A

The Eternal Life of the Godhead as the Whole or the Construction of the Complete Idea of God

Point of Entry: The Distinction between Necessity and Freedom in God

[207] As with the coming time, God self-referentially [*fürsichtig*] shrouds the point of departure for the past beginning in dark night.[11] It is not given to everyone to know the end and it is given to few to see the primordial beginnings of life and it is given to even fewer to think through the whole of things from beginning to end. Imitation, rather than the inner drive, leads to a research that confuses the senses as if by an inevitable fate. Hence, inner fortitude is necessary in order to keep a firm hold of the interrelation of movement from beginning to end. But they would then like, where only the deed decides, to arbitrate everything with peaceful and general concepts and to represent a history in which, as in reality, scenes of war and peace, pain and joy, deliverance and danger alternate as a mere series of thoughts.

There is a light in this darkness. Just as according to the old and almost hackneyed phrase that the person is the world writ small, so the events of human life, from the deepest to their highest consummation, must accord with the events of life in general. Certainly one who could write completely the history of their own life would also have, in a small epitome, concurrently grasped the history of the cosmos. Most people turn away from what is concealed within themselves just as they turn away from the depths of the great life and

shy away from the glance into the [208] abysses of that past which are still in one just as much as the present.

All the more so and because I am conscious that I do not speak of something familiar or popular or of that which is in accord with what has been assumed, it seems necessary to me to recollect first and foremost the nature of all happenings, how everything begins in darkness, seeing that no one sees the goal, and so that a particular event is never intelligible by itself but rather that the whole entire transpired occurrence is intelligible. Then just as all history is not just experienced in reality or only in narration, it cannot be communicated, so to speak, all at once with a general concept. Whoever wants knowledge of history must accompany it along its great path, linger with each moment, and surrender to the gradualness of the development. The darkness of the spirit cannot be overcome suddenly or in one fell swoop. The world is not a riddle whose solution could be given with a single word. Its history is too elaborate to be brought, so to speak, as some seem to wish, to a few short, uncompleted propositions on a sheet of paper.

But to speak the truth, it is no less the case with true science than it is with history that there are no authentic propositions, that is, assertions that would have a value or an unlimited and universal validity in and for themselves or apart from the movement through which they are produced. Movement is what is essential to knowledge. When this element of life is withdrawn, propositions die like fruit removed from the tree of life. Absolute propositions, that is, those that are once and for all valid, conflict with the nature of true knowledge which involves progression. Let, then, the object of knowledge be A and then the first proposition that is asserted would be that "A = x is the case." Now if this is unconditionally valid, that is, that "A is always and exclusively only x," then the investigation is finished. There is nothing further to add to it. But as certainly as the investigation is a progressive kind, it is certain that "A = x" is only a proposition with a limited validity. It may be valid in the beginning, but as the investigation advances, it turns out that "A is not simply x." It is also y, and it is therefore "x + y." One errs here [209] when one does not have a concept of a kind of true science. They take the first proposition, "A = x," as absolute and then they perhaps get, or have in mind from somewhere else in experience, that it would be the case that "A = y." Then they immediately oppose the second proposition to the first instead of waiting until the incompleteness of the first proposition would demand, from itself, the advance to the second proposition. For they want to conceive of everything in one proposition, and so they must only grant nothing short of an absolute thesis and, in so doing, sacrifice science. For where there is no succession, there is no science.

From this it seems evident that in true science, each proposition has only a definite and, so to speak, local meaning, and that one who has withdrawn the determinate place and has made the proposition out to be something absolute

(dogmatic), either loses sense and meaning, or gets tangled up in contradictions. Then insofar as method is a kind of progression, it is clear that here method is inseparable from the being [*Wesen*] and, outside of this or without this, the matter is also lost. Whoever then believes that they may make the very last the very first and vice versa, or that they can reformulate the proposition that ought only be valid in a particular place into something general or unlimited, may thereby indeed arouse enough confusion and contradictions for the ignorant. But in so doing, they have not actually touched the matter itself, much less damaged it.

God is the oldest of beings—so Thales of Miletus is already purported to have judged. But the concept of God is of great, nay, of the very greatest, range, and is not to be expressed with a single word. Necessity and freedom are in God. Necessity is already recognized when a necessary existence is ascribed to God. To speak naturally, there is necessity insofar as it is before freedom, because a being must first exist before it could act freely. Necessity lies at the foundation of freedom and is in God itself what is first and oldest, insofar as such a distinction can take place in God, which will have to be cleared up through further consideration. Even though the God who is necessary is the God who is free, both are still one and the same. What [210] is a being from nature and what is as such through freedom are completely different. If God were already everything from necessity, then God would be nothing through freedom. And yet God is, according to general consensus, the most voluntaristic being.

Everyone recognizes that God would not be able to create beings outside of itself from a blind necessity in God's nature, but rather with the highest voluntarism. To speak even more exactly, if it were left to the mere capacity of God's necessity, then there would be no creatures because necessity refers only to God's existence as God's own existence. Therefore, in creation, God overcomes the necessity of its nature through freedom and it is freedom that comes above necessity not necessity that comes above freedom.

What is necessary in God we call the nature of God. Its relationship to freedom is similar (but not identical) to the relationship that the Scriptures teach is between the natural and the spiritual life of the person. What is understood here by "natural" is not simply the by and large "physical," that is, the corporeal. The soul and the spirit, as well as the body, if not born again, that is, elevated to a different and higher life, belong to the "natural." The entirety of Antiquity knows as little as do the Scriptures of the abstract concept of nature.

