [*Wahrheit begründen*]—even the Latin expression *ratio sufficiens*—all these words point downwards, into the depths. In relation to them, the expression *ground of proof* used in the axiom is truly wooden iron [i.e., a contradiction in terms]. But language, as is well known, is usually governed by appearance, or by mere common sense, and the lofty paradox of the axiom is only rendered more spiritual by the *ground* of proof hovering in the air.

This new axiom, which might be called a true counter-argument of all *depth*, is, however, perfectly true to the doctrine given twenty-five years ago: we can only demonstrate similarities; all demonstration is only progress by way of identical propositions[21]; there is no progress from one term to another, but from the same to the same: the tree of knowledge never comes to flower nor to fruit; there is no development at all; there are only [59] general propositions and concepts, *among* which more particular ones are included as mere *applications*.

It is with concern that we now recognize the cause of our misunderstanding. We must confess that we were not acquainted at all with proofs based on concepts as such; that we had unfortunately not learned that subjective manner of philosophizing where the philosopher makes his own truth; that we had hitherto thought that the object of a true objective science was a real [*Wirkliches*], living thing [*Lebendiges*]; its progression and development a progression and development of the object itself; that the true method of philosophizing was ascending, not descending. This necessarily resulted in the exact opposite axiom: "The ground of development [*Entwicklungsgrund*] is always and necessarily *beneath* that which is developed; it sets that which develops from it *above* itself; it recognizes it as higher and, having served its development as a substance, as an organ, as a condition, submits to it."

2) The suggestion of the possibility of such an evolutive method does appear once—in the appendix (pp. 212, 213)—but only to be refuted. But the argument must first be propped up if it is to fulfill this function.

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[21] *Letters concerning Spinoza*, p. 225. [F. H. Jacobi, *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2000), 123.]

"I prove," says the author, "by *showing* the place or position that a particular part occupies in a particular whole." (Of course, everything is expressed here in a lifeless way, as a mere *showing* of what already exists, as if we were speaking of drawers, not of a living bursting forth of each part in the position and at the level where it is necessary.) "What does not belong as a part to a whole can neither be demonstrated nor deduced."

"Now, not only are all the parts, determinations, or predicates, taken together, equal to the whole which unites them in itself, and one and the same with it or the object, but for this very reason they *also necessarily present themselves as existing simultaneously with it* [60], so that objectively neither the whole can exist before its parts, nor the parts as parts of this whole exist before it."

From this it must be concluded that all proof is impossible, because everything to be proved must relate to that from which it could be proved as a part, a determination, or a predicate, but there is no true succession between the whole and the part, the condition, the predicate.

But this argument, put down on paper with visible effort, would prove far too much, in that it would follow from it the impossibility of all proof, and not only of scientific proof, but of all development without distinction.

Our great dialectician, who on p. 155 even shows, to my delight, his familiarity with an Aristotelian rule—has forgotten only one small stipulation in the proposition that all the parts must exist simultaneously with the whole, namely, that the parts can exist simultaneously with the whole both *implicitly* and *explicitly*. If he means the latter, his conclusion has the insignificant error of which he may remember having heard in logic under the name of *petitio principii*; but if he means the former, the nerve of the proof is lost.

It may be clearer for the author if we put it this way: his whole argument is based on denying that a whole can exist in a state of involution. According to him, every concept reaches its fullness immediately, the essence immediately snatches at the form, the unity at the totality. Now because the philosopher has his essence [*Wesen*] precisely in this middle, Mr. Jacobi does not understand how one can get in between. Certainly he speaks here from experience: it is indisputable that in this case Mr. Jacobi has lost the greater part of his philosophical understanding, and now, as the cunning fox in Aesop's fable, he wants to persuade the rest of us to discard this *useless* and *superfluous tool*.

Neither is there any foundation for the assertion that what is developed or what is to be proved must relate to that from which it is developed [61] or proved as a *part* to the whole. The most proximate relation is rather that between the implicit, undeveloped whole, and the explicit whole, divided according to its individual parts. However, in the latter, precisely because it is an explicit whole, the part can be determined only by its relation to another part, and not by virtue of its being in the whole, otherwise this second

(objective) whole would not be truly distinct from the first (the subjective whole).—Here, however, it is important to find the *beginning*, which Mr. Jacobi has not found throughout his life, and, as will become clear from the following, could not find at all.

3) The following argument (p. 136), which hits the nail on the head, refers again to axiom No. 1.

"If it were possible to prove the existence of a living God, God Himself would have to be deduced from something that can be explained, derived, [and] developed as if out of His own principle, from something that we would be able to conceive as His ground, and which, therefore, would be *before* and *above* Him. For the mere deduction of the idea of a living God from the nature of the human faculty of knowledge leads so little to a proof of His true existence that, on the contrary," etc. (this last point is given to him and willingly conceded).

To be *before* another and to be *above* him are synonymous terms for the author: he joins both propositions calmly with an "and." It is the confusion of priority and superiority already criticized in the *axiom*.

