

Classic Wisdom 1

Benedict Spinoza

# ETHICS

Translated by William Hale White

Moonrise Press

# ETHICS

## DEMONSTRATED IN GEOMETRICAL ORDER AND DIVIDED INTO FIVE PARTS

WHICH TREAT

- I. OF GOD
- II. OF THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE MIND,
- III. OF THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE AFFECTS.
- IV. OF HUMAN BONDAGE, OR OF THE STRENGTH OF  
THE AFFECTS.
- V. OF THE POWER OF THE INTELLECT, OR OF HUMAN  
LIBERTY.

BY

**BENEDICT SPINOZA**

Translated from the Latin

BY

**WILLIAM HALE WHITE**

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## Copyright Page

*Ethics* by Benedict Spinoza, translated by William Hale White

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## A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

*The more things change, the more they stay the same. After taking a philosophy class way back in college and not caring one way or another for Spinoza whose geometric way of presenting his philosophical, religious, ethical, ontological and epistemological views did not appeal to me at all, I finally discovered his immensely significant, timeless wisdom and decided to share it by reprinting the Ethics in an 19<sup>th</sup>-century English translation by William Hale White, in convenient paperback and EBook formats. This is the first in our new reprint series, Classic Wisdom. This wisdom is evident starting right in the first Part, on God:*

*“PROP. XI. — God or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence necessarily exists. PROP. XV. — Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God.”*

*Thus, God by virtue of being infinite, cannot be outside of this world (transcendental), God has to be and is immanent, God is in everything that exists. Everything that exists is in God, i.e., Divine. This, of course, is a path straight to the modern understanding of the united Universe, permeated by the creative energy of its Source, the One Divine Being that is all in all. This of course, is not compatible with the dogmas and teachings of any temple or church that separate the One into Many, or cut-off the Divine Spirit from matter. What an amazing revolution, hidden in plain sight! To obfuscate things, Spinoza’s theories have been called “Philosophical Monism,” “Pantheistic” or “Rationalist” and engendering ideas that gave the birth to Enlightenment.*

*Born in a Sephardic Jewish-Portuguese community in Amsterdam in 1621 (his ancestors excepted the Inquisition), he was expelled from the Jewish community at 23 years old, and is buried in the courtyard of a Christian Nieuwe Kerk in The Hague (he died at 44 years old in 1677). He was neither Jewish nor Christian in his views, and, from today’s perspective may be called one of the early Classics of Awakened Wisdom: the awakening is to the intrinsic unity of all that exist with God, the immortality of the human spirit, and the primacy of Love over all, Divine Light and Love guiding humans along their individual paths towards awakening, increased awareness and wisdom.*

*Philosophers love Spinoza for the elegance of his writings and the depth of his logical analysis of theorems and dogmas that he, time after time, proves absurd. The book consists of five parts: I. Of God; II. Of The Nature and Origin of the Mind, III. Of The Origin and Nature of the Affects; IV. Of Human Bondage, or of the Strength of the Affects. And V. Of The Power of the Intellect, or Of Human Liberty.*

*Just like the ancient Gnostics, Pythagoras, Plotinus, Hermes Trismegistos (many who wrote under his name), Giordano Bruno, and, to skip half a millennium, modern deep ecologists (Arne Deke Eide Næss, and James Lovelock of the Gaia hypothesis), Spinoza found and shared the unified understanding of nature, humanity and divinity that dispels darkness, sorrows and doubts, while crowning the human being with the unperishable Divine Light that exists within. As he said: "The affect of Joy and its offspring increases the perfection of the mind and therefore is good; the affect of Sorrow and its offspring decreases the perfection of the mind and therefore is not good." Thus, to seek Joy and intellectual Love that unites the seeker with the Divine is the ultimate goal of human life.*

*This idea reminds casual readers of the recently popular "The Secret" teaching millions about the power of positive thinking, based on a premise that the "Universe" gives the individual an exact response to what that person thinks or feels like – the haters will be hated back and hurt, the lovers will be loved, the fearful – scared, and the joyous will have a lot more to enjoy. Who knows how it really works, but there are many things worth doing less than reading Spinoza.*

*For convenience of those who did not grow up studying Latin, we added Arab numerals to the Propositions and other numbered lists. We also added more paragraph breaks to make the text easier to follow on the page. The index, due to changed pagination, had to be redone, only the main entries were preserved, and additional items added. Finally, the title was changed to plural, Ethics, not Ethic as White had it, following the original.*

*Spinoza's wisdom will reach you if you are patient and read this volume with a discerning mind.*

*Enjoy!*

*~ Maja Trochimczyk*

# PREFACE

*By William Hale White*

The present translation of Spinoza's *Ethic* was completed more than twenty years ago, but at that time the interest in Spinoza was too slight to justify its publication. Latterly, however, a number of books and articles have been written about him, and it is hoped therefore that a rendering into English of his central work may stand a chance of being read.

Before going any further I wish to acknowledge the very great obligation under which I lie to Miss Stirling, daughter of Dr. J. Hutchison Stirling of Edinburgh. She has revised with singular patience and care every word which I had written, and at innumerable points has altered and adapted what before was a misfit, so that I trust the dress will now be found not to disguise but accurately to figure forth the original. I am quite sure that those fortunate friends who know Miss Stirling, and what the quality of her scholarship is, will congratulate me on having been able to find such help.

My object has been not to present an interpretation of the *Ethic*, but a translation of it, and I would beg the reader who may here and there complain of obscurity to remember that perhaps the Latin may also be obscure. Some difficulties are not quite, satisfactorily solved. For example, Spinoza, although a scientific writer, frequently uses a scientific term like *modus* in two different senses. At one time he means "mode," as he defines it in the fifth definition of the First Book, and at another time he means simply "way" or "manner."

The best has been done that I can do to distinguish between these meanings, but it is possible that in some cases I have failed. Again, it will frequently happen that the reader will think that the right name has not been found for what are called the affects, of which a list is given at the end of the third book and elsewhere. Taking individual passages by themselves, better names might undoubtedly have been discovered, but individual passages cannot be isolated, and the word to be selected must be one which best meets the requirements of all the passages taken together in which a particular affect is named. One blemish, which has disfigured previous translations, French, German, and English, and indeed most Latin editions of Spinoza, has been removed.

The references to the different propositions, axioms, postulates, and definitions have been carefully verified, and many corrections have been the result. The new edition by Van Vloten and Land came just in time, and their text has been the one used in revising the proofs for the press. It is believed that now and for the first time there is presented to the English reader a version in his own tongue of the Ethic, which certainly may not be elegant, but is at least tolerably literal, and does not in many cases miss the sense. No doubt competent critics will discover many possible improvements, and I can only say that I shall be glad to hear of them in order that they may be incorporated in a second edition, should the book ever obtain such a success.

The object which I have in view in this preface is not to write an essay upon Spinoza. In the first place, I am not equal to the task, and in the second place there have been many essays upon him lately of more or less merit. Those persons who wish to affiliate Spinoza with the philosophy before and after him, cannot perhaps after all do better than read Schwegler, whose excellent Handbook Dr. Stirling has translated into English.

My purpose is to offer one or two general observations which may serve to tempt anybody who takes up this volume to go on seriously with the study of Spinoza for himself. The aim of every writer who writes upon any author who is worth reading ought to be, not to prevent people from reading him, but to induce them to do it, and not to remain satisfied with reading about him in abstracts or articles, be they ever so able and popular.

It may be as well to indicate to the ordinary reader one central difficulty in Spinoza, for, until that is overcome, advance will be impossible. Thought is generally considered, or at least is generally considered by Englishmen, to be limited by the imagination. What cannot be depicted before the eye of the mind is simply nothing. Spinoza, however, warns us in the 15th proposition of the first part to distinguish between the imagination and the intellect, and in the scholium to the 48th proposition of the second part the warning is repeated. "For, by ideas," he says, "I do not understand the images which are formed" at the back of the eye, or, if you please, in the middle of "the brain, but rather the conceptions of thought." If we deny what we cannot image, and if we consider it to be a sufficient objection to a religious or philosophical statement, "I cannot imagine it to be true," it is not worthwhile to have



anything to do with Spinoza. It may be added too, that it is not worthwhile to have anything to do with religion or with any philosophy properly so called. Spinoza, insisting on the power of thought to go beyond the imagination, is really claiming no more than the orthodox Christian creeds claim from the humblest of believers.<sup>1</sup>

It may be worthwhile also to remove one prevalent misconception as to Spinoza, He is usually supposed to be destructive. In reality he belongs in a remarkable degree to the constructive class. It is quite true that he is the founder of modern Biblical criticism, but he criticised merely in order to remove obstacles. Were lie simply negative, his influence

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<sup>1</sup>A minor difficulty is the use of the words “subjective” and “objective” which with Spinoza and with Descartes bear a meaning exactly the reverse of that now assigned to them. Upon this subject Dr. Stirling has been good enough to furnish me with the accompanying notes which I transcribe; — “Prantl (vol. iii., p. 208) says of these words ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ in Duns Scotus — In innumerable places from now on to the eighteenth century (that is, until Alexander Baumgarten) wo find this use of the words ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’\* which relates itself to the present one as exactly the re verse; namely, ‘subjective’\* then meant what refers itself to the ‘subject of the judgments’; consequently to the concrete objects of thoughts; ‘objective’ again what lies in the mere *obicere* that is, in the making conceivable or mentally representable, and falls consequently to the score of the conceiver — the mental representer.’ Trendelenburg (EL Log. Aristotle p. 52, note) also observes: — ‘Thus *subject* during the Middle Ages has the force of underlying substance, as it has also with Descartes and Spinoza. The latter (Princip. Philos. Cartes., p. II, ed. Paul.) says, — ‘Everything in which, as in a subject, there is immediately any property, whose real idea is in us, is called substance.’ So *esse subjectivum* (to be subjective — subjective Being), quite contrary to the present usage amongst the Germans, is said by Occam (Sec.XV.) to be ‘that which, as though a thing in nature, is placed outside of the forms of the mind, and is not imaged by thought alone; ‘whereas *esse obiectivum* (objective Being) on the contrary, is explained as ‘Cognition itself,’ and consequently a certain imaged Being (*esse quoddam fictum*). (Occam, sentent. lib. I. distinct. II. quest. 8.) From which it will be evident what is the meaning of objective reality with Descartes {e.g., in med. 3). Amongst the Germans, chiefly Kant and then Fichte being the originators of the change, the use of these words is completely inverted. While the *subject* is said to be he who knows; the *object*, on the contrary, is something which, while subjected in thinking [i.e., the subject of thought], still maintains, nevertheless, its own nature in independence of the opinions of him who thinks. Hence it is that subjective is said to be that which lies in the changing condition of the thinker, and objective, again, that which lies in the fixed nature of the thing itself.”

would have disappeared long ago. It is the builder and believer whom we worship. "Typhon," says Plutarch, "tears to pieces and puts out of sight the sacred word which Isis again gathers up and puts together." And it is Isis who is truly divine, while Typhon is a demon. In the body putting together is another name for life, and pulling asunder is death. So, when the mind is alive it is affirmative, and when it is dead it is negative. Nothing more, however, need be said in this direction, because, although the Spinoza who is current amongst those who have never read him is a sceptic or atheist, it is impossible for any person who will even look at him not to be aware that here is no waste no-man's land with nothing on it but a deposit of broken potsherds and miscellaneous rubbish, but at least architecture. A closer acquaintance will prove that we have before us a temple.

The question which we have a right to ask of any person who professes to have anything to say to us is, *Wherein can you help me?* And this is the question we put to Spinoza. It may be answered boldly that Spinoza is helpful to us through his system, or rather through what there is in him which is systematic, through his much decried method. It has been pointed out that geometrical demonstrations derive their cogency, not from their form, but from the fact that they deal with intuitions, and leave no room for doubt through haziness of definition. This is quite true; nevertheless Spinoza, in his consecutiveness, his advance from position to position in complete connection and in perfect order, remains exemplary to us. The power to go from one ascertained point to another point, and so on and on, is what makes the strength of the human mind. It is this which creates for us principles, or at least the only principles worth the name. Our usual habit is something quite different. We pick up one rule to-day and act upon it, and we pick up another to-morrow and act upon that. Today we discern that our only safety lies in self-government as strict as that of the Stoics, and to-morrow we incline to a belief in the natural man and in the divinity of all our passions. It is even a settled and formulated article of belief that nothing must be pushed to extremes; that a deduction from an axiom is right so far, and that then it goes all wrong, and another so-called axiom must be assumed.

