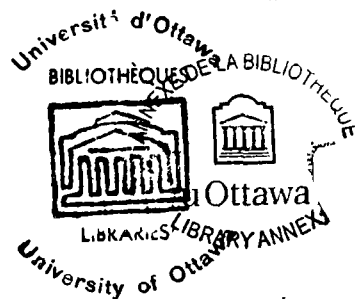


CSP-2

The Prescription of Faith in the "Theological-
Political Tractatus" of Benedict de Spinoza



A thesis presented to the Faculty of Philosophy
at the University of Ottawa for the completion
of requirements leading to the M.A. degree.

by

Richard M. Trainor

Ottawa 1969

UMI Number: EC55385

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI Microform EC55385
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
Our Problem: The valid understanding of Spinoza's prescription of faith . . .	5
<u>CHAPTER I</u>	
Faith Within the <u>Theological-Political</u> <u>Tractatus</u>	12
a. The purpose of the work and the place of faith therein	13
b. The instances of prescription within the <u>Tractatus</u>	18
<u>CHAPTER II</u>	
Necessary Grounds to the Understanding of Faith's Prescription Within the Thought of Spinoza	41
a. The causes of faith	42
1. Knowledge and "intellectual love in Spinoza	43
2. The act of willing in Spinoza	54
b. The habitus of faith	61
1. Faith and Reason	61
2. Faith and Love	67
3. Faith and Virtue	73
c. The effects of faith	78
1. Credulity vs. piety	80
2. Obstinacy vs. obedience.	83
3. Evil, Good and Morality.	87
<u>CHAPTER III</u>	
The Prescription of Faith and its Influence	98
a. The Status of State and Freedom of Thought	99

	4
	<u>Page</u>
b. The Status of Scripture and Freedom of Worship	115
<u>CHAPTER IV</u>	
Faith and the Faithful Man in the Thought of Spinoza	126
<u>APPENDIX</u>	143
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY.</u>	145

I N T R O D U C T I O N

THE PROBLEM OF THE VALID UNDERSTANDING
OF SPINOZA'S PRESCRIPTION OF FAITH

The problem of this thesis is one of understanding. We wish to understand the meaning behind Spinoza's¹ notion of faith. Moreover, this understanding must look to the fact of his prescribing this faith. The necessity for such an understanding should first be considered, along with reasons why a pre-occupation with the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (1670) should engender validity from such research.

We look to the Tractatus for two reasons. First, the thought or presentation to be found in this work can be considered representative of the mature Spinoza. While the Ethics was not finished until a few years after the anonymous publication of the Tractatus,² authors note that the

1. Benedict de Spinoza (Baruch) 1632-1677. There is a discrepancy in the recording of his Birth date. The greatest number of his biographers agree on 1632. The best source of this matter is "The Life of Benedict de Spinoza by John Colerus, a contemporary of Spinoza, London, D.L. Press, 1706 - found in appendix to Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy by Sir Frederick Pollock, London, Duckworth & Co., 2 ed. 1899.
2. Elwes R.H.M., cf. intro. (p. xvi) to his translation of the Tractatus; also cf. Pollock, Spinoza..., p. 339.

Ethics was being thought out and written both before and alongside the writing of the Tractatus. With the exception of his Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding, all his other major works ^hronologically preceded the Tractatus. Therefore, we primarily concentrate on the development within the Tractatus because it shall better give us vantage over thought antecedent to its conclusions.

Secondly, we look to the Tractatus because the instance of prescription is more pronounced than in any other of his works. Many authors, it seems, have pretended that pronouncement can be made as regards the religious system of Spinoza without consideration of this work. Correspondingly, the study of the status of faith in Spinoza has been hampered through unfamiliarity or at best, neglect of treatment, as regards the work in which its status is most openly explicitated. Admittedly, the valid understanding of his prescription can never be attained without proper regard given to each of his writings, but it is certain that major emphasis should be given to this work.

It might be alleged that a third reason for concentrating upon the Tractatus is also at hand. The master of Spinoza died in 1677 with Spinoza. Because of the extreme animosity which followed this author throughout the days of his life, little time for dialogue was afforded him. Only his correspondence will help the student gain some

insight, from outside his works, into the rationale behind his thought. Also, two important works were left unfinished. (Improvement of the Understanding and the Political Tractatus) These reasons for obscurity leave Spinoza the only true master of himself. Hence, the one who pretends that a year of reflection and research on this man can give to him the valid total perspective of Spinoza's compendium of thought is indeed mistreating the possibilities of philosophy's ever being recognized as a science.

Why attempt to define or understand the prescription of faith which Spinoza endorses? Two conditions stimulate such research. The first lies within the texts of thought prepared by Spinoza. The second lies within the texts of commentary upon the thought of Spinoza.

It would seem, (and it is the task of this thesis to rightfully uncover the possibility of validity in this matter) that Spinoza's notion of faith is a mainstream foundation throughout the development of his thought. The faithful man must be contemplated, in his system, if his theory of knowledge, political propositions, and many more areas of thought are to be understood in their full context. Correspondingly, the status of faith is within a ground-work position in his thought. All of man's situations do refer to the embrace of this basic condition.

Quantitatively considered, the prescription of

faith is articulated sparingly in all works save the Tractatus. However, the prescription once being uttered in this work, a return to all other texts finds one with greater facility at understanding the significance of the faithful union man embraces in intuitive knowledge of the fourth mode. The basic condition ^{propaedeutic} ~~propaedeutic~~ to perfection is thereby seen as the condition of faith in man. This faith is not that of mere formal assent to knowledge of essence, but necessarily does it also entail the existential commitment of obedience proper to that self same union. Despite, therefore, the sparse usage of the term "faith" in other works than the Tractatus, we should see, without any forced presuppositions, that much of Spinoza's preoccupation within these works demands an understanding of the meaning and place of faith in his thought.