Even this "nature" of God is living, nay, it is the highest vitality, and it is not to be expressed so bluntly. Only by progressing from the simple to the complex, through gradual creation, could we hope to reach the full concept of this vitality.

Everyone agrees that the Godhead is the Supreme Being, the purest Love, infinite communicativity and emanation. Yet at the same time they want it to exist as such. But Love does not reach Being [*Seyn*] from itself. Being is

ipseity [*Seinheit*], particularity.[12] It is dislocation. But Love has nothing to do with particularity. Love does not seek its own [*das Ihre*] and therefore it cannot be that which has being [*seyend seyn*] with regard to itself. In the same way, a Supreme Being is for itself groundless and borne by nothing. It is in itself the antithesis of personality and therefore another force, moving toward personality, must first make it a ground. An equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of egoity [*Egoität*], is required so that [211] the being which is Love might exist as its own and might be for itself.

Therefore, two principles are already in what is necessary of God: the outpouring, outstretching, self-giving being, and an equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of retreat into itself, of Being in itself. That being and this force are both already God itself, without God's assistance.

It is not enough to see the antithesis. It must also be recognized that what has been set against each other has the same essentiality and originality. The force with which the being closes itself off, denies itself, is actual in its kind as the opposite principle. Each has its own root and neither can be deduced from the other. If this were so, then the antithesis would again immediately come to an end. But it is impossible *per se* that an exact opposite would derive from its exact opposite.

Indeed, humans show a natural predilection for the affirmative just as much as they turn away from the negative. Everything that is outpouring and goes forth from itself is clear to them. They cannot grasp as straightforwardly that which closes itself off and takes itself, even though it is equivalently essential and it encounters them everywhere and in many forms. Most people would find nothing more natural than if everything in the world were to consist of pure gentleness and goodness, at which point they would soon become aware of the opposite. Something inhibiting, something conflicting, imposes itself everywhere: this Other is that which, so to speak, should not be and yet is, nay, must be. It is this No that resists the Yes, this darkening that resists the light, this obliquity that resists the straight, this left that resists the right, and however else one has attempted to express this eternal antithesis in images. But it is not easy to be able to verbalize it or to conceive it at all scientifically.

The existence of such an eternal antithesis could not elude the first deeply feeling and deeply sensitive people. Already finding this duality in the primordial beginnings of nature but finding its source nowhere among that which is visible, early on one had to say to oneself that the ground of the [212] antithesis is as old as, nay, is even older than, the world; that, just as in everything living, so already in that which is primordially living, there is a doubling that has come down, through many stages, to that which has determined itself as what appears to us as light and darkness, masculine and feminine, spiritual and corporeal. Therefore, the oldest teachings straightforwardly represented the first nature as a being with two conflicting modes of activity.

But in later times, ages more and more alienated from that primordial feeling, the attempt was often made to annihilate the antithesis right at its source, namely, to sublimate the antithesis right at its beginning as one sought to trace one of the conflicting modes back to the other and then sought to derive it from that other. In our age, this was true especially for the force that is set against the spiritual. The antithesis in the end received the most abstract expression, that of thinking and Being. In this sense, Being always stood in opposition to thinking as something impregnable, so that the Philosophy that would explain everything found nothing more difficult than to provide an explanation for precisely this Being. They had to explain this incomprehensibility, this active counterstriving against all thinking, this active darkness, this positive inclination toward darkness. But they preferred to have done away entirely with the discomforting and to resolve fully the incomprehensible in comprehension or (like Leibniz) in representation [*Vorstellung*].

Idealism, which really consists in the denial and nonacknowledgment of that negating primordial force, is the universal system of our times. Without this force, God is that empty infinite that modern philosophy has put in its stead. Modern Philosophy names God the most unlimited being (*ens illimitatissimum*), without thinking that the impossibility of any limit outside of God cannot sublimate that there may be something in God through which God cuts itself off from itself, in a way making itself finite (to an object) for itself. Being infinite is for itself not a perfection. It is rather the marker of that which is imperfect. The perfected is precisely the in itself full, concluded, finished.

Yet also to know the antithesis is not enough if, at the same time, the unity of the being is not known, or if it is not known that, indeed, the antithesis is [213] *one and the same*, that it is the affirmation and the negation, that which pours out and that which holds on. The concept of a connection [*Zusammenhang*] or of anything similar to that is much too weak for the thought that should be expressed here. The merely various can also connect. Precisely that which is set in opposition can only be essentially and, so to speak, personally, "one," insofar as it is only the individual nature of the person that is able to unite that which is in conflict. But if one wanted to call everything that is not one and the same a connection, then one would have to say of a person who appears gentle, then wrathful, that the gentle person connects to the wrathful person in them, although, according to the truth, they are one and the same person.

If someone wanted to say further: it is a contradiction that something is *one and the same* and also the exact opposite of itself, then they would have to explain this principle more precisely since, as is known, Leibniz already disputed the absoluteness of this still always repeated rule.[13] Thereupon they might want to consider that a contradiction might not be precisely what one would want.

The authentic, essential contradiction would be immediately sublimated again, or, rather, transformed into something merely formal and literal, if the unity of the being were taken to mean that that which has been set apart are themselves one and the same. Even the most slipshod expression: the Yes is also the No, the Ideal is also the Real, and vice versa, would not justify this imbecilic explanation because in no judgment whatsoever, not even in the merely tautological, is it expressed that the combined (the subject and the predicate) are one and the same. Rather, there is only an identity of the being, of the link (of the copula). The true meaning of every judgment, for instance, A is B, can only be this: *that which* is A is *that which* is B, or *that which* is A and *that which* is B are one and the same. Therefore, a doubling already lies at the bottom of the simple concept: A in this judgment is not A, but "something = x, that A is." Likewise, B is not B, but "something = x, that B is," and not this (not A and B for themselves) but the "x that is A" and "the x that is B" is one and the same, that is, the same x. [214] There are actually three propositions contained in the above cited proposition. The first, "A = x," the second, "B = x," and, following first from this, the third, "A and B are one and the same," that is, "both are x."