We hold that black is black, but nevertheless, "under 'certain circumstances,'" etc. Contraries lie side by side in us in peaceful repose, and if they were only to stir one must devour the other. But they never do stir; we never take the trouble, in fact, to bring them together. Spinoza, on the other hand, walks with a thread to guide him, never

stopping. Once a thing strikes him he exhausts it. He fears no conclusions, and embraces every result which his intellect offers him, no matter how extreme it may seem to be. He knows well enough that the whole value of any intellectual process lies in these extremities, that they are its precious final fruit.

His system, therefore, is his recommendation; not perhaps in an age like the present, for it is not an age of systems, but of disintegration, and all systems are *ex vitermini* condemned. Every religion, however, has been a system, and unless we have some kind of a religion, that is to say, some linked and settled conclusions upon the problems which incessantly confront us, we live aimlessly. A man's mind ought to be open to the reception of new light, but he ought not to allow vital questions affecting his daily life to remain open. He is bound to close them, and when he comes to mature years he should be able to say that he has put forth all his strength on such and such subjects, and has once for all decided in this way and no other. The reason why we cannot do this is because we have never, after the manner of Spinoza, gone resolutely to work and examined and thought to the very end of our capacity.

Spinoza, as a necessary result of his consecutiveness, was a perfectly formed character, and not a mere mass of shapeless slush. He had acquired for himself certain definite rules of procedure available under given circumstances, and one of his rules is always at hand to meet foreseen cases. His whole private life went on certain lines prescribed for him by his Ethic. He was always armed, and had not to look for a weapon when he wanted one. It is most instructive that he even uses the ecclesiastical word dogmata to describe the maxims which were law to him, signifying thereby that they are unquestionable, and he counsels that we should commit them to memory. They are his apostles' creed.

This habit of Spinoza is the same thing as the unity which is remarkable throughout the whole of the Ethic, and is its peculiar charm. Spinoza knows that the chief delight of man is in unity, and that we rejoice not so much in the perception of this thing and that thing as in the perception that this thing and that thing are the same. His unity is especially remarkable in his treatment of the passions.

*“It will doubtless, “he says in his Preface to the Third Part,*

“seem a marvelous thing for me to endeavour to treat by a geometrical method the vices and “follies of men, and to desire by a sure method to demonstrate those things which these people cry out against “as being opposed to reason, or as being vanities, absurdities, and monstrosities. The following is my reason for so doing. Nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to any vice of nature, for she is always the same and everywhere one. Her virtue is the same, and her power of acting; that is to say, her laws and rules, according to which all things are and are changed from form to form, are everywhere and always the same; so that there must also be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things whatsoever, that is to say, by the universal laws and rules of nature. The affects, therefore, of hatred, anger, envy, considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and virtue of nature as other individual things; they have therefore certain causes through which they are to be understood, and certain properties which are just as worthy of being known as the properties of any other ‘thing in the contemplation alone of which we delight. I shall, therefore, pursue the same method in considering the nature and strength of the affects and the power of the mind over them which I pursued in our previous discussion of God and the mind, and I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if I were considering lines, planes, or bodies.”

The popular religious belief tends the other way. We hear of a schism in us, a lower deep of mutiny which requires suppression or even annihilation. We have to ask ourselves, not whether such a view is of service to man, but is it true? If it is not true, it is of no use whatever to preach it. It is better to preach at once the truth which visits us, no matter how dangerous it may seem to be to any or every cause, for we may be sure that it will bring its own compensation and its own restrictions. It is a fact that man does not stand outside the general order of things, and that it is not necessary to imagine a system for him alone. Man is governed as the planet is governed. Spinoza knows that neither in planet nor man can any law hold its way unchecked by the operation of another and its opposite law. Neither the earth itself nor the smallest atom of it can yield to its centrifugal tendency in its course round the sun, but at every instant is subject to the centripetal pull which, together with centrifugal urge, gives the perfect curve. In fact the pull is inconceivable without the urge, and the urge without the pull. Everywhere it is the same everywhere is the contrary not only an accompaniment to any given force, but positively essential to its existence.

Spinoza holds that all desires are good. The desire to appropriate is good, and is nothing but the impulse to preserve our being, but man has



other desires, and the desire to appropriate brought under their influence is altered and becomes moral. It would be an entire mistake, therefore, to suppose that Spinoza's creed lends itself to licentiousness or loosens the hold which conscience has upon us. No man ever supplied such reasons for a pure and upright life. Man properly instructed will prefer mercy and love to lust, just as he prefers bread to swine's meat.

Blyenbergh is told "that if any one sees he can live more comfortably on a cross than sitting at his table, he would act foolishly if he did not hang himself on the cross, and he who clearly sees that by perpetrating crimes he can really enjoy a more perfect and better life or essence than in the pursuit of virtue, is also a fool if he does not commit crimes."

This is bold, but it is surely a sharper incentive than a sermon on the text that our passions are simply of the devil and must be put down. Spinoza provides us with the strongest of all reasons for being virtuous, and through him we come also to see that what we have thought to be mere evil in us is necessary to virtue, a discovery of immense practical importance. The desires which we accuse so bitterly are really indispensable to our purification.

Spinoza's unity is of course exemplified in all he has to say about God; but upon this subject I confess a dread of insufficient power of expression and of inequality to anything like coherent and intelligible comment. If I were to attempt it, I should only lose myself in indefinite phrases. Moreover, my desire now is, as before observed, not to provide a commentary but a stimulus. An exposition, too, of the *De Deo* would have the disadvantage of leading the mind of the student away from what is particularly serviceable to him — which he would, unaided, probably discover for himself — and of turning his attention to what somebody else has seen to be serviceable. We will then content ourselves with the passing remark that the Divine Unity with Spinoza is something very different from that of the theologians. It means, to use his own language, that "whatever is, is in God, and nothing can "either be or be conceived without God."

It is not Unity as against Trinity, but it is the denial of any entity personal or metaphysical which can be set over against God. God, in other words, becomes sufficiently extended to cover every fact in the universe, and in every fact He is present, whether to us it be evil or good.

Let us again ask the question, Wherein can you help me? And, returning to the subject just dropped, I say that Spinoza will be found specially and practically serviceable in all that he says about action and passion, and the means by which passion is to be kept under control. The remedies against the passions are thus summed up in the scholium to the 20th proposition of the fifth part. They lie—

1. In the knowledge itself of the affects. (See Schol. Prop. 4, pt. 5)
2. In the separation by the mind of the affects from the thought of an external cause, which we imagine confusedly. (See Prop. 2, pt. 5, and Schol. Prop. 4, pt. 5.)
3. In duration, in which the affections which are related to objects we understand surpass those related to objects conceived in a mutilated or confused manner. (Prop. 7, pt. 5.)
4. In the multitude of causes by which the affections which are related to the common properties of things or to God are nourished. (Props. 9 and 11, pt. 5.)
5. In the order in which the mind can arrange its affects and connect them one with the other. (Schol. Prop. 10, pt. 5, and see also Props. 12, 13, and 14, pt. 5.)

The distinction between action and passion is one which is vital throughout the whole of the *Ethic*. “I say that we act,” Spinoza observes in the second definition of the third part, “when anything is done, either within us or without us, of which we are the adequate cause, that is to say (by the preceding definition) when from our nature anything follows, either within us or without us, which by that nature alone can be clearly and distinctly understood. On the other hand, I say that we suffer when anything is done within us, or when anything follows from our nature, of which we are not the cause excepting partially.”

So far as the mind has adequate ideas it is active; so far as it has inadequate ideas it is not active, and the increase of adequate ideas is to be our great aim. Virtue is action and power. “By virtue and power,” says the eighth definition of the fourth part, “I understand the same thing; that is to say (Prop. 7, pt. 3), virtue, in so far as it is related to man, is the essence itself or nature of man in so far as it has the power

of effecting certain “ things which can be understood through the laws of its “ nature alone.” The formal proof of the first remedy is to be found in the third, fourth, and fourteenth propositions of the fifth book, which, for the reader’s convenience, I will venture to quote together and entire; —

*“Prop. III. — An affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it*

*Demonst.* — An affect which is a passion is a confused idea (by the general definition of the Affects). If, therefore, we form a clear and distinct idea of this affect, the idea will not be distinguished — except. by reason — from this affect, in so far as the affect is related to the mind alone (Prop. 21, pt. 2, with its Schol.), and therefore (Prop. 3, pt. 3) the affect will cease to be a passion. — Q.E.D.

*Corol.*— In proportion, then, as we know an affect better is it more within our control, and the less does the mind suffer from it.”

*“Prop. IV. — There is no affection of the body of which we cannot form some clear and distinct conception.*

*“Demonst.* — Those things which are common to all cannot be otherwise than adequately conceived (Prop. 38, pt. 2), and therefore (Prop. 12, and Lem. 2, following Schol. Prop. 1 3, pt. 2) there is no affection of the body of which we cannot form some clear and distinct conception. — Q.E.D.”

*“ Corol.*— Hence it follows that there is no effect of which we cannot form some clear and distinct conception. For an affect is an idea of an affection of the body (by the general definition of the Affects), and this idea therefore (Prop. 4, pt. 5) must involve some clear and distinct conception.”

*“ Schol.* — Since nothing exists from which some effect does not follow (Prop. 36, pt.1), and since we understand clearly and distinctly everything which follows from an idea which is adequate in us (Prop. 40, pt. 2), it is a necessary consequence that everyone has the power, partly at least, if not absolutely, of understanding clearly and distinctly himself and his affects, and consequently of bringing it to pass that he suffers less from them. We have therefore mainly to strive to acquire a clear and distinct knowledge as far as possible of each affect, so that the mind may be led to pass from the affect to think those things which it perceives clearly and distinctly, and with which it is entirely satisfied, and to strive also that the affect may be

separated from the thought of an external cause and connected with true thought. Thus not only love, hatred, &c., will be destroyed (Prop. 2, pt. 5), but also the appetites or desires to which the affect gives rise cannot be excessive (Prop. 61, pt. 4). For it is above everything to be observed that the appetite by which a man is said to act is one and the same appetite as that by which he is said to suffer. For example, we have shown that human nature is so constituted that everyone desires that other people should live according to his way of thinking (Schol. Prop. 31, pt. 3), a desire which in a man who is not guided by reason is a passion which is called ambition, and is not very different from pride; while, on the other hand, in a man who lives according to the dictates of reason it “is an action or virtue which is called piety (Schol. 1, Prop. 37, pt. 4, and Demonst. 2 of the same Prop.) In the same manner, all the appetites or desires are passions only in so far as they arise from inadequate ideas, and are classed among the virtues whenever they are excited or begotten by adequate ideas; for all the desires by which we are determined to any action may arise either from adequate or inadequate ideas (Prop. 59, pt. 4). To return, therefore, to the point from which we set out; there is no remedy within our power which can be conceived more excellent for the affects than that which consists in a true knowledge of them, since the mind possesses no other power than that of thinking and forming adequate ideas, as we have shown above (Prop. 3, pt. 3).”

“ Prop. XIV. — The mind can cause all the affections of the body or the images of things to be related to the idea of God (*ideam Dei*).

“*Demonst.* — There is no affection of the body of which the mind cannot form some clear and distinct conception (Prop. 4, pt. 5), and therefore (Prop. 15, pt. I) it can cause all the affections of the body to be related to the idea of God. — Q.E.D.”

The particular mode in which these propositions are demonstrated, more particularly the fourth, would lead to a longer discussion than is possible in a preface; but the abstract of the whole matter is that it is possible to think of any passion as we think of a crystal or a triangle, and when we do so it is no longer injurious. A man, for example, suffers an insult, and is hurried by passion to avenge it. He is a *victim* for the time being (*patitur*). A stream of images passes before him, over which he exercises no authority. But it is possible to break that series of images, — to reflect, to put the insult from him, to consider it as if it were an effect of gravitation or electricity, to place himself outside it, to look at it as I God looks at it. This is to refer it to God’s idea, or to have an adequate idea of it.



For the meaning of the second remedy, which consists “in the separation by the mind of the affects from the thought of an external cause, which we imagine confusedly,” we turn to the second proposition of the fifth part: —

“If we detach an emotion of the mind or affect from the thought of an external cause, and connect it with other thoughts, then the love or hatred towards the external cause, and the fluctuations of the mind which arise from these affects, will be destroyed.”

“*Demonst.* — That which constitutes the form of love or hatred is joy or sorrow, accompanied with the idea of an external cause (Defs. 6 and 7 of the Affects). If this idea, therefore, be taken away, the form of love or hatred is also removed, and therefore these affects, and any others which arise from them, are destroyed. — Q.E.D.”

