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# PHILOSOPHY

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### SPINOZA'S DOCTRINE OF GOD IN RELATION TO HIS CONCEPTION OF CAUSALITY

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"The truest vision ever had of God came, perhaps, here."<sup>1</sup>

IN a previous article I considered Aristotle's view of God as final cause and its relation to the philosophy of Plato;<sup>2</sup> and at the end of the article I remarked on the affinity of both doctrines with that of Spinoza. The present paper is concerned with Spinoza's doctrine of God as it is related to his conception of causality and seeks, *inter alia*, to show that his explicit rejection of final causes does not prevent his philosophy from having in it something like the true principle of final causation. In each section I first quote the chief relevant definitions or propositions in Spinoza's *Ethics*,<sup>3</sup> and then state what seems needful in the way of interpretation or comment.

#### *Causa Sui* = ULTIMATE REALITY

"By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived unless exist-

<sup>1</sup> Santayana's beautiful rendering of the concluding words of Ernest Renan's commemorative address at the unveiling of the statue of Spinoza at The Hague. The whole address is contained in *Spinoza: Four Essays* (edited by Knight).

<sup>2</sup> "Aristotle's Concept of God as Final Cause" (*Philosophy*, Vol. xxii, No. 82, July, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> The passages cited are all from the *Ethics*, and I have followed Hale White's translation unless the text seemed to warrant a somewhat different wording. Except on one or two points I have made no references to particular expositors or commentators. My love for Spinoza goes back to my student days half a century ago; but, with much else claiming attention, anything I have hitherto written on his philosophy has been confined to class lectures and an address delivered to a Jewish community on the occasion of the Spinoza Tercentenary in 1932. What follows aims at giving a concise statement on the subject immediately concerned.

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ing.”<sup>1</sup> “By substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself.”<sup>2</sup> “It pertains to the nature of substance to exist.”<sup>3</sup>

The first definition of Spinoza’s *Ethics* lays the foundation for his whole system of philosophy. It expresses his fundamental intuition—that of the unity of all reality—in the idea of an ultimate or absolute reality as the necessary cause or ground of all that is. This alone is truly substance or self-subsistent reality. It is the absolutely self-dependent, on which all else depends, and is therefore at once the ultimate in being or existence and in thought or knowledge.

To the objection that a self-causing cause is logically inconceivable the appropriate answer seems to be that the term “cause of itself” (or “its own cause”)—like Plato’s “self-mover” and Aristotle’s “unmoved mover,” which have likewise been called wholly unintelligible—seeks to apply the most fitting idea available to what is in actual fact not fully expressible. Reality is not unknowable: on the contrary, it is just what is known in all knowledge; but no terms are wholly adequate to its being and nature. Again, to the criticism<sup>4</sup> that Spinoza’s idea of substance, *causa sui*, is a substantiation or hypostatization of logic and of logical necessity, and gives no real or ontological necessity, one may perhaps reply that the defect, if such there be, lies in the method rather than in the significance of Spinoza’s philosophy, and that the whole tenor of his doctrine implies that the logical is only one aspect, though an essential aspect, of the real or ontological. For Spinoza there is an inherent relation between thought and being such that what is found to be necessary for thought can be taken as true of existence.<sup>5</sup>

Spinoza’s method of exposition of his philosophical principles is particularly open to criticism in that he seems to begin from an abstract concept of being, which makes impossible his ever reaching the concrete reality whose nature and action it is his purpose to disclose. But what he wants to affirm is a reality that is not indeterminate but fully determinate and therefore the determinant of all lesser or derivative forms of existence. Such reality is not the negation of all characters and relations but their totality or correlation. Accordingly the infinite is not the mere negation of the finite, it is the finite that is the negation of the infinite; or rather, each is the necessary counterpart of the other.

Another deficiency, or another aspect of the same deficiency, in Spinoza’s mode of statement is that he seems from the outset to

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics* I, Def. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Def. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Prop. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Made, e.g., by Jacques Maritain in one of the essays in his volume entitled *Redeeming the Time*.

<sup>5</sup> This conception is expressed, e.g., in his statement that “it is of the nature of the mind to frame true ideas.”