It follows from itself that the link in judgment is what is essential and that which lies at the bottom of all the parts.[14] The subject and the predicate are each for themselves already a unity and what one by and large calls the copula just indicates the unity of these unities. Furthermore, the judgment is then already exemplified in the simple concept and the conclusion is already contained in the judgment. Hence, the concept is just the furled judgment and the conclusion is the unfurled judgment. These remarks are written here for a future and most highly desirable treatment of the noble art of reason because the knowledge of the general laws of judgment must always accompany the highest science. But one does not philosophize for novices or for those ignorant of this art. Rather, they are to be sent away to school where, as in other arts, no one easily dares to put forward or to assess a musical work who has not learned the first rules of a musical movement.

Hence, it is certainly impossible that the Ideal *as such* is ever the Real and vice versa, and that the Yes is ever a No and that the No is ever a Yes. To assert this would mean sublimating human comprehension, the possibility of expressing oneself, even the contradiction itself. But it is certainly possible that one and the same = x is both Yes and No, Love and Wrath, Leniency and Strictness.

Perhaps some now already locate the contradiction here. But the correctly understood principle of contradiction actually only says as much as that the same *as the same* could not be something and also the opposite of that something. But the principle of contradiction does not disallow that the same, which is A, can be an other that is not A (*contradictio debet esse ad idem*). The same person can be called, for example, good in accordance with their character or in their actions and *as this*, namely, likewise in accord with their character or in

their actions, cannot be evil. But this does not disallow that they might be evil in accord with what in them is not in their character or active. In this [215] manner, two contradictory, self-opposed predicates can certainly be ascribed to that person. Expressed in other words this would mean: of two things exactly opposed that are stated of one and the same thing, according to the law of contradiction, if one is in force as the active and as that which has being, then the other must become that which is respectively not acting, Being.

Now, what here should be, actually and in the strictest sense, that which is opposed yet is "one and the same = x," is the affirming and negating force. It therefore appears that when both *actually* become one, the one or the other would have to become that which respectively does not have Being and is not acting—something like (because this seems to most people to be something hostile) the negating force.

But the original equivalence (equipollence)[15] between both of them now appears between them. Since each, by nature, is equally originary and equally essential, each also has the same claim to be that which has being. Both hold their own weight and neither by nature yields to the other.

Therefore, it is conceded that of that which has been opposed, if they indeed become one, only one of them would be active and the other would be passive. But, enabled by the equivalence of both, it follows that if one is passive, then the other must be so also, and, likewise, if one is active, then, absolutely, the other must also be active. But this is impossible in one and the same unity. Here each can only be either active or passive. Hence, it only follows from that necessity that the one unity decomposes into two unities, the simple antithesis (that we may designate as A and B) intensifies itself into that which has been doubled. It does not follow that in God one force is active and the other is inactive, but rather that God itself is of two different kinds; first the negating force (B) that represses the affirmative being (A), positing it as the inwardly passive or as what is hidden; second, the outstretching, self-communicating being that in clear contrast holds down the negating power in itself and does not let it come outwardly into effect.

This can also be considered another way. That which has been set apart [216] are already in themselves not to be brought apart. The negating and contracting force could not be for itself without something that it negates and contracts, and that which has been negated and contracted cannot be anything other than precisely that which is in itself affirmative and flowing from itself. Hence, this negating power dislocates itself from itself in order to be, so to speak, its own complete being. In turn, that potency which, in accordance with its nature, is spiritual and outstretching, could not persist as such were it not to have, at least in a hidden manner, a force of selfhood. Therefore, this also dislocates itself as its own being and, instead of the desired unity, there has now resulted two oppositionally posited unities located apart from one another.

Should we want to sacrifice one of the two, we would always thereby have given up one of the two principles itself. Because only one is active in it, each of these unities then conducts itself as this one, the first as B, the other as A. But were these equivalent such that neither could, by nature, take second place to the other, then also each of the two unities again maintains the equivalency and each has the same claim to be that which has being [*seyend zu seyn*].

And so then now if both of them were fully apart from one another and without reciprocal contact, then they would be the same as the two primordial beings in the Persian teaching, one being a power insisting on closure and the darkening of the being and the other insisting on its outstretching and revelation. Both do not conduct themselves as one, but as two Godheads.[16]

But it still remains that "one and the same = x" is both principles (A and B). But not just in accordance with the concept, but really and actually. Hence, "the same = x" that is the two unities must again be the unity of both unities and with the intensified antithesis is found the intensified unity.

There still seems to be an unavoidable contradiction such that the two unities, having been set apart, should be posited as active and as one. And yet this still admits of resolution such that the unity here demanded has no other but the following meaning. That which has been set apart should be one, that is, a unity of the two is posited, but it is not [217] concomitantly posited that they cease being that which has been set apart. Rather, insofar as there should be unity, there should also be antithesis. Or unity and antithesis should themselves again be in antithesis. But the antithesis is in and for itself no contradiction. It could be no more contradictory that there could be A as well as B, than that just as there is unity, there is antithesis. Again, these are, between themselves, equivalent. The antithesis can as little surrender to unity as unity can surrender to the antithesis.