Spinoza does not mean that each remedy is sovereign against all the affects. Those which are now in his mind are love and hatred. We hate, not because of any injury done to us, but because it has been done to us by a person like ourselves. The misery consequent on it is out of proportion to the actual loss or pain. Spinoza impresses on us that really the only thing which need concern us is the actual loss or pain, and that these are due to the operation of natural laws. So, too, he supposes that the disturbance due to a passion of any kind may be quelled. It is the imagination, in fact, which wanders beyond the immediate *here* that is the cause of the mischief.

For the explanation of the third remedy, which consists “in duration, in which the affections which are related to objects we understand surpass those related to objects conceived in a mutilated or confused manner,” we are referred to the seventh proposition of the fifth part; —

“The affects which spring from reason, or which are excited by it, are, if time be taken into account, more powerful than those which are related to individual objects which we contemplate as absent.”

“*Demonst.* — We do not contemplate an object as absent by reason of the affect by which we imagine it, but by reason of the fact that the body is affected with another affect, which excludes the existence of that object (Prop. 17, pt. 2). The affect, therefore, which is related to an object which we contemplate as absent, is not of such a nature as to overcome the other actions and power of man (concerning these

things see Prop. 6, pt. 4), but, on the contrary, is of such a nature that it can in some way be restrained by those affections which exclude the existence of its external cause (Prop. 9, pt. 4). But the affect which arises from reason is necessarily related to the common properties of things (see the definition of reason in Schol. 2, Prop. 40, pt. 2), which we always contemplate as present (for nothing can exist which excludes their present existence), and which we always imagine in the same way (Prop. 38, pt. 2). This affect, therefore, always remains the same, and consequently (Ax. 1, pt. S), the affects which are contrary to it, and which are not maintained by their external cause, must more and more accommodate themselves to it until they are no longer contrary to it. So far, therefore, the affect which springs from reason is the stronger. — Q.E.D.”

The affect which arises from reason necessarily related to the common properties of things is an affect, as we see from Schol. 2, Prop. 40, pt. 2, from generalisations and adequate ideas — from laws, in fact. The meaning, therefore, is that the ever present which occupies the reason will in time vanquish the affect due to that which is not present. Hatred of a person not actually before me will yield to the affects of the reason, because the objects of the reason are always before me. It will yield to the direct influence of the affects of the reason continually at work to show its folly, and it will yield also still more signally to the indirect influence of the continued occupation of the reason with “the common properties of things.” One inference is obvious, that if we wish to know the efficacy of this remedy, our reason must habitually dwell upon “the common properties of things.” Dwelling thus upon them, we shall, when we suffer from passion, return under their control, with more or less rapidity, as we lie more or less open to their influence, and the passion will “more and more accommodate itself” to the affect proceeding from them.

To find the meaning of the fourth remedy, which consists “in the multitude of causes by which the affections which are related to the common properties of things or to God are nourished,” we have to turn to the 9th and 11th propositions of the 5th part: —

“Prop. IX. — If we are affected by an affect which is related to many and different causes which the mind contemplates at the same time with the affect itself, we are less injured, suffer less from it, and are less affected, therefore, towards each cause than if we were affected by another affect equally great, which is related to one cause only, or to fewer causes.”

“Demonst. — An affect is bad or injurious only in so far as it hinders the mind from thinking (Props. 26 and 27, pt. 4), and therefore that affect by which the mind is determined to the contemplation of a number of objects at the same time is less injurious than another affect equally great which holds the mind in the contemplation of one object alone, or of a few objects, so that it cannot think of others. This is the first thing we had to prove. Again, since the essence of the mind, that is to say (Prop. 7, pt. 3), its power, consists in thought alone (Prop. II, pt. 2), the mind suffers less through an affect by which it is determined to the contemplation of a number of objects at the same time than through an affect equally great which holds it occupied in the contemplation of one object alone or of a few objects. This is the second thing we had to prove. Finally, this affect (Prop. 48, pt. 3), in so far as it is related to a number of external causes, is therefore less towards each. — “Q.E.D.”

Prop. XI. — The greater the number of objects to which an image is related, the more constant is it, or the more frequently does it present itself, and the more does it occupy the mind.”

Demonst. — “The greater the number of objects to which an image or affect is related, the greater is the number of causes by which it can be excited and cherished. All these causes the mind contemplates simultaneously by means of the affect (by hypothesis), and therefore the more constant is the affect, or the more frequently does it present itself, and the more does it occupy the mind (Prop. 8, pt. 5.)— Q.E.D.”

To exhibit the distinct moments of this remedy we note —

Passion holds the mind to a single thought.

It therefore hinders the mind from thinking.

Observe by the way the characteristic selection by Spinoza of this one as chief among the many evils of passion.

An affect, therefore, by which we contemplate a number of objects at the same time with the affect, is less injurious than an affect which holds the mind to the contemplation of one object.

The greater the number of causes which can produce any affect, the more frequently it recurs and occupies the mind.

We look therefore to affects which are due to the common properties of things, *or to God*, as the remedy against the injurious absorption of the mind by passion.

It is, as we say, characteristic of Spinoza that his objection to passion is that it chokes thought. Everybody who tries to lead a life from the intellect knows what a calamity is that incessant apparition of the object of a passion. It pursues the victim like a Fury. To be capable of affection by the common properties of things, *or God*, is the cure, and everything helps that way. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

The fifth and last remedy is derived from “the order in which the mind can arrange its affects and connect them one with the other.” The entire comprehension of this remedy is not possible without lengthened study of all the propositions involved. There is no possibility of *jumping* Spinoza. He cannot be understood without consecutive study and strait attention to every line from beginning to end. It is not, it is to be hoped, necessary to reprint all these propositions here, as they would take up too much room, and the reader who is serious with his subject will not mind the trouble of turning to them.

The proof proceeds as follows —

Mind and body are the same thing, considered at one time under the attribute of thought and at another under that of extension. The order and connection of things is therefore one, whether viewed under this or that attribute, and consequently the order of the actions or passions of the body is the same as that of the actions or passions of the mind. The mind has the power to form clear and distinct ideas and of deducing others from them. Consequently it has the power of arranging and connecting the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect. The mind, in other words, has the power of joining one idea to another. If I conceive a triangle, I conceive that its three angles are equal to two right angles. So I may chain (*concatenare*) hatred to love, that is to say, I may establish it as a rule that hatred is to be overcome by love, and the affections of the body will follow the rule. These chained demonstrations in morals are called by Spinoza *dogmata*, and these he counsels, as we have before noticed, we should always have ready for every emergency.

So much for the remedies for the passions. We have now heard enough to convince us that to the question. *Wherein can you help me ?* Spinoza can give a solid answer. The truth is, that this book is really an *ethic*. It is not primarily a metaphysic. All there is in it, which is metaphysical, what is intended as a sure basis for the ethical. The science of ethic is not much in fashion now. There have been times in the history of the world when men have thought that the science of sciences was the knowledge of self-control, of our duty to ourselves and our neighbours. Socrates, Marcus Antoninus, and Epictetus so thought; Spinoza so thought. The decay of religion, however, amongst other innumerable evils, has also brought upon us this evil, that the purely intellectual with no reference whatever to the ethical is the sole subject of research, and a man devotes all his life to the anatomy of lepidoptera and never gives an hour to a solution of the problem how he may best bring insurgent and tyrannous desires under subjection or face misfortune.

No doubt the anatomy of lepidoptera does contribute ethical results, but ethical science strictly so called is non-existent. No preacher preaches it; the orthodox churches are given over to a philosophy of rags, and “free” pulpits do nothing but mince and mash up for popular ears commonplaces upon books and passing events. Neither does any school teach it. It is frightful to think that at the present moment the only ethic known to the great mass of the children of this country is a dim and decaying dread left over by a departed religion, while to the children of the aristocracy it is nothing more than a blind obligation to be technically honourable. “In my class, and it is a large one,” said a teacher to me the other day, “there is not one girl who would not on the slightest pressure tell me a lie,” and this was in a school, not certainly for the rich, but certainly not for the very poor.

The world is alarmed now at the various portents which threaten it. On every side are signs of danger more terrible by far than that which impended in 1793. But the germinating spot in all the dangers ahead of us is the divorce of the intellect from its chief use, so that it spends itself upon curiosities, trifles, the fine arts, or in science, and never in ethical service. The peril is, of course, the more tremendous, because the religions, which with all their defects did at least teach duty and invested it with divine authority, are effete.

Spinoza, in this total absence of Ethic, is perhaps not to be recommended as a class-book. Nevertheless, I believe there are to be found in him, more than in any other modern author, great principles

which, if translated into the vulgar tongue, will be the best attainable ethic for the people. One thing the student will observe, that Spinoza relies altogether upon reason as effectual to cope with passion. He does not content himself with a mere blind “Thou shalt or thou shalt not,” whether as the voice of a God or a conscience. He believes, too, in reason as able to do what he expects of her. Commonplaces are frequent enough of the powerlessness of reason over the passions, but it is nearer the truth to say that men yield to passion because they know no reason why they should not. At any rate, if they are to be reclaimed, reason alone can reclaim them.

Although Spinoza’s aims are ethical, he is also speculative. The question, *Wherein do you help me?* may be answered, not merely by wise counsel but by a revelation; that is to say, by ideas, by an insight which removes the limits of the world in which we live and shows us something beyond. There is no assistance more efficient than that by which we are led to turn our eyes away from the earth and raise them to heaven.

Most religions, therefore, are speculative in the proper sense of the word, and their power over men is due to the lift which they give even to the feeblest of believers. A religion constructed of the elements of this world and of nothing more would indeed be no religion. It is of the very essence of a genuine religion that it should take the other side; that it should be the counterpoise, the perpetual affirmation against the perpetual negation which lies in the routine and vulgarity of existence. The demand to which the Christian doctrine of eternal life is an answer is, in some shape or other, absolutely constant, and there must, in some shape or other, be a reply to it. The promise, however, of a future life is only one element in religion. It tells the humblest of a supreme God to whom we are each one of us personally related. It is a window to men through which they look into the Infinite, are satisfied and consoled!

Now, although Spinoza may be hard to understand, and although the reader may rise from the perusal of some of his demonstrations and not feel content, asking himself whether the thing be really so or not, there is no writer probably who loosens more effectually the hard tyranny of time and circumstance and provides us with more of those thoughts which it is the office of a real and speculative religion to supply. I remember the self-given warning of a few pages back against venturing out of my depth in the first book, and yet is impossible in this connection to pass it by altogether.

Take, for example, the eleventh and following propositions. “ God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.” Note the “ infinite attributes,” each attribute infinite, and infinity also of number. There is no cataloguing of them. A few only are known to us. The sixteenth proposition affirms that “from the necessity of the divine nature infinite numbers of things in infinite ways (that is to say, all things which can be conceived by the infinite intellect) must follow.”

What a region is this into which we are here introduced! The effect on the mind is something similar to that produced upon men when the sky ceased to be a solid roof, or when the stars took their proper places and the earth became a revolving planet, an atom compared with the immense whole. For the first time, too, as before pointed out, we find God enlarged so as to cover every fact, even the most obstinate.

“God,” says the corollary to this last-quoted proposition, “ is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under the infinite intellect;” and the second corollary determines Him as “cause through Himself and not through that which is contingent.”

In the scholium to the seventeenth proposition we have a further development: —

“There are some who think that God is a free cause, because He can, as they think, bring about that those things which we have said follow from His nature — that is to say, those things which are in His power — should not be, or should not be produced by Him. But this is simply saying that God could bring about that it should not follow from the nature of a triangle that its three angles should be equal to two right angles, or that from a given cause an effect should not follow, which is absurd. But I shall show further on, without the help of this proposition, that neither intellect nor will pertain to the nature of God. I know, indeed, that there are many who think themselves able to demonstrate that intellect of the highest order and freedom of will both pertain to the nature of God, for they say that they know nothing more perfect which they can attribute to Him than that which is the chief perfection in ourselves. But although they conceive God as actually possessing the highest intellect, they nevertheless do not believe that He can bring about that all those things should exist which are actually in His intellect, for they think that by such a supposition they would destroy His power. If He had created, they say, all things which are in His intellect, He could have created

nothing more, and this, they believe, does not accord with God's omnipotence; so then they prefer to consider God as indifferent to all things, and creating nothing excepting that which He has decreed to create by a certain absolute will. But I think that I have shown with sufficient clearness (Prop. i6) that from the supreme power of God, or from His infinite nature, infinite things in infinite ways, that is to say, all things, have necessarily flowed, or continually follow by the same necessity, in the same way as it follows from the nature of a triangle, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles. The omnipotence of God has, therefore, been actual from eternity, and in the same actuality will remain to eternity. In this way the omnipotence of God, in my opinion, is far more firmly established. My adversaries, indeed (if I may be permitted to speak plainly), seem to deny the omnipotence of God, inasmuch as they are forced to admit that He has in His mind an infinite number of things which might be created, but which, nevertheless, He will never be able to create, for if He were to create all things which He has in His mind. He would, according to them, exhaust His omnipotence and make Himself imperfect. Therefore, in order to make a perfect God, they are compelled to make Him incapable of doing all those things to which His power extends; and anything more absurd than this, or more opposed to God's omnipotence, I do not think can be imagined."