This proposition, too, can again be reversed to its exact opposite, namely that "the existence of a living God is demonstrable precisely because this living existence develops itself from a necessary ground, of which we necessarily become aware, and which in this respect is *before* and *below* the living existence, and is therefore also to be developed from it."

"Horrible!" exclaims our philosophical divine scholar: to hear us say that the living existence of God, or God Himself as a [62] living being, presupposes a *ground* from which He first develops—that He is, as it were, only an effect, only a soul of the whole.—Just keep calm and the matter will be explained! If only the divine scholar would realize that this ground is again God Himself, but not *as* a conscious, intelligent God, and at least *this* terrifying thing would disappear. God must have something before Him, namely *Himself*, as certainly as He is *causa sui*. *Ipse se ipso prior sit necesse est*: if these are not empty words, God is absolute.

Admittedly, this idea is not compatible with the concepts of a vapid theism that allows no distinction in God, that describes the being in whom all fullness dwells as an utterly simple [concept]—completely empty, lacking substance, only just *tangible*. Nor should it be compatible with them.

To make it clearer for the attentive, well-meaning reader, I add the following. The deepest, most hidden thing in God is what the philosophers call aseity. It is that which is unapproachable in Him, which conceals love and goodness. But is this aseity God Himself, God in the eminent sense? How could it be, given that all deeper thinkers agree that, *in and of itself* (in the undeveloped state), it [aseity] leads no further than to the concept of a Spinozist substance?—Or is this aseity already consciousness, i.e., the

conscious God? Can Mr. Jacobi, for instance, conceive of an aseity having consciousness?—How little has he looked into this sacred depth!

4) "There can be only two main classes of philosophers: those who allow the more perfect to emerge from the less perfect, to develop gradually; and those who maintain that the most perfect is first, and that everything begins from it, that the origin and beginning of all things is *not* a nature of things, but a moral principle, an intelligence that wills and acts with wisdom: a Creator—God" (pp. 149, 150).

In this main proposition, too, which I confess, if found true, would make all scientific theism impossible, the teacher of our time has left out much that requires closer [63] definition, and which a philosopher by profession, who has practiced this profession almost from childhood, should not overlook.

This will be most clear if I reproduce the proposition with the necessary remarks added to the text, printing what belongs to what Mr. Jacobi, as is appropriate, in italic type, and what belongs to me, with the exception of a few words, in ordinary type.

"Some claim that *there are only two main classes of philosophers*. The first, they say, allows *what is more perfect to develop and rise from what is less perfect*."

"But you should make two subdivisions here. First, there could be those who allow the more perfect to rise from a less perfect [being] *that is independent of it and different from it*. There are no such philosophers to be found, however, who have strayed so far into absurdity. There are, however, such philosophers, not a few of whom are still insignificant, who allow the more perfect to rise *from what is less perfect in it*. There is nothing absurd in this. For thus we see every day that through education and development a man who is ignorant becomes a man who knows; that a man works his way up out of himself as a youth, the youth out of himself as a boy, and the boy again out of himself as a child, which are all less perfect states. Not to mention that nature itself, as those who do not lack the necessary knowledge know, has gradually risen from lower and more confused creatures to more perfect and well-formed ones."

"*The other main class* [*of philosophers*]," however, those who spoke first again assert, "distinguishes itself by teaching that *the most perfect is first*," but it makes the mistake of not saying whether it is [first] *actu* or *potentia*, first *in fact* or *merely in ability*; for the latter is also asserted by the others, whom this class nevertheless wishes to contradict. For the most perfect—that which has the perfection of all things in itself—must *necessarily* be *before all things*. But the question is whether [64] it was first *as* the most perfect, which is difficult to believe for many reasons, if only for the very simple one that, possessing in reality the highest perfection, it had no reason to create and bring forth so many things, through which, unable to attain a higher degree of perfection, it

could only become less perfect. But this does not contradict the fact that that which was first is *precisely that which* is the most perfect—just as when someone, to give only an approximate analogy, who says that Newton is the most perfect geometer, does not mean that he was already so as a child, and yet does not deny that *the Newton* who was the child is the same *Newton who* is the most perfect geometer."

"*This other main class* [of philosophers] further *asserts*, contrary to the first, as it thinks, that *the origin and beginning of all is not a nature of things*. But those of the first class do not mean this either, if the 'nature of things' is understood to be an *external* nature in relation to God. They only maintain that the nature of the *being* [*Wesen*] *itself* which extends through creation necessarily precedes this being, and that this nature cannot be of one kind with this being itself, but rather must be different from it in respect of its *attributes*. As, for example, if it were said that the actual nature [*Art*] of the being [*Wesen*] consists in love and goodness, so the *nature* [*Natur*] of this being, which is inseparable from it, and which this being to a certain extent presupposes, could not also consist in goodness and wisdom, because otherwise there would be no difference; in it there must therefore be a lack, at least of self-conscious goodness and wisdom, or it must be mere strength.[22] [65] But [the claim] that there is something in God that is *merely* force and strength cannot be disconcerting, provided one does not claim that God is *only* this and nothing else. Rather, the opposite should be disconcerting. For how could there be a *fear* of God if there were no strength in Him, and then how could He Himself, with all His wisdom and goodness, exist without strength, given that strength is precisely existence [*Bestehen*] and, in turn, all existence is strength? Where there is no strength, there is also no character, no individuality, no true personality, but vain diffuseness. We see this every day in people without character. And just as well, indeed better, can the old saying be reversed that without strength even the highest goodness would never be elevated to majesty. It is not for nothing, it might be added, that holy books speak so much of God's force and the strength of His authority."