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assert the unity of reality in a way that involves denial of all real difference or diversity. That this is not Spinoza's intention, even if his exposition be faulty, is shown by the principles he affirms in the subsequent parts of his great treatise. It is seen especially in his doctrine of the self-maintaining or self-realizing impulse, which is the very essence of each particular being, and by virtue of which every creature strives after the preservation and fulfilment of its own nature. Spinoza's whole philosophy has this implication of diversity along with unity, although the unity may throughout be overstressed. Indeed it has been said that Spinoza's philosophy is one of the greatest efforts in the entire history of human thought to give adequate expression to the principle of unity in diversity as the fundamental character of reality. Unity and difference are meaningless apart from each other, and an infinite unity must be realized or expressed in infinite variety. This principle of individuality and self-persistence will be treated more fully in a later section.

### GOD AS THE ONE REALITY

"By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence."<sup>1</sup> God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, necessarily exists.<sup>2</sup> "Besides God no substance can be or be conceived."<sup>3</sup> "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God."<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate reality, which he has initially posited, Spinoza forthwith identifies with God. He does so because to it must pertain all fullness of being and completeness of nature, and because God must be conceived as eternal, infinite and perfect being. If God is to be all that is truly meant by God, nothing else will suffice; since anything less than this falsifies the divine nature by turning it into something finite and therefore imperfect.

God, so conceived, necessarily exists, because existence is involved in the very nature of the being thus defined. Or, as Spinoza expresses the same principle in a somewhat less abstract form, the more perfection and therefore the more reality anything has, the more has it power to exist and therefore necessarily exists.<sup>5</sup> This is Spinoza's version of the ontological argument for the existence of God, or rather his substitute for it.<sup>6</sup> For Spinoza, therefore, nothing is

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, I, Def. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Prop. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Prop. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Prop. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. I, 11, Dem. and II, Def. 6 ("By reality and perfection I understand the same thing").

<sup>6</sup> As his alternative proofs taken together show, Spinoza's demonstration combines the ontological and the cosmological arguments; and it may also be said to accord with the logical principle that all necessity is hypothetical inasmuch as it takes the form: If anything exists, God exists.

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surer or can be surer than the existence of God. That anything exists at all involves the existence of infinite and perfect being, since otherwise the finite and imperfect would have more power or capacity to exist than the infinite and perfect.

In identifying God with the one substance or ultimate reality Spinoza is neither merely using conventional language nor forcing his terminology upon a principle or conception to which it is inappropriate. He is expressing his insight into the real meaning of the concepts concerned and is convinced that he is not misinterpreting but reinterpreting common thought and usage. Taking the accepted definition of substance as that which needs nothing else for its conception or its existence and the customary idea of God as an infinite and absolutely perfect being (*ens perfectissimum*), he shows that there can be only one such substance and that this can only be God—or God can only be this.

Objection may be taken to the use of the word "God" unless it expressly connotes a personal being as the creator and ruler of the world. But it is Spinoza's supreme merit that he takes the bold step of identifying the God of religion with the ultimate reality which philosophical thought compels him to affirm, and thereby makes possible the union of the quest of truth and the worship of the living God. It may be that the God of true religion is more properly to be conceived as superpersonal, if not as impersonal,<sup>1</sup> rather than as personal. But whatever be the solution of this theological or metaphysical problem, Spinoza's doctrine is in principle indefeasible. If religion is to be defined as the sentiment of the holy, or the sense of the numinous, then what alone can ultimately satisfy the need concerned is not any finite object of awe or reverence, but assuredly the perfect and sublime as revealed in the infinite whole of reality.<sup>2</sup>

Spinoza's conception of God as the only true substance or the one reality implies, further, the identification in some sense of God and Nature, or of God with the world which is commonly spoken of as his creation. This is signified by the expression "God or Nature."<sup>3</sup> But he adopts from Scholastic philosophy the distinction of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*<sup>4</sup> to denote a certain self-differentiation in the absolute reality implying two distinguishable though inseparable aspects or characters. In terms of Spinoza's fundamental

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "At all times and in every part of the world mystics of the first order have always agreed that the ultimate reality, apprehended in the process of meditation, is essentially impersonal" (Aldous Huxley).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Spinoza's own statement of his quest and problem in *De Intellectus Emendatione*, I. One may also recall Carlyle's fine saying: "This Universe . . . is a living thing—ah, an unspeakable, godlike thing; towards which the best attitude for us . . . is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship if not in words, then in silence" (*Heroes and Hero-Worship*).