The meaning of this is not that everything which will exist does exist. Spinoza, of course, could not intend anything so obviously untrue. We have in the Scholium to the eighth proposition of the second book, a clue to an interpretation. The eighth proposition itself is, "The ideas of nonexistent individual things or modes are comprehended in the infinite idea of God, in the same way that the formal essences of individual things or modes are contained in the attributes of God," and the scholium gives us an illustration: —

"The circle, for example, possesses this property that the rectangles contained by the segments of all straight lines cutting one another in the same circle are equal; therefore in a circle there are contained an infinite number of rectangles equal to one another, but none of them can be said to exist unless in so far as the circle exists, nor can the idea of any one of these rectangles be said to exist unless in so far as it is comprehended in the idea of the circle. Out of this infinite number of rectangles, let two only, E and D, be conceived to exist. The ideas of these two rectangles do not now exist merely in so far as they are comprehended in the idea of the circle, but because they involve the existence of their rectangles, and it is this which distinguishes them from the other ideas of the other rectangles."



We have here, then, in Spinoza, as we so often have, a realised theological doctrine, a doctrine nominally taught by theology, but remaining unrealised. This is the true unchangeableness of God. All that He is lies open before us, and has always been open; what He is now He will forever be. Thus much, however, is sufficient to show Spinoza's suggestiveness, and to indicate how far he can be of any service to those who find a solace in ideas.

Spinoza has recognised the support which the doctrine of immortality gives to Ethic. It is quite true that Ethic can subsist without immortality. Listen to the forty-first proposition of the fifth part, with its scholium —

“Prop. XLI. — Even if we did not know that our mind is eternal, we should still consider as of primary importance Piety and Religion, and absolutely everything which in the Fourth Part we have shown to be related to strength of mind and generosity.

“*Demonst.* — The primary and sole foundation of virtue “ or of the proper conduct of life (by Corol. Prop. 22, and Prop. 24, pt. 4) is to seek our own profit. But in order to determine what reason prescribes as profitable, we had no regard to the eternity of the mind, which we did not recognise till we came to the Fifth Part. Therefore, although we were at that time ignorant that the mind is eternal, we considered as of primary importance those things which we have shown are related to strength of mind and generosity; and therefore, even if we were now ignorant of the eternity of the mind, we should consider those commands of reason as of primary importance. — Q.E.D.”

“*Schol.* — The creed of the multitude seems to be different from this; for most persons seem to believe that they are free in so far as it is allowed them to obey their lusts, and that they give up a portion of their rights, in so far as they are bound to live according to the commands of divine law. Piety, therefore, and religion, and absolutely all those things that are related to greatness of soul, they believe to be burdens which they hope to be able to lay aside after death hoping also to receive some reward for their bondage, that is to say, for their piety and religion. It is not merely this hope, however, but also and chiefly fear of dreadful punishments after death, by which they are induced to live according to the commands of divine law, that is to say, as far as their feebleness and impotent mind will permit; and if this hope and fear were not present to them, but if they, on the contrary, believed that minds perish with the body, and that there is no prolongation of life for miserable creatures exhausted with

the burden of their piety, they would return to ways of their own liking; they would prefer to let everything be controlled by their own passions, and to obey fortune rather than themselves.

“This seems to me as absurd as if a man, because he does not believe that he will be able to feed his body with good food to all eternity, should desire to satiate himself with poisonous and deadly drugs; or as if, because he sees that the mind is not eternal or immortal, he should therefore prefer to be mad and to live without reason, — absurdities so great that they scarcely deserve to be repeated.”

Nevertheless Spinoza can neither avoid the desire to know something about immortality, nor can he deny the importance of this knowledge. It must be confessed, too, that there are few men who can be satisfied with simple ignorance upon this subject, and all of us who are not capable of a violent wrench to our nature seek at some time or other to come to a conclusion with regard to it. The majority of mankind, the vast majority, including even the best and wisest, cannot reconcile themselves to the thought of a blank hereafter, and derive from their hope the strongest stimulus to work and to patience. It is not so much happiness in the ordinary sense of the word which is coveted, but continued life, continued thought, and continued progress through that great and gradual revelation which unfolds itself to us from birth to death, and is gradually unfolding itself to the world.

We cannot help feeling that it makes *some* difference if in a few more years we are no longer to be witnesses to the evolution of all that is now stirring amongst mankind, and our own development and ascent are to be suddenly arrested. It makes *some* difference if we believe that the experience, the self-mastery, the slowly-acquired knowledge, the slowly-reached reduction to harmony of what was chaotic are to be stopped, and not only stopped, but brought to nothing. Spinoza evidently could not believe it — that is certain; but when we try to understand what it was exactly which he did believe we find ourselves in difficulties. I trust I may be pardoned if, departing from the general plan of this preface, which was, not to give any complete account of Spinoza's philosophy, but merely to present so much of it as may induce a study of it, I attempt a somewhat more detailed examination of the propositions in which his teaching as to immortality is contained.

Two things, however, we must remember. In the first place, complete understanding is, from the very nature of the matter in hand, altogether

impossible. Obscurity must remain, and all that we can hope to do is to diminish it here and there. Secondly, we must recollect that our first duty is not to criticise our author but to comprehend him. The propositions which deal with immortality in express terms are somewhat abruptly introduced in the middle of the fifth part. We are told in the twenty-first proposition that the mind can neither imagine nor remember anything excepting so long as the body lasts. Then comes Prop. 22 —

“In God, nevertheless, there necessarily exists an idea which expresses the essence of this or that human body under the form of eternity.”

The demonstration being —

“God is not only the cause of the existence of this or that human body, but also of its essence (Prop. 25, pt. i), which, therefore, must necessarily be conceived through the essence of God itself (Ax. 4, pt. i), and by a certain eternal necessity (Prop. 16, pt. i). This conception, moreover, must necessarily exist in God (Prop. 3, pt. 2).— Q.E.D.”

We have to remark here, firstly, the meaning of the word essence. Essence, according to Def. 2, pt. 2, is

“that, which being given, the thing itself is necessarily posited, and being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken; or, in other words, that, without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which in its turn cannot be nor be conceived without the thing.”

Furthermore, in Schol. 2, Prop. 10, pt. 2, Spinoza tells us that

“I did not say that that pertains to the essence of a thing without which the thing can neither be nor can be conceived; and my reason is, that individual things cannot be nor be conceived without God, and yet God does not pertain to their essence. I have rather, therefore, said that the essence of a thing is necessarily that which being given, the thing is posited, and being taken away, the thing is taken away, or that, without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which in its turn cannot be nor be conceived without the thing.”

And again we are told in the corollary to the same proposition that

“The essence of man consists of certain modifications of the attributes of God; for the Being of substance does not pertain to the

essence of man (Prop. 10, pt. 2). It is therefore something (Prop. 15, pt. 1) which is in God, and which without God can neither be nor be conceived, or (Corol. Prop. 25, pt. 1), an affection or mode which expresses the nature of God in a certain and determinate manner.”

We have also to note that the phrase “under the form of eternity,” in the 22d Prop., above quoted, has no reference whatever to time. It does not mean indefinite prolongation of time. Spinoza is express on this point. “By eternity,” he says (Def. 8, pt. 1),

“I understand existence itself, so far as it is conceived necessarily to follow from the definition alone of an eternal thing. “

“*Explanation*— For such an existence is conceived as eternal truth, and also as the essence of the thing. It therefore cannot be explained by duration or time, even if the duration be conceived without beginning or end.”

Spinoza believes, therefore, in Being which has no relation to time, and he illustrates his doctrine by the example of a truth of pure thought like mathematics or geometry.

The idea also which expresses the essence of the human body is the mind. “The object of the idea constituting the human mind, “according to Prop. 13, pt. 2, “is a body, or a certain mode of extension actually existing and nothing else.”

We have got thus far, therefore, that the idea of this or that human body, that is to say, the mind of this or that human body exists in God under the form of eternity, inasmuch as each mind (Corol. Prop. 10, pt. 2) is a modification of some attribute of God, and expresses the nature of God in a certain and determinate manner.

We now advance to the 23rd Proposition —

“ The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal.

“*Demonst.* — In God there necessarily exists a conception or idea which expresses the essence of the human body (Prop. 22, pt. s). This conception or idea is therefore necessarily something which pertains to the essence of the human mind (Prop. 13, pt. 2). But we ascribe to the human mind no duration which can be limited by time, unless in

so far as it expresses the actual existence of the body, which is explained through duration, and which can be limited by time, that is to say (Corol. Prop. 8, pt. 2), we cannot ascribe duration to the mind except. while the body exists.

“But nevertheless, since the something is that which is conceived by a certain eternal necessity through the essence itself of God (Prop. 22, pt. 5), this something which pertains to the essence of the mind will necessarily be eternal.— Q.E.D.”

Perhaps this somewhat abstruse demonstration will be better understood if we exhibit it in successive steps, slightly altering the terminology.

- In God there is necessarily an idea of the essence of this or that human mind.
- This idea has an existence in time only in so far as the body exists in time.
- Nevertheless the idea exists in God by a certain eternal necessity, and is explained through His essence.
- Therefore the idea of this or that human mind is eternal.

There is no thought here of bodily immortality in the ordinary sense of the words. It strikes us as strange that Spinoza should use the words *essentia corporis* instead of *mens*, but this is explained if we recollect that according to the ethic the mind is the idea of the body. “The object of the idea constituting the human mind,” says Prop. 13, pt. 2, “is a body.” The scholium to Prop. 23, pt. 5, is as follows —

“This idea which expresses the essence of the body under the form of eternity is, as we have said, a certain mode of thought which pertains to the essence of the mind, and is necessarily eternal. It is impossible, nevertheless, that we should recollect that we existed before the body, because there are no traces of any such existence in the body, and also because eternity cannot be defined by time, or have any relationship to it. Nevertheless we feel and know by experience that we are eternal. For the mind is no less sensible of those things which it conceives through intelligence than of those which it remembers, for demonstrations are the eyes of the mind by which it sees and observes things. Although, therefore, we do not recollect that we

existed before the body, we feel that our mind, in so far as it involves the essence of the body under the form of eternity, is eternal, and that this existence of the mind cannot be limited by time nor explained by duration. Only in so far, therefore, as it involves the actual existence of the body can the mind be said to possess duration, and its existence be limited by a fixed time, and so far only has it the power of determining\* the existence of things in time, and of conceiving them under the form of duration.”

We must not suppose that the phrase “we feel and know by experience that we are eternal” is mere sentiment, or signifies an unaccountable impression that we are immortal. The eyes of the mind are demonstrations. They are the mind, as the eyes are the body, and through them the mind becomes aware of eternal truth; through them is eternal truth admitted to the mind to form a part of it, and through them does the mind know its relationship to truth which has nothing to do with time.

The 38th, 39th, and 40th Propositions again take up the same subject. The 38th Proposition is to this effect —

“The more objects the mind understands by the second and third kinds of knowledge, the less it suffers from those affects which are evil, and the less it fears death.”

And the scholium is —

“ We are thus enabled to understand that which I touched upon in Schol. Prop. 39, pt. 4, and which I promised to explain in this part, namely, that death is by so much the less injurious to us as the clear and distinct knowledge of the mind is greater, and consequently as the mind loves God more. Again, since (Prop. 27, pt. S), from the third kind of knowledge there arises the highest possible peace, it follows that it is “ possible for the human mind to be of such a nature that that part of it which we have shown perishes with its body (Prop. 21, pt. 5), in comparison with the part of it which remains, is of no consequence. But more fully upon this subject presently.”

The 39th Proposition is —

“He who possesses a body fit for many things possesses a mind of which the greater part is eternal,” the proof being that the possessor of such a body is least agitated by affects which are evil; can consequently arrange and concatenate the affections of the body

according to the order of the intellect; can therefore cause all the affections of the body to be related to God's idea, and so attain a love to God which must occupy or form the greatest part of the mind. He has a mind therefore, the greatest part of which is eternal."

The 40th Proposition with its corollary is as follows —

"The more perfection a thing possesses, the more it acts and the less it suffers, and conversely the more it acts the more perfect it is."

*Demonst.* — The more perfect a thing is, the more reality it possesses (Def. 6, pt. 2), and consequently (Prop. 3, pt. 3 with the Schol.) the more it acts and the less it suffers. Inversely also it may be demonstrated in the same way that the more a thing acts the more perfect it is.— Q.E.D."