"But once a strength, that is, *something that is mere nature*, must be admitted in the supreme being, the question then rises as to which *came before* the other: do they believe that goodness and wisdom came first, and that strength was then added to them, or do they believe that, conversely, strength came first, and was then tempered by wisdom and goodness? And if they must find the latter [hypothesis] far more plausible, as they ought to (unless they are

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[22] "Nature of itself exercises neither wisdom nor goodness, but everywhere only power; it is what works without freedom, without knowledge and will; in it alone the law of powerprevails. But where wisdom and goodness are lacking, and only the law of power prevails, there is, says an old saying, no true sublimity, there is no majesty: Sine bonitate nulla majestas!" (Jacobi, *Von den göttlichen Dingen*, pp. 167–168).

too incapable even to rise to such thoughts), they will probably also have to admit that it was what has been and has not ceased to be from the beginning, i.e., the very first existing being—certainly not a nature of things, which would be something merely external and not belonging here at all—[but rather] *the nature of the being itself*, which has evolved out of itself to the *actu* most perfect [being]. But those who have remained novices in philosophy all their lives, and who have never arrived at the right concepts, however much they have snatched at them, do not arrive at such determinations at all."

"Thus these same philosophers also constantly oppose the first ones: *the beginning of everything must be a moral principle* [66], but they omit to specify whether it is an *actu* or merely *potentiâ* moral principle, whereby they gain that those who are wiser than they are, stand as if they posited an absolutely blind being, as it were a stone or a block, as the beginning. For even the moral being, in order to be just such and to distinguish itself as such (in which the act of personality consists), must have in itself a *beginning of itself* that is not *moral*.[23] But the beginning of itself, which a moral being has in itself, is already *potentiâ* or *implicite* moral, and not an absolute opposite of freedom or morality."

But as far as what that so-called other main class of philosophers further says, namely that "*the origin and beginning of all things* (of intelligence itself as well?) *is an intelligence that wills and acts with wisdom*," we have already answered with the question inserted in the words just cited. Since they believed themselves to be at the deepest level, they have hardly penetrated below the surface. Let them only ask themselves, if they understand so much, whether an intelligence, as *intelligence*, can rest so purely and simply *on itself* (that is, *exist* as pure intelligence), considering that *thought* is the very opposite of *being*, and is, as it were, as thin and empty as the latter is thick and full. But that which is the beginning of an intelligence (in itself) cannot in turn be intelligent, since otherwise there would be no differentiation; nor can it be purely non-intelligent per se, precisely because it is the possibility of an intelligence. Thus it will be a mediator, that is, it will act with wisdom, but as it were with an innate, instinctive, blind, not yet conscious wisdom, just as we often see enthusiasts acting: they speak sayings full of understanding, yet they do not do so with reflection, but rather as if by inspiration.

"Those others (of the second main class), who are too idiotic to understand these things, become quite indignant when they realize [67] that those who are knowledgeable accept a non-intelligent principle as the lowest and deepest of intelligence, and are full of annoyance when they realize that they cannot arrive anywhere at reality with their enlightened God. They cannot utter a word when they are asked how such a strangely confused whole as the world (even if it has been put in order) could have arisen from such a

[23] To be distinguished from *immoral*.

completely clear and transparent intelligence. Full of anger at this, they begin to scold those of the first class as deniers of God, and put the thumbscrew on them that they should confess that they are atheists, and are only lying when they speak of God."

"So it is with those *two main classes of philosophers*, where, however, it would be far more correct to say that one is the class of philosophers, and the other the race of wretched and ignorant sophists."

In this paraphrase of Jacobi's propositions, I have thus explained my... *naturalism* openly and, as it seems to me, clearly enough for the deeper-thinking reader. To *this* atheism I confess. Let him who can refute it come, and I will face him.

Our divine scholar cannot be expected to do this. If he could only suspect such things, he would have long since been troubled by more obvious questions, e.g.: "How is it that the Old Testament came before the New, since in his opinion the most spiritual is always what comes first? Why did God reveal Himself *much earlier* in the former as an angry and zealous God—more hidden than manifest[24]—and generally displayed more physical characteristics, but only found it good to reveal His highest spiritual characteristics explicitly to the human race not yet two thousand years ago?"

5) "There are only two systems, naturalism and theism: both are incompatible, and can in no way exist together or balance each other out."—This proposition sums up the substance of the entire polemic so well that it would be unnecessary to cite any single passage.