<sup>3</sup> IV, Pref.

<sup>4</sup> I, 29, Schol.

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principle, *causa sui*, the former is God as self-cause or ground of all existence, the latter is God as self-caused or consequent, that is, his manifestation in all existence. To the one belong the infinite attributes of God, such as thought and extension; to the other the infinitude of diverse modes under each of these, namely all bodies as particular modifications of infinite motion and rest and all thoughts or ideas as comprised in infinite intellect.<sup>1</sup>

It may be held that any such self-diremption of the one substance or reality cannot be made intelligible on his logical principles as an actual significant element in Spinoza's system. But the spirit of his philosophy, if not its logic, involves a duality-in-unity which may be expressed by distinguishing between the divine activity in all the processes of nature or the work of creation (not at one point of time but as continuous action) and the relative passivity of facts and things as they are made or have become.<sup>2</sup> Without this aspect of differentiation or self-negation in the infinite reality there could not be the complementary self-affirmation or reaffirmation implied in the progressive becoming or perfecting of the finite.<sup>3</sup>

### GOD THE ONLY TRUE CAUSE

*Causi sui*, when the implications of the principle are unfolded, involves the conception that God or infinite and perfect being is not only the one real substance but also the one real cause. What are commonly called causes can only be the conditions under which, in accordance with the nature of reality, this or that particular finite expression of its being comes into existence. Moreover, the term "cause of itself," duly interpreted, already indicates that the causal relation of the infinite to the finite differs from that of one finite being or thing to another. Spinoza's explicit statements concerning the divine causation may be considered under the headings: (1) God's causality is immanent causality; (2) God alone is a free cause; (3) God does not act for an end.

(1) *God's causality is immanent causality.*—"From the necessity of the divine nature must follow an infinitude of things in infinite ways."<sup>4</sup> "God is the efficient (or active) cause of all things. . . . God is absolutely the first cause."<sup>5</sup> "God is the immanent, and not the transient (or transitive) cause of all things."<sup>6</sup>

As is implied in what has already been said, God is the first cause, or creator, of the world or cosmos, not as existing and acting externally to it, but as its indwelling power or activity, its inmost reality.

<sup>1</sup> The further distinctions are not necessary for my present purpose.

<sup>2</sup> This is what is properly signified by the opposition of "spirit" and "nature."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below.

<sup>4</sup> I, 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Corol. 1 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> Prop. 18.

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God is not the remote cause of any thing or event in the sense of being removed from it in time with intermediate causes coming in between. The reciprocal relations of different finite things or beings to one another are seen as an endless series of causes and effects, each of which conditions and is in turn conditioned by that which precedes or follows it.<sup>1</sup> But the infinite is related to the finite not as one particular thing or individual is to another but as the universal ground or common basis of all existence. This relation cannot be expressed in terms of time or succession; it is in the nature of a timeless fact or eternal truth. Further, God is the efficient cause of all things, not as being only the cause of the beginning of their existence and not also of their persistence or continuance in existence; for the nature or essence of particular things does not in itself involve either existence or duration, since it is to the nature of God alone that existence necessarily pertains.<sup>2</sup>

Spinoza's doctrine of immanent causation is doubtless connected historically with the mechanical conception of nature associated with the names of Descartes and Hobbes. Consequently the action of the world-ground is expressed in terms appropriate to mechanical causation and to the concept of the conservation and transformation of energy. But the philosophy of Spinoza does not involve acceptance of the mechanist principle as the last word in the explanation of natural events. It is rather an attempt to interpret this in conformity with other and more fundamental concepts. The essential significance of the doctrine is that everything is connected both existentially and causally with everything else, and that all action and reaction are ultimately dependent on the underlying nature of the eternal reality.