*Corol.* — Hence it follows that that part of the mind which abides, whether great or small, is more perfect than the other part. For the part of the mind which is eternal (Props. 23 and 29, pt. 5) is the intellect, through which alone we are said to act (Prop. 3, pt. 3), but that part which, as we have shown, perishes, is the imagination itself (Prop. 21, pt. 5), through which alone we are said to suffer (Prop. 3, pt. 3, and the general definition of the affects). Therefore (Prop. 40, pt. 5) that part which abides, whether great or small, is more perfect than the latter. — Q.E.D."

To sum up. The essence of this or that human body being a modification of this or that attribute of God expressing His nature in a certain determinate manner exists in Him under the form of eternity; that is to say, the idea, of which this or that human body is the object is eternal. What then, more exactly, is that idea, that part which is eternal or which is not expressed by duration? It is what the mind knows by the second and third kind of knowledge, by reason and by intuition. It is the intellect as distinguished from the imagination which perishes. It is that through which we are active as distinguished from that through which we are subject to passion.

Such is Spinoza's teaching. Although it becomes more intelligible like many other difficulties when it is fairly exhibited, it is still abstruse and many questions arise. The difficulties lie in the conception of an eternity in which there is no time, no succession, and in the conception also of the body as the object of the mind.

With regard to eternity, the Christian religion is at one with Spinoza. God, says the *Larger Catechism*, is “eternal, *unchangeable*, incomprehensible.” “Nothing,” adds the *Confession of Faith*, “is to Him contingent or “uncertain ... in His sight all things are open and “manifest . . . He hath not decreed anything because “He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to “pass upon such conditions.” Here we have obviously a conception of a Being in whom there is no before or after, and to whom a million years hence is as truly present as to-day. The Christian religion is in truth full of these mysteries which we mouth glibly enough, but when they are originally presented to us and in different language we exclaim against them as absurdities.

With regard to the second difficulty, it is one which is carried over from Spinoza’s assumption of the unity of body and mind. To him they are one and the same thing considered now under the attribute of thought and now under the attribute of extension. We cannot see why, if this be so, the idea of the body should only include the active intellect. When, however, we hear simply that the active intellect is immortal and increases in immortality as it knows more things by the second and third kinds of knowledge we are on firmer ground. Spinoza affirms an immortality of degrees; the soul which is most of a soul being least under the dominion of death. Every adequate idea gained, every victory achieved by the intellectual part of us, is the addition of something permanent to us. Surely no nobler incentive to the highest aims and the most strenuous exertion has ever been offered to the world. Every deed of self-denial done in secret, every conviction wrought in secret, laboriously strengthened and sharpened into distinct definition by diligent practice, is recorded in a Book for ever with no possibility of mistake or erasure.

*William Hale White*



## ABBREVIATIONS

- ❖ Ax. ≡ Axiom
- ❖ Corol. ≡ Corollary
- ❖ Def. ≡ Definition
- ❖ Demonst. ≡ Demonstration
- ❖ Q.E.D. ≡ *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*, what was to be demonstrated (Latin), or, for physics students, *Quite Easily Done*
- ❖ Pt. ≡ Part
- ❖ Post. ≡ Postulate
- ❖ Prop. ≡ Proposition
- ❖ Schol. ≡ Scholium
- ❖ &c. ≡ Et Cetera

## LATIN QUOTATIONS

The following expressions appear in Latin in the text:

- *anima pathema* ≡ Affect — 153
- *animositas* ≡ strength of mind — 139
- *ad infinitum* ≡ again and again, forever — 16, 26, 29, 50, 51, 57, 60, 71, 72, 84, 162, 206
- *a priori* ≡ from the earlier, theoretical knowledge — 11
- *a posteriori* ≡ from the latter, experiential knowledge — 11
- *cum suo ideato (Lat.)* ≡ with its idea — 3
- *denominationes intrinsecas* ≡ intrinsic denomination, referring to a things own's properties — 44
- *finem indigentice et finem assimilationis* ≡ *the end of want and the end of assimilation* — 37
- *reductio ad absurdum* ≡ reduce to absurdity, logical argument to show the fallacy of a thesis — 5
- *reductio ad ignorantiam* ≡ argument from ignorance, a logical argument to show the fallacy of a thesis — 37

~ XXXV ~

- *rem cogitantem* ≡ the thinking thing (i.e. intellectual) — 13
- *rem extensam* ≡ the extended thing (i.e. physical) — 13
- *idea Dei* ≡ the idea of God (or God's idea) — 49, 231
- *Speremus pariter, pariter metuamus amantes; Ferreus est, aliquis, quod sinit alter, amat.* [≡ *Ferreus est, aliquis, quod sinit alter, amat.* ... *Speremus pariter, pariter metuamus amantes*] ≡ Let us hope that while we fear lovers, one is strong and allows the other in love; a quotation from Ovid's *Amores*, Liber secundus, XIX, with the order of phrases changed by Spinoza — 118
- *secundum fieri*, or, *causalitas / causa secundum fieri* ≡ causality with respect to becoming (coming into being), a medieval scholastic term — 52
- *secundum esse*, or, *causalitas / causa secundum esse* ≡ causality with respect to being, a medieval scholastic term.— 52
- *Video proboque, deteriora sequor* ≡ I see the better way and approve it, but I follow the worse way, a Latin proverb — 170
- *Vice versa* ≡ the other way around — 32, 37, 178, 223, 86, 159

**ETHICS**

**First Part**

**OF GOD**

~ 1 ~

## DEFINITIONS

I. By **cause of itself**, I understand that, whose essence involves existence; or that, whose nature cannot be conceived unless existing.

II. That thing is called **finite in its own kind** (*in suo genere*) which can be limited by another thing of the same nature. For example, a body is called finite, because we always conceive another which is greater. So a thought is limited by another thought; but a body is not limited by a thought, nor a thought by a body.

III. By **substance**, I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; in other words, that, the conception of which does not need the conception of another thing from which it must be formed.

IV. By **attribute**, I understand that which the intellect perceives of substance, as if constituting its essence.

V. By **mode**, I understand the affections of substance, or that which is in another thing through which also it is conceived.

VI. By **God**, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence.

*Explanation.* — I say absolutely infinite but not infinite in its own kind (*in suo genere*); for of whatever is infinite only in its own kind (*in suo genere*), we can deny infinite attributes; but to the essence of that which is absolutely infinite pertains whatever expresses essence and involves no negation.

VII. That thing is called **free** which exists from the necessity of its own nature alone, and is determined to action by itself alone. That thing, on the other hand, is called necessary, or rather compelled,

which by another is determined to existence and action in a fixed and prescribed manner.

VIII. By **eternity**, I understand existence itself, so far as it is conceived necessarily to follow from the definition alone of an eternal thing.

*Explanation.* — For such an existence is conceived as eternal truth; and also as the essence of the thing. It cannot therefore be explained by duration or time, even if the duration be conceived without beginning or end.

## AXIOMS

I. Everything which is, is either in itself or in another.

II. That which cannot be conceived through another must be conceived through itself.

III. From a given determinate cause an effect necessarily follows; and, on the other hand, if no determinate cause be given, it is impossible that an effect can follow.

IV. The knowledge (*cognitio*) of an effect depends upon and involves the knowledge of the cause.

V. Those things which have nothing mutually in common with one another cannot through one another be mutually understood, that is to say, the conception of the one does not involve the conception of the other.

VI. A true idea must agree with that of which it is the idea (*cum suo ideato*).

VII. The essence of that thing which can be conceived as not existing does not involve existence.

# OF GOD

**PROP. I/1.** — *Substance is by its nature prior to its affections.*

*Demonst.* — This is evident from Defs. 3 and 5.

**PROP. II/2.** — *Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common with one another.*

*Demonst.* — This is also evident from Def. 3. For each substance must be in itself and must be conceived through itself, that is to say, the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. III/3.** — *If two things have nothing in common with one another, one cannot be the cause of the other.*

*Demonst.* — If they have nothing mutually in common with one another, they cannot (Ax. 5) through one another be mutually understood, and therefore (Ax. 4) one cannot be the cause of the other. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. IV/4.** — *Two or more distinct things are distinguished from one another, either by the difference of the attributes of the substances, or by the difference of their affections.*

*Demonst.* — Everything which is, is either in itself or in another (Ax. 1) that is to say (Defs. 3 and 5), outside the intellect there is nothing but substances and their affections. There is nothing therefore outside the intellect by which a number of things can be distinguished one from another, but substances or (which is the same thing by Def. 4) their attributes and their affections. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. V/5.** — *In nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute.*

*Demonst.* — If there were two or more distinct substances, they must be distinguished one from the other by difference of

attributes or difference of affections (Prop. 4). If they are distinguished only by difference of attributes, it will be granted that there is but one substance of the same attribute. But if they are distinguished by difference of affections, since substance is prior by nature to its affections (Prop. 1), the affections therefore being placed on one side, and the substance being considered in itself, or, in other words (Def. 3 and Ax. 6), truly considered, it cannot be conceived as distinguished from another substance, that is to say (Prop. 4), there cannot be two or more substances, but only one possessing the same nature or attribute. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. VI/6.** — *One substance cannot be produced by another substance.*

*Demonst.* — There cannot in nature be two substances of the same attribute (Prop. 5), that is to say (Prop. 2), two which have anything in common with one another. And therefore (Prop. 3) one cannot be the cause of the other, that is to say, one cannot be produced by the other. — Q.E.D.

*Corol.* — Hence it follows that there is nothing by which substance can be produced, for in nature there is nothing but substances and their affections (as is evident from Ax. 1 and Defs. 3 and 5). But substance cannot be produced by substance (Prop. 6). Therefore absolutely there is nothing by which substance can be produced. — Q.E.D.

*Another Demonst.* — This Corollary is demonstrated more easily by the *reductio ad absurdum*. For if there were anything by which substance could be produced, the knowledge of substance would be dependent upon the knowledge of its cause (Ax. 4), and therefore (Def. 3) it would not be substance.

**PROP. VII/7.** — *It pertains to the nature of substance to exist.*

*Demonst.* — There is nothing by which substance can be produced (Corol., Prop. 6). It will therefore be the cause of itself that is to say (Def. 1), its essence necessarily involves existence, or in other words it pertains to its nature to exist — Q.E.D.

**PROP. VIII/8.** — *Every substance is necessarily infinite.*



*Demonst.* — Substance which has only one attribute cannot exist except as one substance (Prop. 5) and the nature of this one substance it pertains to exist (Prop. 7). It must therefore from its nature exist as finite or infinite. But it cannot exist as finite substance, for (Def. 2) it must (if finite) be limited by another substance of the same nature, which also must necessarily exist (Prop. 7), and therefore there would be two substances of the same attribute, which is absurd (Prop. 5). It exists therefore as infinite substance. — Q.E.D.

*Schol. 1.* — Since finiteness is in truth partly negation, and infinitude absolute affirmation of existence of some kind, it follows from Prop. 7 alone that all substance must be infinite.

*Schol. 2.* — I fully expect that those who judge things confusedly, and who have not been accustomed to cognise things through their first causes, will find it difficult to comprehend the demonstration of the 7th Proposition, since they do not distinguish between the modifications of substances and substances themselves, and are ignorant of the manner in which things are produced. Hence it comes to pass that they erroneously ascribe to substances a beginning like that which they see belongs to natural things; for those who are ignorant of the true causes of things confound everything, and without any mental repugnance represent trees speaking like men, or imagine that men are made out of stones as well as begotten from seed, and that all forms can be changed the one into the other. So also those who confound human nature with the divine, readily attribute to God human affects,<sup>1</sup> especially so long as they are ignorant of the manner in which affects are produced in the mind. But if men would attend to the nature of substance, they could not entertain a single doubt of the truth of Proposition 7; indeed this proposition would be considered by all to be axiomatic, and reckoned amongst common notions. For by “substance” would be understood that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, or, in other words, that, the knowledge of

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<sup>1</sup>*Affectus* is translated by “affect” and *affectio* by “affection.” There seems to be no other way in the English language of marking the relationship of the two words and perceiving their exact meaning. *Affectus* has sometimes been translated “passion,” but Spinoza uses *passio* for passion and means something different from *affectus*. See Def. III. part 3.

which does not need the knowledge of another thing. But by “modifications” would be understood those things which are in another thing — those things, the conception of which is formed from the conception of the thing in which they are.

Hence we can have true ideas of non-existent modifications, since although they may not actually exist outside the intellect, their essence nevertheless is so comprehended in something else, and that they may be conceived through it. But the truth of substances is not outside the intellect unless in the substances themselves, because they are conceived through themselves. If anyone, therefore, were to say that he possessed a clear and distinct, that is to say, a true idea of substance, and that he nevertheless doubted whether such a substance exists, he would forsooth be in the same position as if he were to say that he had a true idea and nevertheless doubted whether or not it was false (as is evident to anyone who pays a little attention). Similarly if any one were to affirm that substance is created, he would affirm at the same time that a false idea had become true, and this is a greater absurdity than can be conceived.