[68] Therein—in this supposed irreconcilability, which all half-heads must passionately assert, because this is the only way their half-headedness can exist—lies the main reason for the ruin of theism and the main source of all real atheism.

True theism cannot but be divine itself, and therefore, as already remarked, can exclude nothing, suppress nothing. These are the saddest theologians, who want to prescribe to God the way in which He alone can be God, as it were, namely, when He has nothing of a nature in Himself. They consider God to be just as limited as their own narrow-minded ideas, and defending their pathetic theism, they give themselves the pretence of fighting for His glory.

Naturalism, even if it is not equal to theism in terms of dignity, is nevertheless completely equivalent to it as far as reality is concerned, i.e., it has to satisfy the same requirements. A theistic system that excludes the explanation of nature does not even deserve its name, because without a definite concept of the relation of God to nature, the concept of God remains

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[24] "Nature hides God," says the divine scholar on p. 189, not realizing that according to this only the hidden God can be.

uncertain. All knowledge of the divine nature, however, remains quite incomplete, since the mere science that a being exists without recognizing anything of its effects or relations is the most deficient knowledge of all.

Naturalism *can* only recognize the existence of theism to the extent that it is satisfied at the same time as the latter. Indeed, according to the simple principle that everywhere and in all knowledge one must progress from the lower to the higher, that the lower must first be comprehended before one can presume to comprehend the higher, naturalism has even earlier claims to the genuine philosophical system than theism.

Our teacher says: there are only these two systems, so he really recognizes them as two, i.e., each as something. He grants them the same indestructibility, and yet—naturalism alone should fall silent, and allow itself to be rejected by a highly incomplete theism, [69] a theism *in name only*, which does not even satisfy its own purpose. It is precisely through this—through such a powerless and yet exclusionary theism—that the living, never-ending source of a scientific atheism is kept open. This atheism deserves and wins respect because it basically fights only for the interests of science. No compulsion is good on the long run.

Whoever imagines the equal indestructibility of both systems clearly enough must immediately recognize that they must be reconciled in some way, even if this cannot be done by *making them into one* [*Einerleimachen*], as our supposed divine scholar imagines, but only by a connection not unlike that which takes place between body and soul, or, in general, between the lower and the higher.

Incidentally, in asserting such a living connection between the two systems, I do not mean by naturalism any system relating to external nature, but *the system that asserts a nature in God*.—Without this, no system is possible which asserts *consciousness, intelligence, and free will in God*, as I have shown in the previous proposition. Thus I have also proved that naturalism (in the sense just defined) is *the foundation, the necessary antecedent* of theism.

From this it is evident that, if it is in the interest of these two systems to enter into that living relationship, the interest on the side of theism is even greater than on the side of naturalism. The latter can at least still begin on its own, and to that extent exist, even if it cannot end on its own, cannot transfigure itself into something higher, for which it longs as intimately as does nature itself. Theism, on the other hand, cannot even begin without naturalism; it hovers completely in the void, where it is no wonder that no wing of knowledge reaches to it, that we are really only engaged in a faint grasp for it: this is what Mr. Jacobi wants to suggest to us under the title of presentiment, of longing, of feeling, as [70] the most perfect way of becoming certain about something. Just as the God of this theism hovers in the void, so He is also inwardly empty; there is nothing in Him that is solid, definite: in a word, no

nature, in the sense in which a man is said to be a strong, a capable, a healthy nature. This being [*Wesen*], inseparable from the longing and feeling of the individual, and for which even the concept is too strong, too objective, must be guarded from all the air of science out of tender care that it may be blown away by it. Hence the fear of science, the explicit statement: if God were known, He would no longer be God; the fear of any real vitality [*Lebendigkeit*] of God: if this vitality were to become clear to our divine scholar today, he would be as frightened by it as he would be by a ghost, because such a vitality cannot be conceived without a physical ground.

Precisely this opposition, which is offered to us once more as the last legacy of the previous age, was the great error of this whole epoch of education, in that through the complete separation of theism from all naturalism, and conversely of naturalism from all theism, it became necessary to posit at the same time *an unnatural God and a godless nature*. Only together do they produce a living being. The question can only be: how and in what way can they be brought together? Modern theism, which thought it could start from the most spiritual concepts, sought in vain to get from God to nature. It had no choice but either to deny the existence of the latter (which was attempted in idealism), or to ignore it, or, which is just as convenient, and which wants to say the same thing, to withdraw into non-knowledge about it, as our divine scholar does.—There is no way from theism to naturalism; that much is clear. It was time to turn naturalism, i.e., the doctrine that there is a nature in God, into the basis, the *ground* of theism's development (and not something higher than [theism]).

This necessary idea first came to fruition in our time through what is therefore called [71] the philosophy of nature, the doctrine of all-unity, or as Mr. Jacobi otherwise wishes to call it.

Now as to how this can happen—he does not understand this scientific process, just as he does not understand many other things, and for this very reason should not worry about it, or even complain about it.—The gold of divine knowledge is not found on the wet way of idle tears and pointless longing; it is only won in the fire of the spirit.