The antithesis rests on this, that each of the two conflicting powers is a being for itself, a real *principle*. The antithesis is only as such if the two conflicting principles conduct themselves as actually independent and separate from each other. That there should be both antithesis and unity therefore means as much as: that of the negating principle, the affirming principle, and, again, the unity of both, each of these three should be as its own principle, separated from the others. But through this, the unity appears along the same lines with the two principles that have been set in opposition. It is not something like what is chiefly the being. Rather, the unity is just a principle of the being and hence, perfectly equivalent with the two others.

The true meaning of this unity that has been asserted in the beginning is therefore this: "one and the same = x" is as much the unity as it is the antithesis. Or both of the opposed potencies, the eternally negating potency and the eternally affirming potency, and the unity of both make up the one, inseparable, primordial being.

1) WHAT IS NECESSARY OF GOD = THE NATURE OF GOD

a) the triad of principles in what is necessary of God or the nature of God

And here, first after the consummate unfurling of that initial concept, can we glimpse the first nature in its full vitality. We see it, in an equally originary way, decomposed, as it were, into three powers. Each of these powers can be for itself. Hence, the unity is a unity for itself and each of the opposite powers is a whole and complete being. Yet not one of them can be *without* the others also being and hence, only together do they fulfill the whole concept of the Godhead and only that God is necessary. Not one of them is necessary and by nature subordinate to the others. The negating potency is, with regard to that [218] inseparable primordial being, as essential as the affirming potency. And the unity is, in turn, not more essential than each of the opposites are for themselves. Therefore each also has fully the same claim to be the being, to be that which has being. Not one of them can bring itself by nature only to Being or not to be that which has being.

And the law of contradiction, which says that opposites cannot be in one and the same thing and at the same time be that which has being, here, at last, finds its application. God, in accordance with the necessity of its nature, is an eternal No, the highest Being-in-itself, an eternal withdrawal of its being into itself, a withdrawal within which no creature would be capable of living. But the same God, with equal necessity of its nature, although not in accord with the same principle, but in accord with a principle that is completely different from the first principle, is the eternal Yes, an eternal outstretching, giving, and communicating of its being. Each of these principles, in an entirely equal fashion, is the being, that is, each has the same claim to be God or that which has being. Yet they reciprocally exclude each other. If one is that which has being, then the opposed can only be that which does not have being. But, in an equally eternal manner, God is the third term or the unity of the Yes and the No. Just as opposites exclude each other from being what has being [*vom seyend-Seyn*], so again the unity excludes the antithesis and thereby each of the opposites, and, in turn, the antithesis or each of the opposites excludes the unity from being what has being. If the unity is that which has being, then the antithesis, that is, each of the opposites, can only be that which does not have being. And, in turn, if one of the opposites, and thereby the antithesis, has being, then the unity can only retreat into that which does not have being.

And it is not now the case that somehow all three remain inactive so that the contradiction itself could remain in concealment. For that which is these three is the necessary nature, the being that is not allowed not to be, that absolutely must be. But it can only be as the inseparable One of these three. Not one of these for itself would fulfill the whole concept of the necessary being (of

the Godhead), and each of these three has the same right to be the being, that is, to be that which has being.

[219] It is thus found that the first nature is, with regard to itself, in contradiction. It is not in contradiction by chance nor is it in one in which it would have been transposed from the outside (for there is nothing outside of it). Rather, it is in a necessary contradiction, posited at the same time with its being and hence, which, more accurately said, is itself its being.

People appear to have a greater aversion for contradiction than for anything else in life. Contradiction coerces them into action and forces them from their cozy repose. When, after a long time, the contradiction is no longer to be covered over, they seek to at least conceal it from themselves and to distance the moment in which matters of life and death must be acted upon. A similar convenience was sought in knowledge through the interpretation of the law of contradiction in which contradiction should never be able to be. However, how can one put forward a law for something that can in no way be? When it is known that a contradiction cannot be, it must be known that it nevertheless in a certain way is. How else should "that which cannot be" appear to be and how should the law prove itself, that is, prove to be true?

Everything else leaves the active in some sense open. Only the contradiction is absolutely not allowed not to act and is alone what drives, nay, what coerces, action. Therefore, without the contradiction, there would be no movement, no life, and no progress. There would only be eternal stoppage, a deathly slumber of all of the forces.

Were the first nature in harmony with itself, it would remain so. It would be constantly One and would never become Two. It would be an eternal rigidity without progress. The contradiction in the first nature is as certain as life is. As certainly as the being of knowledge consists in progression, it necessarily has as its first posit the positing of the contradiction.

A transition from unity to contradiction is incomprehensible. For how should what is in itself one, whole and perfect, be tempted, charmed, and enticed to emerge out of this peace? The transition from contradiction to unity, on the other hand, is natural, for contradiction is insufferable to everything and everything that finds itself in it will not repose until it has found the unity that reconciles or overcomes it.

b) the unprethinkable decision in the nature of God—the concept of that which does not have being

[220] Only the contradiction brings life into the first necessary nature that we have until now only considered conceptually. Just as with the three principles whose irresolvable concatenation the first nature is, such that *each* in accord with its nature is that which has being, but such that if one has being,

then necessarily the other does not have being and such that it at the same time still does not befit the first nature to have the freedom to be or not to be, so there is similarly in the first nature also necessitated a decision, even if only one that transpires blindly. If the one has being, then the other does not have being, yet each should and must in the same way be that which has being. With this there is nothing left over except an alternating positing, where alternately now one is that which has being and the other is that which does not have being and then, in turn, it is the other of these which has being and the one which does not have being. Yet, so that it thereby also comes exclusively to this alternating positing in that primordial urge for Being, it is necessary that one of them be the beginning or that which first has being and after this, one of them is the second and one of them is the third. From this, the movement again goes back to the first and, as such, is an eternally expiring and an eternally recommencing life.