It is therefore necessary to admit that the existence of substance, like its essence, is an eternal truth. Hence a demonstration (which I have thought worthwhile to append) by a different method is possible, showing that there are not two substances possessing the same nature. But in order to prove this methodically it is to be noted:

1. That the true definition of any one thing neither involves nor expresses anything except the nature of the thing defined. From which it follows, 2. That a definition does not involve or express any certain number of individuals, since it expresses nothing but the nature of the thing defined. For example, the definition of a triangle expresses nothing but the simple nature of a triangle, and not any certain number of triangles.

3. It is to be observed that of every existing thing there is some certain cause by reason of which it exists.

4. Finally, it is to be observed that this cause, by reason of which a thing exists, must either be contained in the nature itself and

definition of the existing thing (simply because it pertains to the nature of the thing to exist), or it must exist outside the thing.

This being granted, it follows that if a certain number of individuals exist in nature, there must necessarily be a cause why those individuals, and neither more nor fewer, exist. If, for example, there are twenty men in existence (whom, for the sake of greater clearness, I suppose existing at the same time, and that no others existed before them), it will not be sufficient, in order that we may give a reason why twenty men exist, to give a cause for human nature generally; but it will be necessary, in addition, to give a reason why neither more nor fewer than twenty exist, since, as we have already observed under the third head, there must necessarily be a cause why each exists.

But this cause (as we have shown under the second and third heads) cannot be contained in human nature itself, since the true definition of a man does not involve the number twenty, and therefore (by the fourth head) the cause why these twenty men exist, and consequently the cause why each exists, must necessarily lie outside each one; and therefore we must conclude generally that everything of such a nature that there can exist several individuals of it must necessarily have an external cause of their existence.

Since now it pertains to the nature of substance to exist (as we have shown in this scholium), its definition must involve necessary existence, and consequently from its definition alone its existence must be concluded. But from its definition (as we have already shown under the second and third heads) the existence of more substances than one cannot be deduced. It follows, therefore, from this definition necessarily that there cannot be two substances possessing the same nature.

**PROP. IX/9.** — *The more reality or being a thing possesses, the more attributes belong to it.*

*Demonst.* — This is evident from Def. 4.

**PROP. X/10.** — *Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself.*

*Demonst.* — For an attribute is that which the intellect perceives of substance, as if constituting its essence (Def. 4), and therefore (Def. 3) it must be conceived through itself. — Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — From this it is apparent that although two attributes may be conceived as really distinct — that is to say, one without the assistance of the other — we cannot nevertheless thence conclude that they constitute two beings or two different substances; for this is the nature of substance, that each of its attributes is conceived through itself, since all the attributes which substance possesses were always at the same time in itself, nor could one be produced by another; but each expresses the reality or being of substance.

It is very far from being absurd, therefore, to ascribe to one substance a number of attributes, since nothing in nature is clearer than that each being must be conceived under some one attribute, and the more reality or being it has, the more attributes it possesses expressing necessity or eternity and infinity. Nothing consequently is clearer than that Being absolutely infinite is necessarily defined, as we have shown (Def. 6), as Being which consists of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses a certain essence, eternal and infinite. But if anyone now asks by what sign, therefore, we may distinguish between substances, let him read the following propositions, which show that in nature only one substance exists, and that it is absolutely infinite. For this reason that sign would be sought for in vain.

**PROP. XI/11.** — *God or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence necessarily exists.*

*Demonst.* — If this be denied, conceive, if it be possible, that God does not exist. Then it follows (Ax. 7) that His essence does not involve existence. But this (Prop. 7) is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists. — Q.E.D.

*Another proof.* — For the existence or non-existence of everything there must be a reason or cause. For example, if a triangle exists, there must be a reason or cause why it exists; and if it does not exist, there must be a reason or cause which hinders its existence or which negates it. But this reason or cause must either be

contained in the nature of the thing or lie outside it. For example, the nature of the thing itself shows the reason why a square circle does not exist, the reason being that a square circle involves a contradiction. And the reason, on the other hand, why substance exists follows from its nature alone, which involves existence (see Prop. 7).

But the reason why a circle or triangle exists or does not exist is not drawn from their nature, but from the order of corporeal nature, generally; for from that it must follow, either that a triangle necessarily exists, or that it is impossible for it to exist. But this is self-evident. Therefore it follows that if there be neither cause nor reason which hinders a thing from existing, it exists necessarily. If, therefore, there be neither reason nor cause which hinders God from existing, or which negates His existence, we must conclude absolutely that He necessarily exists. But if there be such a reason or cause, it must be either in the nature itself of God or must lie outside it, that is to say, in another substance of another nature. For if the reason lay in a substance of the same nature, the existence of God would be by this very fact admitted. But substance possessing another nature could have nothing in common with God (Prop. 2), and therefore could not give Him existence nor negate it.

Since, therefore, the reason or cause which could negate the divine existence cannot be outside the divine nature, it will necessarily, supposing that the divine nature does not exist, be in His nature itself, which would therefore involve a contradiction. But to affirm this of the Being absolutely infinite and consummately perfect is absurd.

Therefore neither in God nor outside God is there any cause or reason which can negate His existence, and therefore God necessarily exists. — Q.E.D.

*Another proof.* — Inability to exist is impotence, and, on the other hand, ability to exist is power, as is self-evident. If, therefore, there is nothing which necessarily exists excepting things finite, it follows that things finite are more powerful than the absolutely infinite Being, and this (as is self-evident) is absurd; therefore either nothing exists or Being absolutely infinite also necessarily exists. But we ourselves exist, either in ourselves or in something else

which necessarily exists (Ax. 1 and Prop. 7). Therefore the Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, (Def. 6), God, necessarily exists. — Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — In this last demonstration I wished to prove the existence of God *a posteriori*, in order that the demonstration might be the more easily understood, and not because the existence of God does not follow *a priori* from the same grounds. For since ability to exist is power, it follows that the more reality belongs to the nature of anything, the greater is the power for existence it derives from itself; and it also follows, therefore, that the Being absolutely infinite, or God, has from Himself an absolutely infinite power of existence, and that He therefore necessarily exists.

Many persons, nevertheless, will perhaps not be able easily to see the force of this demonstration, because they have been accustomed to contemplate those things alone which flow from external causes, and they see also that those things which are quickly produced from these causes, that is to say, which easily exist, easily perish, whilst, on the other hand, they adjudge those things to be of a more difficult origin, that is to say, their existence is not so easy, to which they conceive more properties pertain. In order that these prejudices may be removed,

I do not need here to show in what respect this saying, “What is quickly made quickly perishes,” is true, nor to inquire whether, looking at the whole of nature, all things are or are not equally easy. But this only it will be sufficient for me to observe, that I do not speak of things which are produced by external causes, but that I speak of substances alone which (Prop. 6) can be produced by no external cause. For whatever perfection or reality those things may have which are produced by external causes, whether they consist of many parts or of few, they owe it all to the virtue of an external cause, and therefore their existence springs from the perfection of an external cause alone and not from their own.

On the other hand, whatever perfection substance has is due to no external cause. Therefore its existence must follow from its nature alone, and is therefore nothing else than its essence. Perfection consequently does not prevent the existence of a thing, but establishes it; imperfection, on the other hand, prevents existence,

and so of no existence can we be more sure than of the existence of the Being absolutely infinite or perfect, that is to say, God. For since His essence shuts out all imperfection and involves absolute perfection, for this very reason all cause of doubt concerning its existence is taken away, and the highest certainty concerning it is given, — a truth which I trust will be evident to anyone who bestows only moderate attention.

**PROP. XII/12.** — *No attribute of substance can be truly conceived from which it follows that substance can be divided.*

*Demonst.* — For the parts into which substance thus conceived would be divided will or will not retain the nature of substance. If they retain it, then (Prop. 8) each part will be infinite, and (Prop. 6) the cause of itself, and will consist of an attribute differing from that of any other part (Prop. 5), so that from one substance more substances could be formed, which (Prop. 6) is absurd. Moreover the parts (Prop. 2) would have nothing in common with their whole, and the whole (Def. 4 and Prop. 10) could be, and could be conceived without its parts, which no one will doubt to be an absurdity. But if the second case be supposed, namely, that the parts will not retain the nature of substance, then, since the whole substance might be divided into equal parts, it would lose the nature of substance and cease to be, which (Prop. 7) is absurd.

**PROP. XIII/13.** — *Substance absolutely infinite is indivisible.*

*Demonst.* — For if it were divisible, the parts into which it would be divided will or will not retain the nature of substance absolutely infinite. If they retain it, there will be a plurality of substances possessing the same nature, which (Prop. 5) is absurd. If the second case be supposed, then (as above), substance absolutely infinite can cease to be, which (Prop. 11) is also absurd.

*Corol.* — Hence it follows that no substance and consequently no bodily substance in so far as it is substance, is divisible.

*Schol.* — That substance is indivisible is more easily to be understood from this consideration alone, that the nature of substance cannot be conceived unless as infinite, and that by a part



of substance nothing else can be understood than finite substance, which (Prop. 8) involves a manifest contradiction.

**PROP. XIV/14.** — *Besides God, no substance can be nor can be conceived.*

*Demonst.* — Since God is Being absolutely infinite, of whom no attribute can be denied which expresses the essence of substance (Def. 6), and since He necessarily exists (Prop. 11), it follows that if there were any substance besides God, it would have to be explained by some attribute of God, and thus two substances would exist possessing the same attribute, which (Prop. 5) is absurd; and therefore there cannot be any substance excepting God, and consequently none other can be conceived. For if any other could be conceived, it would necessarily be conceived as existing, and this (by the first part of this demonstration) is absurd. Therefore besides God no substance can be, nor can be conceived. — Q.E.D.

*Corol. 1.* — Hence it follows with the greatest clearness, firstly, that God is one, that is to say (Def. 6), in nature there is but one substance, and it is absolutely infinite, as (Schol. Prop. 10) we have already intimated.

*Corol. 2.* — It follows, secondly, that the thing extended (*rem extensam*) and the thing thinking (*rem cogitantem*) are either attributes of God or (Ax. 1) affections of the attributes of God.

**PROP. XV/15.** — *Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God.*

*Demonst.* — Besides God there is no substance, nor can any be conceived (Prop. 14), that is to say (Def. 3), nothing which is in itself and is conceived through itself. But modes (Def. 5) can neither be nor be conceived without substance; therefore in the divine nature only can they be, and through it alone can they be conceived. But besides substances and modes nothing is assumed (Ax. 1). Therefore nothing can be or be conceived without God. — Q.E.D.

*Schol.*— There are those who imagine God to be like a man, composed of body and soul and subject to passions; but it is clear

enough from what has already been demonstrated how far off men who believe this are from the true knowledge of God. But these I dismiss, for all men who have in any way looked into the divine nature deny that God is corporeal. That He cannot be so they conclusively prove by showing that by "body" we understand a certain quantity possessing length, breadth, and depth, limited by some fixed form; and that to attribute these to God, a being absolutely infinite, is the greatest absurdity. But yet at the same time, from other arguments by which they endeavour to confirm their proof, they clearly show that they remove altogether from the divine nature substance itself corporeal or extended, affirming that it was created by God. By what divine power, however, it could have been created they are altogether ignorant; so that it is clear they do not understand what they themselves say. But I have demonstrated, at least in my own opinion, with sufficient clearness (see Corol. Prop. 6 and Schol. 2, Prop. 8), that no substance can be produced or created by another. Moreover (Prop. 14), we have shown that besides God no substance can be nor can be conceived; and hence we have concluded that extended substance is one of the infinite attributes of God.

But for the sake of a fuller explanation, I will refute my adversaries' arguments, which, taken altogether, come to this. First, that corporeal substance, in so far as it is substance, consists, as they suppose, of parts, and therefore they deny that it can be infinite, and consequently that it can pertain to God. This they illustrate by many examples, one or two of which I will adduce. If corporeal substance, they say, be infinite, let us conceive it to be divided into two parts; each part, therefore, will be either finite or infinite. If each part be finite, then the infinite is composed of two finite parts, which is absurd. If each part be infinite, there is then an infinite twice as great as another infinite, which is also absurd. Again, if infinite quantity be measured by equal parts of a foot each, it must contain an infinite number of such parts, and similarly if it be measured by equal parts of an inch each; and therefore one infinite number will be twelve times greater than another infinite number. Lastly, if from one point of any infinite quantity it be imagined that two lines, AB, AC, which at first are at a certain and determinate distance from one another, be infinitely extended, it is plain that the distance between B and C will be continually increased, and at length from being determinate will be indeterminable. Since

therefore these absurdities follow, as they think, from supposing quantity to be infinite, they conclude that corporeal substance must be finite, and consequently cannot pertain to the essence of God.