(2) *God alone is a free cause.*—"That thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its own nature alone, and is determined to action by itself alone."<sup>3</sup> "God acts from the laws (or the necessity) of his own nature only."<sup>4</sup> "The will cannot be called a free cause, but can only be called necessary."<sup>5</sup> "Things could have been produced by God in no other manner and in no other order than they have been produced."<sup>6</sup>

The term "cause of itself," besides expressing the ultimate identity of essence and existence, also indicates the true unity of freedom and necessity. That God is the only fully free cause follows from the fact that his nature alone essentially involves existence. And the same principle implies that God's activity is a necessity of his nature, or rather that his nature and his activity are one and the same thing. What follows from the existence and nature of God may be called the expression of his will, but not in a sense that would make this will arbitrary or anything less than his whole being. Hence there is no

<sup>1</sup> Prop. 28 and Schol.

<sup>2</sup> Prop. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Def. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Prop. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Prop. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Prop. 33.

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real distinction between the truly necessary and the actually possible;<sup>1</sup> for whatever has power or reality enough to exist does exist and with the degree of perfection involved in its own nature.

Further, since all things are determined to existence and action by God as following from the necessity of his nature, there is nothing that exists or happens in the world which does not result of necessity from determinate causes or conditions.<sup>2</sup> Along with all other finite things and creatures man's activity is thus necessitated. But none the less the finite individual shares in the freedom of God, so that his action is free in proportion as it is determined from within by his own proper nature and not merely by conditions external to himself.

Spinoza thus denies free will in the sense of an indeterminism that implies the "liberty of indifference,"<sup>3</sup> or an absolute power of choosing between alternative courses of action altogether independently of the agent's dispositions and beliefs and the bearing upon these of the conditions involved in his relations to other beings and things. Freedom and necessity are ultimately one, and the only valid opposition between them is that of the relative predominance of internal or of external factors in the determination of any particular action or course of action. An act is free just in so far as it is the expression of the agent's innermost being. There is nothing, therefore, in Spinoza's denial of absolute freedom of will that is inconsistent with his conception of the liberating power or influence of "adequate ideas," or the entrance into the human mind of the truth that makes men free. The one principle is indeed the complement of the other.

(3) *God does not act for an end.*—"There is no cause, either without or within himself, that moves God to act except the perfection of his own nature."<sup>4</sup> "It is commonly supposed that God directs all

<sup>1</sup> Leibniz's conception that God in creating the universe acts in accordance not with the only possibility but with his choice of the best—which is regarded as uniting efficient and final causation—shows the distinction between abstract and concrete possibility, but cannot be taken to express a wholly different principle from that of Spinoza. Cf. the statement: "The divine perfection . . . could also be manifested through other creatures in another order" (Johannes Stufler—following Thomas Aquinas—in *Why God Created the World*), which is likewise tenable only if it precludes the idea of an arbitrary volition.

<sup>2</sup> I, 26–29 and II, 48.

<sup>3</sup> The stress laid by Descartes upon the influence of will on judgment—like a similar principle in Bacon's philosophy—concerns the need of suspense of judgment, or the avoidance (as he puts it) of "precipitancy and anticipation" in judgment through bias or undue haste, and does not properly involve the liberty of indifference. But Spinoza expressly rejects an antithesis of will and intellect in so far as it suggests that volition and judgment do not depend essentially on ideas. ("There is in the mind no volition or affirmation and negation save that which an idea as such involves." II, 49 with Corol. and Schol.)

<sup>4</sup> I, 17, Corol. I.



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things to some determinate end. . . . This doctrine does away with God's perfection. For if God acts for the sake of an end, he necessarily seeks something of which he stands in need."<sup>1</sup>

Spinoza's argument here is that action for the sake of an end is a mark of a finite and imperfect being, whose existence can only be maintained or whose true nature can only be realized by seeking and attaining a goal beyond actual fulfilment. Such a conception, implying as it does a lack or want in the agent concerned, is meaningless in reference to an infinite and perfect being whose nature is eternally complete. If we are to speak of a divine purpose at all, it can only be in the sense that it belongs to the perfection of God's nature that he should manifest himself in the creation of finite beings who can share in that perfection according to the degree in which they attain self-realization. This signifies not any external but an immanent end.