But precisely *that* one commences and one of them is the first, must result from a decision that certainly has not been made consciously or through deliberation but can happen rather only when a violent power blindly breaks the unity in the jostling between the necessity and the impossibility to be. But the only place in which a ground of determination can be sought for the precedence of one of them and the succession of the other is the particular nature of each of the principles, which is different from their general nature which consists in each being equally originary and equally independent and each having the same claim to be that which has being. This is not like saying that one of the principles would absolutely have to be the one that proceeds or the one that succeeds. Rather, just that, because it is allowed by its particular nature, the possibility is given to it to be the first, the second, or the third.

It is now clear that what is posited at the beginning is precisely that which is subordinated in the successor. The beginning is only the beginning insofar as it is not that which should actually be, that which truthfully and in itself has being. If there is therefore a decision, then [221] that which can only be posited at the beginning inclines, for the most part and in its particular way, to the nature of that which does not have being.

Precisely the affirmative principle, the authentic being or that which has being (A) as not active, that is, as not having being, is posited in the originary negation. This is not to say that it would, as that which has being, be altogether negated (this is impossible). On the contrary, it is posited as that which has being, but not as having the being of that which has being or, in other words, not as that which has been revealed actually to have being. On the other hand, that which is singularly active in this unity is the negating potency (B), which, as the potency that has been opposed to the being or that which actually has being, cannot be called that which has being, although it in no way because of that is that which does not have being or nothing.

Therefore, whether we might look at what is active in that originary negation or at that which is posited as inactive or passive in it, we will in any case say that the originary negation for the most part shares in the nature of that which does not have being or itself appears as not *having being.*

The concept of not having being, but especially the not being that occurs everywhere in so many forms, has always led the beholder astray and, like a real Proteus, manifoldly brought them into confusion. For just as it is manifest to hardly anyone that actual power lies more in delimitation than expansion and that to withdraw oneself has more to do with might than to give oneself, so is it natural that where they encounter that which through itself does not have being, they rather regard it as "nothing" and, when it is asserted that it "is" precisely as that which does not have being, they rather explain this away as the greatest contradiction.

They could have been liberated from this simple grammatical misunderstanding, which also prejudiced a good many interpreters of the Greek philosophers, and from which the concept of the *creatio ex nihilo*, among others, also seems to owe its origin, with this distinction, entirely easy to learn and which can be found, if nowhere else, certainly in Plutarch, between non-Being [*nicht Seyn*] (μὴ εἶναι) and the Being which has no being [*nicht seyend Seyn*] (μὴ Ὂν εἶναι). This lets one also defend the expression "privation (στέρησις)" with which Aristotle indicated the other, the opposed τοὐναντίον, namely, insofar as the negating [222] force, which contracts the being, does not posit that it is-not, but rather that it is not that which has being.

Even the most general consideration must incidentally lead to the concept of that which does not have being. For that which is in each thing the actual Being cannot, because of the antithesis, ever be one and the same with that which has being. Rather, it is, in accord with its nature, that which does not have being but, because of that, it is in no way "nothing." For how should nothing be that which is Being itself? Being must after all be. There is no mere Being in which there would be nothing which has being whatsoever (no A without B). That which does not have being is not something that has being against others (objectively), but is something that has being in itself (subjectively). It is only over and against that which mainly has being that it is that which does not have being. But in relationship to itself, it is certainly that which has being. Everything that has being of a humbler rank relates itself, when contrasted with being of a higher rank, as that which does not have being. The same A that, in contrast with another, is that which has being, can appear in contrast with an A of an even higher order as that which does not have being.

So something more or less allows itself expression in our way that Plato already showed in the magnificent dialogue about that which does not have being in which he shows how that which has no being is necessary and how, with-

out this insight, certainty would be entirely indistinguishable from doubt and truth would be entirely indistinguishable from error.[17]

Conceptually, that which has being is always that in which the affirming principle is active and outwardly manifest. But it does not always follow that what has being in accord with the concept is, for this reason, that which indeed really has being. For in an inverted order, or where there is still no order, level-headedness, and organization, that which in itself or essentially has being can just as well become that which does not have being, when contrasted with what, in accord with its being, really does not have being. Just as the good person suppresses the evil within themselves, the evil person, conversely, silences the good within themselves and posits that what in accord with its being is that which has being is really that which does not have being.

We still want to recall the misuse that another kind of sophistry makes of the concept of not having being. Because Being appears as the highest to blind feeling and because all Being [223] is founded on the closure of the being, sophistry then concludes (if it has not been supplemented too much through this explanation) that Being is unknowable and because to them everything is *Being*, nothing is knowable; all knowing knowledge dissolves Being and only the unknowing one knows. Certainly in itself only that which has being is what is knowable and what does not have being is not what is knowable. But it is still only incomprehensible insofar as and in as much as it is not that which has being. But insofar as it is as such and at the same time something that has being, it is certainly comprehensible and knowable. For that through which it does not have being is precisely that through which it has being. For it is not that which does not have being on account of a comprehensive lack of light and being but on account of an active restriction of the being and hence, on account of acting force. We may therefore look to what is interior and concealed in it or to what is exterior and manifest about it. The former is precisely the essentiality itself but the latter is an active force. Nay, we would like to say more correctly that the latter is the force, the absolute might, which, as such, must likewise be something that has being and therefore must be something knowable.