6) "One has only the choice of assuming that the absolute is a *ground*, or that it is a cause. Naturalism claims that it is a *ground* and not a *cause*; theism, that it is a *cause* and not a *ground*" (p. 169).

The answer to this is that there is absolutely no choice here, that the absolute is *both* ground *and* cause, and must be thought of as both.

Since our teacher denies only the first, we have only this to prove.

God, or more precisely, the being that is God, is *ground*—and in two senses which must be distinguished. In the first sense, He *is* ground—namely, of Himself, insofar as He is a moral being. That every intelligence must have a beginning of itself in itself, a beginning that is non-intelligent, has already been

shown on the occasion of the fourth proposition. But God also *makes* Himself into the ground by making that very part of His being with which He was previously active [*wirkend*] subject to suffering [*leidend*]. "The external creation," says J. G. Hamann, "is a work of the greatest humility"; the most spiritual teachers unanimously regard creation as condescension. How can God condescend but by making *Himself*, namely a part (a *potency*) of Himself, the *ground*, so that it is possible for the creature to exist and for *us* to have life in Him? But at the same time He makes Himself the ground of His own *self,* since it is only insofar as He subordinates this part of His being [*Wesen*] (the non-intelligent) to the higher part, that He lives with it free from the world, *above* the world (according to the Jacobian expression, [72] as a *cause*)—just as man only truly transfigures himself into intelligence, into a moral being, by subordinating the irrational part of his being to the higher.[25]

It goes without saying that such views are not for those who assume a God who is finished once and for all, and therefore truly inanimate and dead: there would be nothing more to say in this regard than that they should be content with the common concepts and not get involved in the business of philosophizing.

What is said here is also applicable to all the different variations of that "either/or" (this whole polemic is only an eternal repetition), e.g., on p. 175, where one assertion (that of naturalism) is expressed as follows: "the Absolute *is* (!) only the substrate of the conditioned," where substrate means as much as *ground*.—It is, however, certain that *neither* assertion, taken in isolation, can explain the existence of the universe.

In this regard it is worth noting that, if our great teacher appears to have recognized the equal objectivity of both systems in the foregoing, he (on p. 176) again wants to explain subjectively the "never to be eradicated" antagonism of both, quite simply on the basis of the simultaneously sensual and rational nature of man! Such a statement can arouse nothing but real pity.

All these "either/or's" are cut off by the first principle of the so-called philosophy of nature. Had the only wise man of our time learnt to understand even this, he could have spared himself all his polemic, and would not on all occasions where he touches on the opposition, e.g., on p. 170 (where the "either" is as untrue and tasteless as the "or") and on p. 177, where he wants to speak of freedom and necessity, have even miserably missed the mark.

7) "Do not call God the infinite being, says Plato, for existence resists the infinite; it is essentially without essence [*wesenlos*].—[73] Call Him the one

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[25] See the *Stuttgart Seminars*, in the previous volume [SW VII], p. 429 and 433 ff. Editor's note. [Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. Thomas Pfau (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 203–204 and 206 ff.]

who gives the measure, in whom the measure originally is; say: He Himself is the measure" (p. 14).

This passage from the earlier essay (*Concerning a Prophecy by Lichtenberg*) is one of those statements that *are pleasing to the ear*, because one thinks that what one is hearing is correct, and yet there is no seriousness in it, as one immediately finds oneself back on the old wrong track.

If the wise man of our time had only learnt to understand the *single* statement: existence resists the infinite, and had he seriously endeavoured to place a true *finitude*, that is, something *negative*, in God, all this quarrelling would have been unnecessary. But this is frightening to him because of the emptiness of his abstract concepts, which are in no way different from the well-known concepts that God is *ens realissimum*, *actuosissimum*. On p. 164, he again assures us that everything *apart from God* is finite—in God, therefore there is no finitude.

As long as the God of modern theism remains the simple, purely essential [being], but which in fact is a being without essence, which He is in all recent systems; as long as a real duality is not recognized in God, and that the affirming, expansive force is not opposed by a restricting, negating one; as long as the denial [of the existence] of a personal God is [taken as a sign of] scientific honesty, the affirmation of His existence will indicate a lack of honesty, which a *truly* honest man like Kant deplored so much in these matters.—As for the thought that he [Jacobi] considers necessary, no one can be responsible for it, and when one is incapable of thinking something, one should not presume to be able to do so. Fichte, according to our mutual teacher (on p. 116 and 117), was honest enough to say: "To attribute consciousness and personality to God is to make Him a finite being; for consciousness and that higher degree of it, personality, are tied to limitation and finitude." Why does Mr. Jacobi not emulate him, since to him a personality of God must not only be incomprehensible (he admits this), but *unthinkable* as long as he does not recognize a *nature*, a negative principle in God? One may assert this, inasmuch as it is not individually, but generally and intrinsically impossible to think a [74] being with consciousness that has not been constrained by any negating force in itself—as generally and intrinsically impossible as it is to think a circle without a center. To be unable to think something and to deny its existence are, indeed, two very different things.