Spinoza's doctrine on this point is linked with his denial of final causes in nature. Man habitually acts for some end and devises means to its attainment, and he thinks that the same is true of nature or creation generally. More particularly, he thinks that God has made all things for the sake of man—to serve the ends and purposes of human beings—and that things and events in nature can be judged to be good or bad according as they do or do not further the fulfilment of these ends. But "the perfection of things is to be judged by their own nature and power alone." In the infinite fullness of his being there is nothing wanting to God "for the creation of everything, from the highest down to the lowest grade of perfection"; and things have no other reason than the expression of his being.<sup>2</sup> As products or manifestations of the divine nature and power they have no end external to themselves, since their being is actualized in the maintenance and development of their own natures, albeit also in the service of all other things in the pursuit of like ends.

### CAUSATION AS SELF-EXPRESSION OF THE ETERNAL REALITY

"God's omnipotence has been actual from eternity, and to eternity will remain in the same actuality."<sup>3</sup> "By eternity I understand existence itself, so far as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the definition alone of the eternal thing. Such existence cannot be explained by duration or time, even if the duration be conceived as without beginning or end."<sup>4</sup> "It is of the nature of reason to perceive things under a certain form of eternity."<sup>5</sup> "We feel and know (or experience) that we are eternal."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I, Append.; cf. Prop. 33, Schol. 2 *fin.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. IV, Pref.

<sup>3</sup> I, 17, Schol., where the necessity with which things follow from the existence and nature of God is illustrated by reference to "necessary" or "eternal" truth.

<sup>4</sup> I, Def. 8 and Expl.

<sup>5</sup> II, 44, Corol. 2.

<sup>6</sup> V, 23, Schol.

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The various aspects of Spinoza's doctrine of causation, when taken together, give the fundamental principle indicated by the above citations. That God's causality is immanent causality, that it is alike free and necessary, and that it has no external purpose signify that the causality concerned is the self-expression of the ultimate reality, or *causa sui*, as the eternal ground of all existence. Such causality must be conceived after the fashion or on the analogy of necessary truth, or of the relation of ground and consequent rather than temporal succession.<sup>1</sup> It implies an order or sequence of which relations in time are only the symbol or outward semblance.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental order in terms of which the relations of things must ultimately be understood is that of different essences or individual natures and different levels of existence as determinate expressions of the being and nature of God.<sup>3</sup>

Spinoza's doctrine seems at first sight to be altogether incompatible with the reality in any sense of time or duration.<sup>4</sup> But the distinction of eternity as the character of true reality from mere everlastingness or endurance throughout all time does not imply timelessness in the sense of being that is out of all relation to time. It means rather that eternity is the *truth* of time, as freedom is of necessity or as spirit is of nature or matter. Time or duration must be explained through the nature of eternity and not contrariwise. Duration may be defined as the process of change or transition from a lower to a higher or a higher to a lower degree of perfection, and it presupposes the eternal actuality of perfect being.<sup>5</sup>

Further, eternity or eternal life must be understood as a quality rather than a quantity of existence,<sup>6</sup> and as participated in by finite beings according as they rise above mere conditions of time and place. For eternity can have no meaning for us unless it can in some degree enter into our experience here and now. There are, indeed, experiences in life in which one feels that the moment is itself eternal, that

<sup>1</sup> Joachim points out that the categories of ground and consequent, cause and effect, whole and part are all inadequate to express the immanence of God in the universe (*The Ethics of Spinoza*, pp. 118-19).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plato's definition of time as the "moving image of eternity."

<sup>3</sup> My statement in this section owes much to Prof. H. F. Hallett's article on "Spinoza's Conception of Eternity" in *Mind*, vol. xxxvii, N.S., No. 147. I have not at hand for reference his *Acternitas* in which the subject is treated at length.

<sup>4</sup> Time is distinguishable from duration—which Spinoza defines as "the indefinite continuation of existence" (II, Def. 5)—as its measurement by means of a comparison of durations, or, as Aristotle puts it, "the numbering of motion"; though common usage tends to identify them.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Aristotle's principle of the primacy of actuality, which I endeavoured to set forth in the article mentioned above.

<sup>6</sup> For Spinoza's opposition of eternity and duration in reference to the question of immortality, see V, 34, Schol.

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eternity is *in* the experience in such wise that time and change can never make it really pass away. To see things thus "under the form of eternity," that is, as having, each in its own time and place, an eternal existence and significance, and to live in the spirit of such insight, is to possess something of the perfection and joy of true being.