That God negates itself, restricts its being, and withdraws into itself, is the eternal force and might of God. In this manner, the negating force is that which is singularly revealing of God. But the actual being of God is that which is concealed. The whole therefore stands as A that from the outside is B and hence, the whole = (A = B). Therefore, the whole, because God is that which does not have being (is not manifest) in it, inclines, in accord with its essentiality and in relation to what is other, for the most part toward not being that which has being. This is therefore the beginning, or how we have otherwise already expressed it, the first potency.

Hence, according to the oldest teachings, night is not in general the uppermost being (as these teachings are misunderstood these days), but rather the

first that, precisely because of this, becomes the lowest in the progress of the movement. Precisely that which negates all revelation must be made the ground of revelation.

The same thing allows itself to be demonstrated from another angle. A being cannot negate itself without thereby making itself turn inward and therefore making itself the object of its own wanting and desire. The beginning of all knowledge lies in the knowledge of one's ignorance. [224] But it is impossible that the person posits himself or herself as ignorant without thereby inwardly making knowledge into an object of their desire. Positing oneself as that which does not have being and wanting oneself are therefore one and the same. Each being primarily wants itself and this self-wanting is later precisely the basis of egoity, that through which a being withdraws itself or cuts itself off from other things and that through which it is exclusively itself, and therefore is, from the outside and in relation to everything else, negating.

But the power of a beginning is only in wanting in general. For that which is wanted and therefore that which should actually be in accord with the intention is posited as that which does not have being precisely because it is that which is *wanted*. But all beginning is founded on that which is not, on what actually should be (that which in itself has being). Since a being that has nothing outside of itself can want nothing other than simply itself, the unconditioned and absolutely first beginning can lie only in self-wanting. But wanting oneself and negating oneself as having being is one and the same. Therefore, the first beginning can only be in negating oneself as that which has being.

For the beginning really only lies in the negation. All beginning is, in accord with its nature, only a desire for the end or for what leads to the end and hence, negates itself as the end. It is only the tension of the bow—it is not so much that which itself has being as it is the ground that something is. It is not enough for a beginning that now commences or becomes not to be. It must be expressly posited as that which does not have being. A ground is thereby given for it to be. No beginning point (*terminus a quo*) of a movement is an empty, inactive point of departure. Rather, it is a negation of the starting point and the actually emerging movement is an overcoming of this negation. If the movement was not negated, then it could not have been expressly posited. Negation is therefore the necessary precedent (*prius*) of every movement. The beginning of the line is the geometrical point—but not because it extended itself but rather because it is the negation of all extension. One is the beginning of all number, not so much because it itself is a number but because it is the negation of all number, of all multiplicity. That which would intensify itself must first gather itself together and transpose itself into the condition of being a root. [225] What wants to grow must foreshorten itself and hence, negation is the first transition whatsoever from nothing into something.

There is therefore no doubt that if a succession takes place among the primordial powers of life, only the power that contracts and represses the being can be the initiating power. What is first in God after the decision or, because we must assume that as having *happened* since all eternity (and as still always happening), what is altogether first in God, in the living God, the eternal beginning of itself in itself, is that God restricts itself, denies itself, withdraws its essence from the outside and retreats into itself.

The currently accepted teaching about God is that God is without all beginning. The Scripture to the contrary: God is the beginning and the end. We would have to imagine a being regarded as without beginning as the eternal immobility, the purest inactivity. For no acting is without a point out of which and toward which it goes. An acting that would neither have something solid upon which to ground itself nor a specific goal or end that it desires, would be a fully indeterminate acting and not an actual and, as such, distinguishable one. Certainly, therefore, something that is eternal without beginning can be thought as not actual but never as actual. But now we are speaking of a necessarily actual God. Therefore, this God has no beginning only insofar as it has no beginning of its beginning. The beginning in it is an eternal beginning, that is, a beginning that was, as such, from all eternity and still always is and one that never ceases to be a beginning. The beginning that a being has outside of itself and the beginning that a being has within itself are different. A beginning from which it can be alienated and from which it can distance itself is different than a beginning in which it eternally remains because it itself is the beginning.

But the divine nature does not allow that it is just an eternal No and an eternal denial of itself. It is an equally valid part of its nature that it is a being of all beings, the infinitely self-granting and self-communicating being. In that it therefore conceals its being, there thereby appears, by force of the eternal necessity of its nature, [226] the eternal affirmation of its being as it opposes the negation (which is not sublimated but abiding, albeit now receding into the negative). In contrast, the negating force represses itself and precisely thereby intensifies itself into an independent being.

Exactly as when the body collects itself and cools off and a perceptible warmth spreads around it so that it therefore elevates the previously inactive warmth into an active warmth, so too, and with a wholly equal necessity, that originary negation becomes the immediate ground, the potency that begets the actual being. It posits this being outside of itself and independent of itself as a being removed from itself, nay, as a being opposed to it, as that which in itself eternally has being.

Through this, a new light falls upon that originary negation. A being cannot negate itself as actual without at the same time positing oneself as the actualizing potency that begets itself. Hence, conversely, positing oneself as the

actualizing potency of oneself and, in turn, positing oneself as not having being is one and the same.

In the first potency (in A = B), there was also something that had being (A). But this was posited here as not having being (as passive, as object). In accordance with the presupposition, that which is begot by it is posited as that which has being such that *it has being* [*das Seyende als Seyendes*]. It can in this way be called that which has being to the second power (we indicate it by A^2 in which now the negating power, B, disappears). And from this it would be clear that if that originary No is the beginning or the first, than the being opposed to it is the second and the successive being.