Why, then, does Mr. Jacobi pretend to be the only one still holding the personality of God, he, who *denies* the very principle in God by which alone personality is possible, and whose God must be an entirely subjectless being?

All consciousness is a concentration, a collection, a gathering, and a bringing together of oneself. This negating force of a being, which goes back

to itself, is the true force of the personality in it, the force of selfhood, of egoity.[26]

Until, therefore, our teacher recognizes such a force in God, or until he recognizes *the absolute identity of the infinite and the finite*, an identity which is such a great annoyance to him when it comes to the philosophy of nature, and of which he has always spoken only in relation to the creature, without even there showing any special understanding of it—until he understands this identity *in God Himself*, he should refrain from instructing others that they should not call God the *Infinite*. Until then, he should not expect us to concede to him even a *concept* of the personality of God, and to regard *what he says* about it as anything more than nonsense.

Now that it has been shown by the previous arguments, according to the opinion of our teacher, that only *either* theism *or* naturalism can be accepted, the following proofs will make it clear that the higher cannot be derived or developed from the lower, and that the divine, the true, and the good cannot be derived or developed from the natural.

8) "That the things in the world are—or will become—*good*, says Aristotle, cannot be caused by fire or earth or anything of the kind, and those philosophers themselves (who hold the All to be One, adds Mr. Jacobi) could not have believed this" [75] (p. 147). (From this it will be concluded later that those *stagger* who do not posit a moral cause as the beginning.)

For the time being, we will leave aside Aristotle, and how he is actually to be understood, in order to come to terms with a much greater thinker.

He *talks* a lot about a *power* of the good and, following Plato, claims that God is the origin and *power* of the good. Now power is unthinkable without something against which it is power. Thus the good itself demands something against which it can express power, and which in this respect is necessarily—not exactly evil, but nevertheless—the non-*good*. Only by transforming and ennobling this non-good in itself, by ennobling it, by making it good, does it reveal itself as the good in itself, as the *power* of the good. This is also what Plato says in the passage quoted—not that God produces the good, but that He produces *that which is better*.

Where, then, does the non-good, without which the good could not *exist* and reveal itself as the good, come from? Does Mr. Jacobi want to derive the origin of the non-good from the good? In this case, the good, i.e., God, would not, as he says, be the origin and power of the good, but the origin and power of the non-good.

Thus, if this non-good cannot be *produced* by the good, it must necessarily be as eternal *in its own way* as the good itself. And because the good

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[26] Cf. *loc. cit.* [SW VII] p. 419 and p. 436, pp. 439–40. Editor's note. [Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, 196–97 and 208–209, 210–212.]

cannot *create* it, indeed cannot possibly truly *will* it, the good can only *find* it, in the same way that we only *find* it (in ourselves); and so the non-good is *already there* when the good arises.

But because this non-good is not a *real* but a *possible* good, something that can be transformed into the good; because it thus contains the good as a possibility; because, furthermore, the non-good is not itself that which is [*Seyende*], but only the ground of *that which is*, namely of the good (which has the [ground] *in itself* as the beginning of itself): thus we can say that not only the original principle [*Erste*], i.e., *that which is* before all things, is the good, but also that *which in itself is not* [*das nicht selber Seyende*], which [76] has the good in itself as its own ground: it is an inner or hidden good, a possible good. Thus in every way the good is the beginning and the original principle.

I do not suppose that my opponent understands these words, which for his sake I did not wish to make clearer. I now turn to Aristotle, whose passage from book XIII of the *Metaphysics*, as quoted by Mr. Jacobi *against* me, is actually in my favor.

"Even for the experienced scholar," so reads that passage in Jacobi on p. 148, "the relation of the good and the beautiful to the original elements and principles is difficult. Whether there is something in the latter that we may call the *truly* good (Aristotle here does not omit this absolutely necessary determination), or whether it is not contained in them, but arose later—this is the difficulty. Among present-day theologians, it seems, this question is considered settled: they answer the first hypothesis in the negative, and maintain *that only in the course of the development of the nature of things do the good and the beautiful* ***appear***" ("appear" and not simply "become," as our philosophical theologian interprets it. According to this, it would be nothing less than inconceivable that Aristotle meant among these theologians the very *Plato* whose equal Mr. Jacobi would like to become, but who, notwithstanding the eternity of the archetypes, asserts *precisely* what Aristotle says here, who likewise accepts the existence of a primeval chaos—the mere concept of which is a scandal for our theologian—and who even allows the *nature of things* to arrive, only later, from an earlier state of disorder to the present perfection of their organization (*ἐς τὸν νῦν κόσμον ἀφικέσθαι*).—"They (those theologians) do this for fear of a *real* difficulty that stands in the way of those who accept the One as the *original beginning*. This difficulty, however, does not lie in the fact that the good is attributed to the original beginning *as being present with it* (and not as *being* it), but rather in wanting to make the One (that which truly is, the good as such—*simultaneously*) the *original beginning* (what we have called above only the beginning of [77] the good in itself), and to make the original beginning (furthermore) the original matter, and the many the *product* of the One (deriving it from the One)": what poses the difficulty, therefore, is precisely what is constantly recurring in Jacobi's sermon, namely that the One, the good and

wise in itself, is also the *beginning of all things*, the *original beginning*; that the One is also *actu before* the many. In short, the difficulty is what still now constitutes the cross of philosophy, to which Mr. Jacobi has been nailed along with many others.