A second argument is assumed from the absolute perfection of God. For God, they say, since He is a being absolutely perfect, cannot suffer; but corporeal substance 'since it is divisible' can suffer: it follows, therefore, that it does not pertain to God's essence. These are the arguments which I find in authors, by which they endeavour to show that corporeal substance is unworthy of the divine nature, and cannot pertain to it. But anyone who will properly attend will discover that I have already answered these arguments, since the sole foundation of them is the supposition that bodily substance consists of parts, a supposition which (Prop. 12 and Corol. Prop. 13) I have shown to be absurd.

Moreover, if any one will rightly consider the matter, he will see that all these absurdities (supposing that they are all absurdities, a point which I will now take for granted), from which these authors attempt. to draw the conclusion that substance extended is finite, do not by any means follow from the supposition that quantity is infinite, but from the supposition that infinite quantity is measurable, and that it is made up of finite parts. Therefore, from the absurdities to which this leads nothing can be concluded, excepting that infinite quantity is not measurable, and that it cannot be composed of finite parts. But this is what we have already demonstrated (Prop. 12, &c.), and the shaft therefore which is aimed at us turns against those who cast it.

If, therefore, from these absurdities anyone should attempt to conclude that substance extended must be finite, he would, forsooth, be in the position of the man who supposes a circle to have the properties of a square, and then concludes that it has no centre, such that all the lines drawn from it to the circumference are equal. For corporeal substance, which cannot be conceived except as infinite, one and indivisible (Props. 8, 5, and 12), is conceived by those against whom I argue to be composed of finite

parts, and to be multiplex and divisible, in order that they may prove it finite. Just in the same way others, after they have imagined a line to consist of points, know how to discover many arguments, by which they show that a line cannot be divided *ad infinitum*; and indeed it is not less absurd to suppose that corporeal substance is composed of bodies or parts than to suppose that a body is composed of surfaces, surfaces of lines, and that lines, finally, are composed of points. Everyone who knows that clear reason is infallible ought to admit this, and especially those who deny that a vacuum can exist.

For if corporeal substance could be so divided that its parts could be really distinct, why could not one part be annihilated, the rest remaining, as before, connected with one another? And why must all be so fitted together that there can be no vacuum? For of things which are really distinct the one from the other, one can be and remain in its own position without the other. Since, therefore, it is supposed that there is no vacuum in nature (about which I will speak at another time), but that all the parts must be united, so that no vacuum can exist, it follows that they cannot be really distinguished; that is to say, that corporeal substance, in so far as it is substance, cannot be divided. If, nevertheless, any one should now ask why there is a natural tendency to consider quantity as capable of division, I reply that quantity is conceived by us in two ways; abstractly or superficially; that is to say, as we imagine it, or else as substance, in which way it is conceived by the intellect alone.

If therefore, we regard quantity (as we do very often and easily) as it exists in the imagination, we find it to be finite, divisible, and composed of parts; but if we regard it as it exists in the intellect, and conceive it in so far as it is substance, which is very difficult, then, as we have already sufficiently demonstrated, we find it to be infinite, one, and indivisible. This will be plain enough to all who know how to distinguish between the imagination and the intellect, and more especially if we remember that matter is everywhere the same, and that, except in so far as we regard it as affected in different ways, parts are not distinguished in it; that is to say, they are distinguished with regard to mode, but not with regard to reality. For example, we conceive water as being divided, in so far as it is water, and that its parts are separated from one another; but

in so far as it is corporeal substance we cannot thus conceive it, for as such it is neither separated nor divided.

Moreover, water, in so far as it is water, is begotten and destroyed; but in so far as it is substance, it is neither begotten nor destroyed. By this reasoning I think that I have also answered the second argument, since that too is based upon the assumption that matter, considered as substance, is divisible and composed of parts. And even if what I have urged were not true, I do not know why matter should be unworthy of the divine nature, since (Prop. 14) outside God no substance can exist from which he divine nature could suffer. All things, I say, are in God, and everything which takes place takes place by the laws alone of the infinite nature of God, and follows (as I shall presently show) from the necessity of His essence.

Therefore in no way whatever can it be asserted that God suffers from anything, or that substance extended, even if it be supposed divisible, is unworthy of the divine nature, provided only it be allowed that it is eternal and infinite. But enough on this point for the present.

**PROP. XVI/16.** — *From the necessity of the divine nature infinite numbers of things in infinite ways (that is to say, all things which can be conceived by the infinite intellect) must follow.*

*Demonst.* — This proposition must be plain to everyone who considers that from the given definition of anything a number of properties necessarily following from it (that is to say, following from the essence of the thing itself) are inferred by the intellect, and just in proportion as the definition of the thing expresses a greater reality, that is to say, just in proportion as the essence of the thing defined involves a greater reality, will more properties be inferred. But the divine nature possesses absolutely infinite attributes (Def. 6), each one of which expresses infinite essence in its own kind (*in suo genere*), and therefore, from the necessity of the divine nature, infinite numbers of things in infinite ways (that is to say, all things which can be conceived by the infinite intellect) must necessarily follow. — Q.E.D.

*Corol. 1.* — Hence it follows that God is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under the infinite intellect.

*Corol. 2.* — It follows, secondly, that God is cause through Himself, and not through that which is contingent (*per accidens*).

*Corol. 3.* — It follows, thirdly, that God is absolutely the first cause.

**PROP. XVII/17.** — *God acts from the laws of His own nature only, and is compelled by no one.*

*Demonst.* — We have just shown (Prop. 16) that from the necessity, or (which is the same thing) from the laws only of the divine nature, infinite numbers of things absolutely follow and we have demonstrated (Prop. 15) that nothing can be, nor can be conceived, without God, but that all things are in God. Therefore, outside Himself, there can be nothing by which He may be determined or compelled to act; and therefore He acts from the laws of His own nature only, and is compelled by no one.— Q.E.D.

*Corol. 1.* — Hence it follows, firstly, that there is no cause, either external to God or within Him, which can excite Him to act except the perfection of His own nature.

*Corol. 2.* — It follows, secondly, that God alone is a free cause; for God alone exists from the necessity alone of His own nature (Prop. 11, and Corol. 1, Prop. 14), and acts from the necessity alone of His own nature (Prop. 17). Therefore (Def. 7) He alone is a free cause.— Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — There are some who think that God is a free cause because He can, as they think, bring about that those things which we have said follow from His nature — that is to say, those things which are in His power — should not be, or should not be produced by Him. But this is simply saying that God could bring about that it should not follow from the nature of a triangle that its three angles should be equal to two right angles, or that from a given cause an effect should not follow, which is absurd. But I shall show farther on, without the help of this proposition, that neither intellect nor will pertain to the nature of God.

I know, indeed, that there are many who think themselves able to demonstrate that intellect of the highest order and freedom of will both pertain to the nature of God, for they say that they know nothing more perfect which they can attribute to Him than that which is the chief perfection in ourselves. But although they conceive God as actually possessing the highest intellect, they nevertheless do not believe that He can bring about that all those things should exist which are actually in His intellect, for they think that by such a supposition they would destroy His power. If He had created, they say, all things which are in His intellect. He could have created nothing more, and this, they believe, does not accord with God's omnipotence; so then they prefer to consider God as indifferent to all things, and creating nothing excepting that which He has decreed to create by a certain absolute will. But I think that I have shown with sufficient clearness (Prop. 16) that from the supreme power of God, or from His infinite nature, infinite things in infinite ways, that is to say, all things, have necessarily flowed, or continually follow by the same necessity, in the same way as it follows from the nature of a triangle, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles. The omnipotence of God has therefore been actual from eternity and in the same actuality will remain to eternity. In this way the omnipotence of God, in my opinion, is far more firmly established.

My adversaries, indeed (if I may be permitted to speak plainly), seem to deny the omnipotence of God, inasmuch as they are forced to admit that He has in His mind an infinite number of things which might be created, but which, nevertheless He will never be able to create, for if He were to create all things which He has in His mind. He would, according to them, exhaust His omnipotence and make Himself imperfect. Therefore, in order to make a perfect God, they are compelled to make Him incapable of doing all those things to which His power extends, and anything more absurd than this, or more opposed to God's omnipotence, I do not think can be imagined.

Moreover — to say a word, too, here about the intellect and will which we commonly attribute to God — if intellect and will pertain to His eternal essence, these attributes cannot be understood in the sense in which men generally use them, for the intellect and will which could constitute His essence would have to differ entirely

from our intellect and will, and could resemble ours in nothing except in name. There could be no further likeness than that between the celestial constellation of the Dog and the animal which barks.

This I will demonstrate as follows. If intellect pertains to the divine nature, it cannot, like our intellect, follow the things which are its object (as many suppose), nor can it be simultaneous in its nature with them, since God is prior to all things in causality (Corol., 1. Prop. 16); but, on the contrary, the truth and formal essence of things is what it is, because as such it exists objectively in God's intellect. Therefore the intellect of God, in so far as it is conceived to constitute His essence, is in truth of the cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence, — a truth which seems to have been understood by those who have maintained that God's intellect, will and power are one and the same thing.

Since, therefore, God's intellect is the sole cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence (as we have already shown), it must necessarily differ from them with regard both to its essence and existence; for an effect differs from its cause precisely in that which it has from its cause. For example, one man is the cause of the existence but not of the essence of another, for the essence is an eternal truth; and therefore with regard to essence the two men may exactly resemble one another, but with regard to existence they must differ.

Consequently if the existence of one should perish, that of the other will not therefore perish; but if the essence of one could be destroyed and become false, the essence of the other would be likewise destroyed. Therefore a thing which is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of any effect must differ from that effect both with regard to its essence and with regard to its existence. But the intellect of God is the cause both of the essence and existence of our intellect; therefore the intellect of God, so far as it is conceived to constitute the divine essence, differs from our intellect both with regard to its essence and its existence, nor can it coincide with our intellect in anything except the name, which is what we essayed to prove. The same demonstration may be applied to the will, as any one may easily see for himself.



**PROP. XVIII/18.** — *God is the immanent, and not the transitive<sup>2</sup> cause of all things.*

*Demonst.* — All things which are, are in God and must be conceived through Him (Prop. 15), and therefore (Corol. 1, Prop. 16) He is the cause of the things which are in Himself. This is the first thing which was to be proved. Moreover, outside God there can be no substance (Prop. 14), that is to say (Def. 3), outside Him nothing can exist which is in itself. This was the second thing to be proved. God, therefore, is the immanent, but not the transitive cause of all things. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. XIX/19.** — *God is eternal, or, in other words, all His attributes are eternal.*

*Demonst.* — For God (Def. 6) is substance, which (Prop. 11) necessarily exists, that is to say (Prop. 7), a substance to whose nature it pertains to exist, or (which is the same thing) a substance from the definition of which it follows that it exists, and therefore (Def. 8) He is eternal. Again, by the attributes of God is to be understood that which (Def. 4) expresses the essence of the divine substance, that is to say, that which pertains to substance. It is this, I say, which the attributes themselves must involve. But eternity pertains to the nature of substance (Prop. 7). Therefore each of the attributes must involve eternity, and therefore all are eternal — Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — This proposition is as clear as possible, too, from the manner in which (Prop. 11) I have demonstrated the existence of God. From that demonstration I say it is plain that the existence of God, like His essence, is an eternal truth. Moreover (Prop. 19 of the “Principles of the Cartesian Philosophy”), I have demonstrated by another method the eternity of God, and there is no need to repeat the demonstration here.

**PROP. XX/20.** — *The existence of God and His essence are one and the same thing.*

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<sup>2</sup>*Transiens*, passing over and into from the outside.

God (Prop. 19) and all His attributes are eternal; that is to say (Def. 8), each one of His attributes expresses existence. The same attributes of God, therefore, which (Def. 4) explain the eternal essence of God, at the same time explain His eternal existence; that is to say, the very same thing which constitutes the essence of God constitutes at the same time His existence, and therefore His existence and His essence are one and the same thing. — Q.E.D.

*Corol. 1.* — Hence it follows, 1. That the existence of God, like His essence, is an eternal truth.

*Corol. 2.* — It follows, 2. That God is immutable, or (which is the same thing) all His attributes are immutable; for if they were changed as regards their existence, they must be changed also as regards their essence (Prop. 20); that is to say (as is self-evident), from being true, they would become false, which is absurd.