That the former can only proceed and that the latter can only succeed can, however, still be looked at in another way. It is natural to the negating force that it represses the being. Once a negating force is posited, it can effect nothing else but the closure of the being. But the negating force is fully alien to the affirming principle in itself. And yet the affirming principle actually has being as that which has being only by repressing the negating force in itself. Furthermore, it would, with regard to itself, never come forth and therefore never elevate to act if the negation of the being [227] had not proceeded. In that it has being, it certainly has it from itself. But that it again has being, that it laboriously proves itself and reveals itself as having being, has its ground in the negating potency. If there were not the No, then the Yes would be without force. No "I" without the "not-I" and in as much as the "not-I" is before the "I." That which has being, precisely because it has being from itself, has no ground to desire that it be. But to be negated conflicts with its nature. Therefore, in that it is at all negated, it follows that, excepting that in which it is negated, it is in itself unnegated and in its own purity.

The primordial antithesis is given with these two potencies. Yet the antithesis is not such that it is based on a completely reciprocal exclusion, but only as such that it is based on an opposed relationship, on, so to speak, an inverted position of those first life forces. What in the proceeding potency was the exterior, contracting, and negating, is itself, in the successive potency, the inner, contracted, and self-negated. And conversely, what was there inhibited is what is here free. They are infinitely far from each other and infinitely near. Far, because what is affirmed and manifest in one of them is posited in the other as negated and in the dark. Near, because it only requires an inversion, a turning out of what was concealed and a turning into what is manifest, in order to transpose and, so to speak, transform, the one into the other.

Hence, we already see here the structure for a future, inner unity in which each potency comes out for itself. Hence, the day lies concealed in the night, albeit overwhelmed by the night; likewise the night in the day, albeit kept down by the day, although it can establish itself as soon as the repressive potency disappears. Hence, good lies concealed in evil, albeit made unrecog-

nizable by evil; likewise evil in good, albeit mastered by the good and brought to inactivity.

But now the unity of the being thus seems torn and hence, each of the opposites stands for and in itself as its own being. Yet they incline themselves toward unity, or they come together in one and the same because the negating force can only [228] feel itself as negating when there is a disclosing being and the latter can only be active as affirming insofar as it liberates the negating and repressing force. It is also impossible that the unity of the being could be sublimated. Hence, facilitated by eternal necessity through the force of indissoluble life, they posit outside and above themselves a third, which is the unity.

This third must in itself be outside and above all antithesis, the purest potency, indifferent toward both, free from both, and the most essential.

From the foregoing it is clear that this cannot be the first, nor the second, only the third, and can only comport itself as having the being of the third potency = A^3.

Just as the originary negation is the eternal beginning, this third is the eternal end. There is an inexorable progression, a necessary concatenation, from the first potency to the third. When the first potency is posited, the second is also necessarily posited, and both of these produce the third with the same necessity. Thereby the goal is achieved. There is nothing higher to be produced in this course.

Yet having arrived at its peak, the movement of itself retreats back into its beginning; for each of the three has an equal right to be that which has being. The former differentiation and the subordination that followed from it is only a differentiation of the being, it is not able to sublimate the equivalence with regard to that which is as what has being. In a nutshell, it is not able to sublimate the existential parity [*die existentielle Gleichheit*].

But we still cannot at all talk here of an ethical relation because we still have only posited blind nature and not an ethical principle. We are taught often enough that the Ideal stands over the Real, that the physical is subordinated to the spiritual, and other such things. There is never a lack of such instruction for us. Indeed, this subordination seemed to be expressed as what was most determined in that we always posited what was akin to the Real as the first potency and what was akin to the Ideal as the second potency. But if one begins thereby to posit as actually subordinated that which ought to be subordinated, what then does one have? [229] One is already finished in the beginning. Everything has happened and there is no further progression.

That originary, necessary, and abiding life hence ascends from the lowest to the highest. Yet when it has arrived at the highest, it retreats immediately back to the beginning in order again to ascend from it. Here we first attain the consummate concept of that first nature (after which all particular concepts, which only had to be posited in order to attain this consummate concept, must

again be expelled), namely, that it is a life that eternally circulates within itself, a kind of circle because the lowest always runs into the highest, and the highest again into the lowest. Hence, it is impossible, by virtue of the nature of the three principles, that each as well as each not be that which has being and therefore they are only thinkable in this urge toward existence as an alternating positing. Hence, now one, now the other, is that which has being. Taking turns, one prevails while the other yields.

Naturally, in this constant annular drive, the differentiation of the higher and the lower again sublimates itself. There is neither a veritable higher nor a veritable lower, since in turn one is the higher and the other is the lower. There is only an unremitting wheel, a rotatory movement that never comes to a standstill and in which there is no differentiation. Even the concept of the beginning, as well as the concept of the end, again sublimates itself in this circulation. There is certainly a beginning of the potency in accordance with its inherent possibility, but this is not an actual beginning. An actual beginning is only one that posits itself as not having being in relationship to that which should actually be. But that which could be the beginning in this movement does not discern itself as the beginning and makes an equal claim with the other principles to be that which has being. A true beginning is one that does not always begin again but persists. A true beginning is that which is the ground of a steady progression, not of an alternating advancing and retreating movement. Likewise, there is only a veritable end in which a being persists that does not need to retreat from itself back to the beginning. Hence, we [230] can also explain this first blind life as one that can find neither its beginning nor its end. In this respect we can say that it is *without* (veritable) beginning and *without* (veritable) end.

Since it did not begin sometime but began since all eternity in order never (veritably) to end, and ended since all eternity, in order always to begin again, it is clear that that first nature was since all eternity and hence, equiprimordially a movement circulating within itself, and that this is its true, living concept.