### THE *NISUS* TOWARDS PERFECTION OR SELF-REALIZATION

"Each thing endeavours to persevere in its own being." "The effort by which each thing so endeavours is nothing but the actual essence (or nature) of the thing itself."<sup>1</sup> "Desire is the very essence of man in so far as determined to any action by any affect whatsoever." "Joy is man's passage from a less to a greater perfection."<sup>2</sup> "The actions of the mind arise from adequate ideas alone, but the passions depend alone upon those which are inadequate."<sup>3</sup>

As already said, the principle of differentiation along with the unity of reality is expressed, in Spinoza's philosophy, more especially in terms of the self-maintaining or self-realizing impulse (*conatus in suo esse perseverare*). It has also been noted that it belongs inherently to the finite and imperfect to aim at a goal or ideal beyond actual attainment. The essential character, therefore, of the finite—in its quest of the infinite and perfect, which is at the same time the presence of the infinite in it—is found in striving, endeavour, or desire. Desire, being the impulse to satisfy a want or need, is essentially for self-fulfilment. Such desire or aspiration is the efficient cause whereby the end or ideal goal is in any measure realized. Here, therefore, efficient and final cause are one.

Further, the sense or feeling of attainment is experienced as joy or happiness, which is the sign of upward as against downward tendency. In general, any affect or emotion ceases to be a mere passion and becomes action in proportion as it is controlled or sublimated through the power of adequate ideas, more particularly a true knowledge of oneself and of the causes of the emotions. Herein lies the road from bondage to liberty, and thereby to participation in some small measure in the blessedness of God. This impulse in virtue of which the finite individual aspires to its own perfection is, indeed, the self-affirmation of God in us, and is at once the affirmation of the individual self as a unique expression of the infinite divine nature and its negation as a self-centred or self-sufficient unit.

### THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD

"Whatever we apprehend by 'intuitive knowledge' brings us the greatest satisfaction of mind (or acquiescence), and so the greatest

<sup>1</sup> III, 6 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Definitions of the Affects or Emotions.

<sup>3</sup> Prop. 3.

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joy, accompanied with the idea of God as its cause. . . . From this kind of knowledge, therefore, necessarily springs the intellectual love of God."<sup>1</sup> "He who loves God cannot seek that God should love him in return."<sup>2</sup> "The intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love with which God loves himself. . . . Hence the love of God towards men and the intellectual love of the mind towards God are one and the same thing."<sup>3</sup>

These propositions must suffice to indicate the significance of the culminating phase of Spinoza's philosophy. According to his distinction of different kinds or stages of knowledge,<sup>4</sup> as the mind rises from the mere particulars of time and circumstance as apprehended in sense-perception and memory (*imaginatio*) through the universals of thought or reason (*ratio*) to what he calls intuitive knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*), that is, an intellectual intuition or insight which apprehends particular things and events in all their concrete reality as features of the universal order and therefore as necessarily following from the being and nature of God, it comes to acquiesce in that order not merely as the only possible one but also as an order of love. For, rightly apprehended, it is such as reveals a being that is at once supremely powerful and supremely wise and good, and so meets all the needs of the human spirit. This, then, is that "infinite and eternal object"<sup>5</sup> in the contemplation of which the mind is alone filled with a love that yields lasting joy and happiness.

Putting together the several strands of Spinoza's philosophy one sees that, whatever may be its deficiencies of logic and method, its essential import is not in doubt. What it teaches is that it is of the very nature of an infinite and perfect being to be manifested in finite individuals who can seek and find their true good in union with their immanent cause and end—a union which is at the same time that of each with all. This relation of the finite and the infinite implies that the divine activity creating, sustaining and controlling all things is not that of mere external power and compulsion but rather the inspiring and persuasive power of infinite love. The response of the finite individual has at its highest level the character of a rationally grounded and disinterested "love towards God" as the supreme reality made manifest in the whole universe of being. Thus the movement or process of the finite towards the infinite and the boundless self-giving of the infinite to the finite are one and the same fact. As the theologian expresses it, "Our opening and His entering are one moment."

<sup>1</sup> V, 32 and Corol.  
<sup>4</sup> II, 40, Schol. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Prop. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Prop. 36 and Corol.  
<sup>5</sup> *De Int. Emend.*, I, 10.