Following this explanation, everyone will probably find it advisable for *our* theologian no longer to deal with the *old* theologians. They are well over his head; let him instead try his hand with us lesser ones!

9) "We cannot imagine ourselves as a living thing belonging to the non-living, a light kindled by darkness, an absurdity, crawling out of the unintelligent [*dumm*] night of necessity, of chance. We cannot imagine, even by straining our wit madly, *that life came out of death*, that the latter only gradually came to think of the former, as unreason gradually came to think of reason, nonsense of an intention, chaos of a world" (p. 98).

It would take pity on a stone to see how miserably Mr. Jacobi, *his* wit really madly *straining*, presents the opinions of his opponents. Our theologian is an unmistakable master of refutation by mere presentation, by altering and exaggerating features, first to make them tearful, then grimacing, and finally hideous. No one has ever even thought of the matter as he presents it here, much less asserted it. These are true *aegri somnia*.

Does the witty man find the opposite so natural, namely, that death comes out of life? What could possibly move the living to create the dead, if indeed God is a God of the living and not of the dead? It is absolutely more conceivable that life emerges from death—which, of course, cannot be an absolute death, but only a death containing life within itself—than the other way round, that life descends into death, loses itself.

[78] For our theologian, being and life, non-being and death, are also synonymous things. As he says (on p. 158): "The God of theism calls forth being from non-being." Thus we would be a living thing *crawling out* of the unintelligent night of non-being, our life would really have come from death. In line with his principle, our divine scholar would have to say that the God of theism calls forth non-being (the empty being of things in the world) from being (His own being).

The same applies to light and darkness. He seems to find it more conceivable that light begat darkness than that, conversely, light arose from darkness. No one has ever said that darkness *kindles* light (although there may be an unexpected meaning in this), but the most basic experiment of rubbing metal or grinding stones to obtain fire shows that darkness contains fire within itself.—Even the Mosaic story of creation, which our enlightened theologian, following Herder, explains as an allegorical representation of morning—as a kind of panorama of sunrise—is completely alien to the idea that darkness comes from light.

My real opinion, which I affirm openly, is that all life, without distinction, starts from a state of envelopment, because in relation to the subsequent state of its development and unfolding, it is like a dead and dark seed before it is lowered into the earth.[27]

I even maintain, contrary to all Jacobian logic, that even in *thinking* and *research*, it is possible to arrive at so-called clear concepts, but not to *start* from them, because one remains inevitably stuck with them. Usually they are so clear, and so emptied of substance, that it is impossible with them to arrive at what is actually dark, i.e., the real. Rather, I believe that the healthy, natural, and *therefore the only fruitful* course of thinking and research is to move from dark concepts to clear ones, from darkness to light, from the chaotic material and mixture of thoughts [79] through gradual determination to order and lawful development.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem.[28]

This (I repeat it here too) is the way of the true artist—and also that of God.

According to the philosophy professed by our perfectly clear theologian, the Deity behaves in creation like the sun, which first *makes* clouds then gathers them; according to the philosophy that is an abomination to him, like the sun that divides clouds *that already exist.*[29]

We conclude with the most sublime result that has been reached for this time by Jacobian philosophizing.

10) "There is indeed a *knowledge* of the supernatural, of *God*, and of divine things, and indeed this knowledge is what is most certain in the human spirit; it is an *absolute* knowledge, arising immediately [*unmittelbar*] from human reason—but this *knowledge* cannot take the form of a *science*" (p. 152).

This confession, hidden in a note, together with the appended distinction, must seem strange to all faithful admirers and the few followers of Mr. Jacobi. They will ask where the non-knowledge so praised and accepted *utiliter* by them has gone, and where the ingenious principle has gone: "a God who could be *known* (of whom therefore there can be *knowledge*) would be no

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[27] See the already cited work [*Stuttgart Seminars*, in SW VII], p. 441. Editor's note. [Schelling, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, 212].

[28] "Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem/cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat" (Horace, *Ars poetica* 143-144) [Not smoke after flame does he plan to give, but after smoke the light, that then he may set forth striking and wondrous tales]. Horace, *Satires. Epistles. Art of Poetry*, trans. H. Ruston Fairclough (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926), 463. DOI: 10.4159/DLCL.horace-ars_poetica.1926. Trans. note.

[29] This too is a truly Platonic doctrine.—Anyone who has only a smattering of Plato on the basis of the Latin translation, or who has become acquainted with him from the translation of Stollberg, even of Kleuker, and for a few years now from Schleiermacher's (not yet completed) translation, should not take the liberty of talking about Plato.