**PROP. XXI/21.** — *All things which follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must forever exist, and must be infinite; that is to say, through that same attribute they are eternal and infinite.*

*Demonst.* — Conceive, if possible (supposing that the truth of the proposition is denied), that in some attribute of God something which is finite and has a determinate existence or duration follows from the absolute nature of that attribute; for example, an idea of God in thought.<sup>3</sup>

But thought, since it is admitted to be an attribute of God, is necessarily (Prop. 11) in its nature infinite. But so far as it has the idea of God it is by supposition finite. But (Def. 2) it cannot be conceived as finite unless it be determined by thought itself. But it cannot be determined by thought itself so far as it constitutes the idea of God, for so far by supposition it is finite.

Therefore it must be determined by thought so far as it does not constitute the idea of God, but which, nevertheless (Prop. 11), necessarily exists. Thought, therefore, exists which does not form the idea of God, and therefore from its nature, in so far as it is

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<sup>3</sup>Not the idea which man forms either interpretation when taken of God, but rather one of God's ideas, without the context. — Tr.

absolute thought, the idea of God does not necessarily follow (for it is conceived as forming and as not forming the idea of God), which is contrary to the hypothesis. Therefore, if an idea of God in thought, or anything else in any attribute of God, follow from the necessity of the absolute nature of that attribute (for the demonstration being universal will apply in every case), that thing must necessarily be infinite, which was the first thing to be proved.

Again, that which thus follows from the necessity of the nature of any attribute cannot have a determinate duration. For, if the truth of this be denied, let it be supposed that in some attribute of God a thing exists which follows from the necessity of the nature of the attribute — for example, an idea of God in thought — and let it be supposed that at some time it has either not existed or will not exist. But since thought is supposed to be an attribute of God, it must exist both necessarily and unchangeably (Prop. 11, and Corol. 2, Prop. 20).

Therefore, beyond the limits of the duration of the idea of God (for it is supposed that at some time it has either not existed or will not exist), thought must exist without the idea of God; but this is contrary to hypothesis, for the supposition is that thought being given, the idea of God necessarily follows. Therefore neither an idea of God in thought, nor anything else which necessarily follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God, can have a determinate duration, but through the same attribute is eternal; which was the second thing to be proved. Observe that what we have affirmed here is true of everything which in any attribute of God necessarily follows from the absolute nature of God.

**PROP. XXII/22.** — *Whatever follows from any attribute of God, in so far as it is modified by a modification, which through the same attribute exists necessarily and infinitely, must also exist necessarily and infinitely.*

*Demonst.* — This proposition is demonstrated in the same manner as the preceding proposition.

**PROP. XXIII/23.** — *Every mode which exists necessarily and infinitely must necessarily follow either from the absolute nature of*

*some attribute of God, or from some attribute modified by a modification which exists necessarily and infinitely.*

*Demonst.* — Mode is that which is in something else through which it must be conceived (Def. 5), that is to say (Prop. 15), it is in God alone and by God alone can be conceived. If a mode, therefore, be conceived to exist necessarily and to be infinite, its necessary existence and infinitude must be concluded from some attribute of God or perceived through it, in so far as it is conceived to express infinitude and necessity of existence, that is to say (Def. 8), eternity, or, in other words (Def. 6 and Prop. 19), in so far as it is considered absolutely. A mode, therefore, which exists necessarily and infinitely must follow from the absolute nature of some attribute of God, either immediately (Prop. 21), or mediately through some modification following from His absolute nature, that is to say (Prop. 22), a modification which necessarily and infinitely exists. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. XXIV/24.** — *The essence of things produced by God does not involve existence.*

This is evident from the first Definition; for that thing whose nature (considered, that is to say, in itself) involves existence, is the cause of itself and exists from the necessity of its own. nature alone.

*Corol.*— Hence it follows that God is not only the cause of the commencement of the existence of things, but also of their continuance in existence, or, in other words (to use scholastic phraseology), God is the *causa essendi rerum*. For if we consider the essence of things, whether existing or non-existing, we discover that it neither involves existence nor duration, and therefore the essence of existing things cannot be the cause of their existence nor of their duration, but God only is the cause, to whose nature alone existence pertains (Corol. 1, Prop. 14).

**PROP. XXV/25.** — *God is not only the efficient cause of the existence of things, but also of their essence.*

*Demonst.*— Suppose that God is not the cause of the essence of things; then (Ax. 4) the essence of things can be conceived without

God, which (Prop. 15) is absurd. Therefore God is the cause of the essence of things. — Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — This proposition more clearly follows from Prop. 16. For from this proposition it follows that, from the existence of the divine nature, both the essence of things and their existence must necessarily be concluded, or, in a word, in the same sense in which God is said to be the cause of Himself He must be called the cause of all things. This will appear still more clearly from the following Corollary.

*Corol.*— Individual things are nothing but affections or modes of God's attributes, expressing those attributes in a certain and determinate manner. This is evident from Prop. 15 and Def. 5.

**PROP. XXVI/26.** — *A thing which has been determined to any action was necessarily so determined by God, and that which has not been thus determined by God cannot determine itself to action.*

*Demonst.* — That by which things are said to be determined to any action is necessarily something positive (as is self-evident); and therefore God, from the necessity of His nature, is the efficient cause both of its essence and of its existence (Props. 25 and 16), which was the first thing to be proved.

From this also the second part of the proposition follows most clearly. For if a thing which has not been determined by God could determine itself, the first part of the proposition would be false, and to suppose this possible is an absurdity, as we have shown.

**PROP. XXVII/27.** — *A thing which has been determined by God to any action cannot render itself indeterminate.*

*Demonst.* — This proposition is evident from the third Axiom.

**PROP. XXVIII/28.** — *An individual thing, or a thing which is finite and which has a determinate existence, cannot exist nor be determined to action unless it be determined to existence and action by another cause which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause cannot exist nor be determined to action unless*

*by another cause which is also finite and determined to existence and action, and so on ad infinitum.*

*Demonst.* — Whatever is determined to existence and action is thus determined by God (Prop. 26 and Corol. Prop. 24). But that which is finite and which has a determinate existence could not be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God, for whatever follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God is infinite and eternal (Prop. 21). The finite and determinate must therefore follow from God, or from some attribute of God, in so far as the latter is considered to be affected by some mode, for besides substance and modes nothing exists (Ax. 1, and Defs. 3 and 5), and modes (Corol. Prop. 25) are nothing but affections of God's attributes. But the finite and determinate could not follow from God, or from any one of His attributes, so far as that attribute is affected with a modification which is eternal and infinite (Prop. 22). It must, therefore, follow or be determined to existence and action by God, or by some attribute of God, in so far as the attribute is modified by a modification which is finite, and which has a determinate existence. This was the first thing to be proved. Again, this cause or this mode (by the same reasoning by which we have already demonstrated the first part of this proposition) must be determined by another cause, which is also finite, and which has a determinate existence, and this last cause (by the same reasoning) must, in its turn, be determined by another cause, and so on continually (by the same reasoning) *ad infinitum*.

*Schol.* — Since certain things must have been immediately produced by God, that is to say, those which necessarily follow from His absolute nature; these primary products being the mediating cause for those things which, nevertheless, without God can neither be nor can be conceived; it follows, firstly, that of things immediately produced by God. He is the proximate cause absolutely, and not in their own kind (*in suo genere*), as we say; for effects of God can neither be nor be conceived without their cause (Prop. 15, and Corol. Prop. 24).

It follows, secondly, that God cannot be properly called the remote cause of individual things, unless for the sake of distinguishing them from the things which He has immediately produced, or rather which follow from His absolute nature. For by a remote

cause we understand that which is in no way joined to its effect. But all things which are, are in God, and so depend upon Him that without Him they can neither be nor be conceived.

**PROP. XXIX/29.** — *In nature there is nothing contingent, but all things are determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and act in a certain manner.*

*Demonst.* — Whatever is, is in God (Prop. 15); but God cannot be called a contingent thing, for (Prop. 11) He exists necessarily and not contingently. Moreover, the modes of the divine nature have followed from it necessarily and not contingently (Prop. 16), and that too, whether it be considered absolutely (Prop. 21), or as determined to action in a certain manner (Prop. 27). But God is the cause of these modes, not only in so far as they simply exist (Corol. Prop. 24), but also (Prop. 26) in so far as they are considered as determined to any action. And if they are not determined by God (by the same proposition), it is an impossibility and not a contingency that they should determine themselves; and, on the other hand (Prop. 27), if they are determined by God, it is an impossibility and not a contingency that they should render themselves indeterminate. Wherefore all things are determined from a necessity of the divine nature, not only to exist, but to exist and act in a certain manner, and there is nothing contingent — Q.E.D.

*Schol.*— Before I go any farther, I wish here to explain, or rather to recall to recollection, what we mean by *natura naturans* and what by *natura naturata*.<sup>4</sup> For, from what has gone before, I think it is plain that by *natura naturans* we are to understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, or those attributes of substance which express eternal and infinite essence, that is to say (Corol. 1. Prop. 14, and Corol. 2, Prop. 1 7), God in so far as He is considered as a free cause. But by *natura naturata* I understand everything which follows from the necessity of the nature of God,

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<sup>4</sup> These are two expressions derived from a scholastic philosophy which strove to signify by the same verb the oneness of God and the world, and yet at the same time to mark by a difference of inflexion the same that there was not absolute identity. — Tr.

or of any one of God's attributes, that is to say, all the modes of God's attributes in so far as they are considered as things which are in God, and which without God can neither be nor can be conceived.

**PROP. XXX/30.** — *The actual intellect,<sup>5</sup> whether finite or infinite, must comprehend the attributes of God and the affections of God, and nothing else.*

*Demonst.* — A true idea must agree with that of which it is the idea (Ax. 6), that is to say (as is self-evident), that which is objectively contained in the intellect must necessarily exist in nature. But in nature (Corol., 1, Prop. 14) only one substance exists, namely, God, nor any affections (Prop. 15) excepting those which are in God, and which (by the same proposition) can neither be nor be conceived without God. Therefore the actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, must comprehend the attributes of God and the affections of God, and nothing else. — Q.E.D.

**PROP. XXXI/31.** — *The actual intellect, whether it be finite or infinite, together with the will, desire, love, &c., must be referred to the natura naturata and not to the natura naturans.*

*Demonst.* — For by the intellect (as is self-evident) we do not understand absolute thought, but only a certain mode of thought, which mode differs from other modes, such as desire, love, &c., and therefore (Def. 5) must be conceived through absolute thought, that is to say (Prop. 15 and Def. 6), it must be conceived through some attribute of God which expresses the eternal and infinite essence of thought in such a manner that without that attribute it can neither be nor can be conceived. Therefore (Schol. Prop. 29) the actual intellect, &c., must be referred to the *natura naturata*, and not to the *natura naturans*, in the same manner as all other modes of thought.— Q.E.D.

*Schol.* — I do not here speak of the actual intellect because I admit that any intellect potentially exists, but because I wish, in order that there may be no confusion, to speak of nothing excepting of that which we perceive with the utmost clearness, that is to say, the understanding itself, which we perceive as clearly as we perceive

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<sup>5</sup>Distinguished from potential intellect, Schol. Prop. 31. — Tr.



anything. For we can understand nothing through the intellect which does not lead to a more perfect knowledge of the understanding.

**PROP. XXXII/32.** — *The will cannot be called a free cause, but can only be called necessary.*

*Demonst.* — The will is only a certain mode of thought, like the intellect, and therefore (Prop. 28) no volition can exist or be determined to action unless it be determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so on *ad infinitum*. And if the will be supposed infinite, it must be determined to existence and action by God, not in so far as He is substance absolutely infinite, but in so far as He possesses an attribute which expresses the infinite and eternal essence of thought (Prop. 23). In whatever way, therefore, the will be conceived, whether as finite or infinite, it requires a cause by which it may be determined to existence and action, and therefore (Def. 7) it cannot be called a free cause, but only necessary or compelled. — Q.E.D.

*Corol. 1.* — Hence it follows, firstly, that God does not act from freedom of the will.

*Corol. 2.* — It follows, secondly, that will and intellect are related to the nature of God as motion and rest, and absolutely as all natural things, which (Prop. 29) must be determined by God to existence and action in a certain manner. For the will, like all other things, needs a cause by which it may be determined to existence and action in a certain manner, and although from a given will or intellect infinite things may follow, God cannot on his account be said to act from freedom of will, any more than He can be said to act from freedom of motion, or rest by reason of the things which follow from motion to rest (for from motion and rest infinite numbers of things follow). Therefore, will does not appertain to the ire of God more than other natural things, but is tied to it as motion and rest and all other things are tied to it; these all following, as we have shown, from necessity of the divine nature, and being determined by existence and action in a certain manner.