These are the forces of that inner life that incessantly gives birth to itself and again consumes itself that the person must intimate, not without terror, as what is concealed in everything, even though it is now covered up and from the outside has adopted peaceful qualities. Through that constant retreat to the beginning and the eternal recommencement, it makes itself into substance in the real sense of the word (*id quod substat*), into the always abiding. It is the constant inner mechanism and clockwork, time, eternally commencing, eternally becoming, always devouring itself and always again giving birth to itself.

The antithesis eternally produces itself, in order always again to be consumed by the unity, and the antithesis is eternally consumed by the unity in order always to revive itself anew. This is the sanctuary (ἑστία),[18] the hearth of the life that continually incinerates itself and again rejuvenates itself from the ash. This is the tireless fire (ἀκάματον πῦρ) through whose quenching, as

Heraclitus claimed, the cosmos was created.[19] It is circulating within itself, continuously repeating itself by moving backward and again forward as was shown in the visions of one of the prophets.[20] This is the object of the ancient Magi teachings[21] and of that doctrine of fire as a consequence of which the Jewish lawgiver left behind to his people: "The Lord your God is a devouring fire,"[22] that is, not in God's inner and authentic being [*Wesen*], but certainly in accordance with God's nature.

But this unremitting movement that goes back into itself and recommences is incontestably the scientific concept of that wheel [231] of birth as the interior of all nature that was already revealed to one of the apostles,[iv] who was distinguished by a profound glimpse into nature, as well as to those who later wrote from feeling and vision.

This movement can be represented as a systole and a diastole. This is a completely involuntary movement that, once begun, makes itself from itself. The recommencing, the re-ascending is systole, tension that reaches its acme in the third potency. The retreat to the first potency is diastole, slackening, upon which a new contraction immediately follows. Hence, this is the first pulse, the beginning of that alternating movement that goes through the entirety of visible nature, of the eternal contraction and the eternal re-expansion, of the universal ebb and flow.

Visible nature, in particular and as a whole, is an allegory of this perpetually advancing and retreating movement. The tree, for example, constantly drives from the root to the fruit, and when it has arrived at the pinnacle, it again sheds everything and retreats to the state of fruitlessness, and makes itself back into a root, only in order again to ascend. The entire activity of plants concerns the production of seed, only in order again to start over from the beginning and through a new developmental process to produce again only seed and to begin again. Yet all of visible nature appears unable to attain settledness and seems to transmute tirelessly in a similar circle. One generation comes, the other goes. Nature goes to the trouble to develop qualities, aspects, works, and talents to their pinnacle, only again to bury them for centuries in oblivion, and then start anew, perhaps in a new species, but certainly only to attain again the same peak.

Yet this first being never comes to Being since only together do the three potencies fulfill the concept of the divine nature, and only that this nature is so is necessary. Since there is consequently an unremitting urge to be and since it cannot be, it comes to a standstill in [232] desire, as an unremitting striving, an eternally insatiable obsession [*Sucht*][23] with Being. The ancient saying is appropriate regarding this: Nature strives for itself and does not find itself (*quærit se natura, non invenit*).

Were life to remain at a standstill here, it would be nothing other than an eternal exhaling and inhaling, a constant interchange between life and death,

---

iv. ὁ τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως, *James* 3: 6 [the wheel of genesis].

that is, not a true existence but only an eternal drive and zeal to be, without actual Being.

It is clear that the life could never come to an actual existence by virtue of the simple necessity of the divine [nature][24] and hence, certainly not by virtue of necessity in general.

How or by virtue of what was the life redeemed from this annular drive and led into freedom?

Since each of the three principles has an equal claim to be that which has being, the contradiction cannot be resolved through one of the principles somehow becoming that which has being at the cost of the others. But since the contradiction can also not remain, and since it does so because each of the principles wants to be that which has being for itself: thus no other solution is thinkable other than that they *all* communally and voluntarily (then by what would they be coerced?) sacrifice being that which has being and hence, debase themselves into simple Being. For thereby that equivalence (equipollence) automatically terminates that did not refer to its essence or its particular nature (by virtue of which they form more of a gradation), but only such that each of them was driven by nature in the same fashion to be that which has being. As long as this necessity continues, they must all strive to be in one and the same locus, namely, in the locus of that which has being and hence, so to speak, to be in a single point. A reciprocal inexistence [*Inexistenz*] is demanded because they are incompatible and when one has being, then the others must be without being.[25] Hence, this necessity can only terminate if all of the potencies have sacrificed, in the same fashion, being that which has being. When one of them has being, then all of the potencies, in accordance with their nature, must strive to be the same. As soon as this necessity terminates, a confrontation becomes possible, that is, that each of them enters into its potency. [233] Space opens up and that blind necessity of reciprocal inexistence metamorphosizes into the relationship of a free belonging together.

By itself this is certainly illuminating enough. Yet a question emerges: How is it possible that all of the potencies communally sacrifice being that which has being?

In itself it is clear that nothing whatsoever can give up having being except before something higher. Just as long as the human heart feels, so to speak, entitled to selfish desire until its yearning, its craving, that inner void that devours it, is not fulfilled by a higher good and just as the soul only settles and stills itself when it acknowledges something higher than itself by which it is made exuberantly blissful, so too can the blind obsession and craving of the first [nature][26] only grow silent before something higher, before which it happily and voluntarily acknowledges itself as mere Being, as not *having being*.

Furthermore, that renunciation and subsidence into Being should be voluntary. But until now there has been nothing in that first nature except irre-