God at all,"[30] as well as many other similar doctrines, e.g., that "all philosophers wanted to *know* the true, not knowing that if the true could be known by man (i.e., by human reason), it would have to cease being the true, in order to become a mere *creature of* [80] *human invention*, *of the imagination and cultivation of insubstantial fictions*,"[31] or even: "with his reason (the same reason from which now arises *an absolute knowledge* of God, the most certain thing in the human spirit?) man is not given the faculty of a science of the true, but only the feeling and consciousness of his ***non-knowledge*** *of it*: the ***intimation*** of the true."[32]

But if the beloved admirers also admit the apostasy [*Abfall*] from non-knowledge, which until now had been asserted mainly with regard to God, on account of the fact that it only appears in a note—like proper waste [*Abfall*]—and because therefore they hope that this new knowledge is never expressed in the *text*, that it never rises to the text; if, furthermore, they recall the subtle distinction made between knowledge and science, how are they to bring the latter part of the assertion into harmony with the statement also found in a note (p. 35), that "the generally non-philosophical (!) Trinitarian belief in God, nature, and personal spirit, must also become philosophical *in the strictest sense*, confirmed in *reflection* (i.e., in *science*, surely?)"? As you can see, the confusion of ideas is not small, and the various parts of the stitched-together book diverge on all sides.[33]

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[30] *Jacobi to Fichte*, x. [F. H. Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel* Allwill, trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 500. Translation slightly modified.]

[31] *Jacobi to Fichte*, 26. [Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 513. Translation slightly modified.]

[32] *Jacobi to Fichte*, 28. [Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 513. Translation slightly modified.]

[33] On p. 8 of the preceding essay [i.e. Jacobi's *On Divine Things*], we also read: "For those who do not see God, nature is irrational." But already on p. 177 nature is again said to be irrational.—There we read: (admittedly only in the note on p. 34): "the understanding in *isolation* is materialistic and irrational: it denies the spirit and God. Reason in *isolation* is idealistic and unintelligent: it denies nature and turns itself into God. The whole, undivided, real and true human being is *both* intelligent and rational; he believes undividedly and with the same confidence—in God, in nature, and in his own spirit."—Setting aside all other peculiarities, a unification of the understanding and reason is recognized here, which, because both, according to what is said on p. 177, relate to each other as naturalism and theism relate to each other, also implies a possible union of these two doctrines. But between these two, according to what is said on p. 150 (in-text), "no rapprochement, still less unification into a third [doctrine] in which they balance each other out." In the face of reason, even the understanding only retains the right—to remain silent.

The author's annotations relate to his own text as some commentators do to the texts of others. We might almost recommend, if it could help, that in the future, since he seems to be running out of text anyway, he should write notes without text—*only* annotations.

[81] Mr. Jacobi asserts that there is an unconditional knowledge of God—most likely a *personal* knowledge—which springs immediately from reason. In this I cannot agree with him, and in so saying my teacher proves me right, he affirms far more than I ever demanded. The pure, immediate knowledge of reason can only be a knowledge by virtue of its absolute law—a recognition of the *contradiction,* or of the *absolute identity of the infinite and the finite,* as the highest. This recognition is indeed also a knowledge of God to the extent that the essence of that absolute identity is *implicitly* already God, or, to be more precise, the *same essence* that transfigures itself into a personal God. But it cannot be called a knowledge or recognition of the personal God. Nor have I ever presented it as such, but expressly declared the contrary.[34]—I posit God as first and as last, as alpha and as omega. As alpha, however, He is not what He is as omega; and insofar as He is God *sensu eminenti* only as omega, He cannot also, as alpha, be God in the same sense, nor, strictly speaking, can He be called God,[35] unless it were explicitly said that He is the *still undeveloped* God, *Deus implicitus*, while, as omega, He is *Deus explicitus*.

An immediate knowledge of a personal God can only be a personal knowledge, based, as every [82] knowledge of this kind, on contact [*Umgang*], real experience. But this does not fall within the jurisdiction of philosophy. It is not, as I have already said, the business of reason, and it is hardly what was meant by Mr. Jacobi, who, by the way, mixes up all these concepts.

But precisely this existence of God as a personal being is the proper object of *science*, and not only from a general point of view: rather, it is science's highest, ultimate object, the *goal* of all its striving, for which it has always strived, and which it has now *reached*, precisely thanks to that philosophy which our good man—Mr. Jacobi—accuses of atheism, and just when he (who would hardly be able to find an intelligent meaning to these words: *knowledge* of God cannot develop into a *science*, but, on the contrary, knowledge must develop *starting from* science) wants once again to tear it away from [science's] eyes.

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[34] See the treatise on *The Essence of Human Freedom* in my *Philosophical Writings*, Bd. I, p. 505. [p. 412 of the previous volume [SW VII]].

[35] In the first exposition of my system (*Zeitschrift für speculative Physik*, Bd. II, Heft 2 [4]), to which I have to refer again and again, I refrained from calling the absolute identity, insofar as it had not yet evolved to the point mentioned above, God, as anyone can convince oneself through his own observation. It was only in later, less rigorous presentations that I departed from this, because I was concerned about no further misunderstandings on this point.