The second reason for an attempt at understanding Spinoza's prescription of faith, stems from both the scarcity of commentary given over to this notion, and the radically divergent interpretations that are given within the commentaries that have been made in reference to this subject matter. First of all, the student has found no one work which explicitly bears on the notion of faith in Spinoza.

An examination of the great bibliographies³ should bear out the truth of this matter.

Secondly, a reading of authors who treat of Spinoza's personality, religious thought, political suggestions and ethical theory, turns up contradictory affirmations as to the validity of his thought. In many cases, an understanding of faith in Spinoza would obviously have altered, (or at the least, tempered) many such affirmations.

Concerning the status of faith itself, we do discover two puzzles that tempt us to look more closely at what Spinoza means by faith and with what importance he esteems this meaning in his system.

The first puzzle arises from the fact that for many the study of Spinoza's notion of faith is an impossibility imposed by paradox. For Spinoza has been, and still is, considered by many as a "man whom the Devil has hired"⁴ and, as the prime inovator of "atheism".⁵ And so, we are puzzled that a man who speaks of faith and who attempts to

3. I refer specifically to the work of Adolph S. OKO of Columbia who for 43 years compiled over 20,000 entries into his The Spinoza Bibliography, (published under the auspices of the Columbia University Libraries by G.K. Hall & Co., 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, 1964.)
4. Dummer, Joseph, Baruch Spinoza and Western Democracy, Philosophical Library, New York, 1955, p. 27.
5. Pollock, Spinoza... p. 403.

correct our notion of religion so as to bring us closer to the One, might be signified with such vindictive categorization.

The second puzzle arises from the fact that, for many, Spinoza is considered as "the holy, the rejected Spinoza".⁶ And it is Novalis "who celebrated him as the man intoxicated with God".⁷ We have found it odd, then, that the understanding of Spinoza's conception of faith has not, at least by some of this contingent, been undertaken as a separate study.

Finally, if headway could be made towards the reconciliation of these divergent stands, (as regards the contribution of Spinoza), perhaps its beginning may lie in that area which has received too little attention - the area of faith.

With this in mind, the procedure of research into this matter shall follow this path. First, the "what" or the evidence of prescription shall be laid forth. This evidence will be, for the most part, taken from the Tractatus. Secondly, the beginning of our understanding shall be made with a backtracking through his works to find possible grounds for his notion of faith and subsequent prescription.

6. Elwes, intro. p. viii in The Chifl Works of Benedict de Spinoza, Dover Publications, New York, Vol. I, 1951.

7. Ibid.

Thirdly, the understanding of these grounds shall be analyzed insofar as their relation to the meaning of the status of faith is concerned. This consideration will dwell upon the significant relation between faith and a) the status of state and freedom of thought and, b) the status of scripture and freedom of worship. Fourthly, we shall return to the prescription itself and attempt an elaboration of the significant role its presence plays in understanding Spinoza's notion of the whole man, his fulfillment, and his salvation.

Controversial commentary is bred from controversial thought. The thought of Spinoza has long been held in such esteem. Yet controversy can often be located but on the side of the commentators. Proof of this matter can only arise if the thought is allowed to clarify itself.

It would seem, therefore, that a gateway to the possible solution of our problem, the valid understanding of Spinoza's prescription of faith, can only be opened if we allow Spinoza to speak for himself. Simplicity and clarity shall also be afforded if we can rigorously attend to Spinoza's words without undo elaboration of commentaries. This paper is not meant to take issue with the validity of interpretations so abundant in its bibliography. Rather, this paper is presented as an opportunity for Spinoza to collect and integrally re-present his understanding of faith and the reasons why its prescription is made.

CHAPTER I

FAITH WITHIN THE TRACTATUS THEOLOGICO-POLITICUS

Consideration should be given the element or context in which the prescription of faith is found. Historically, the context was an era of intense religious bigotry and political upheaval. This area of contestation struck deep into the dignity of every individual. Consequently, a general mistrust was in evidence. The State's use of religion and the Church's use of politics betrayed the problem that each was miscalculating the boundaries of its own domain.

Academically, the age of reason had come to a point of unfortunate conflict with the world of faith. Science and philosophical speculation seemed but antithetical bedfellows to faith and worship. Hostilities produced positions from which the adherents of each seemed never to reach consensus. In this milieu⁸, Spinoza published the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus. His purpose in mind was to engender thought conclusive to reconciling such circumstances. Actual results betrayed this intention, and his own life came under danger from the emotions that ruled those times.

8. Pollock, Spinoza..., pp. 2-43.

a. The purpose of the work and the place of faith therein:

We should examine more closely, therefore, the intention of Spinoza's work and the place of faith and its prescription with which we are specifically concerned.

His preface contains primary reference to such intentionality when we read:

I have believed that I should be undertaking no ungrateful or unprofitable task, in demonstrating that not only can such freedom [each may worship God as his own conscience dictates and freedom is esteemed before all things dear and precious] be granted, without prejudice to the public peace, but also, that without such freedom, piety cannot flourish nor the public peace be secure. Such is the chief conclusion I wish to establish in this thesis. ⁹

From the outset we see that Spinoza has as his end the prescription of public peace and piety. This prescription can only be made after insuring the possibility of freedom of faith. But headway can only be marked if religion and the notion of religion are discussed and clarified.

9. Theologico-Political Tractatus, trans. by R.H.M. Elwes, in Vol. I of "The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza" with bibliographical note by Francesco Cordasco, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1951, p. 6. Henceforth, any reference to this work, unless otherwise stated, will be according to this translation and labeled "TPT".

And consequently, the understanding of religion, that is, the understanding free of the many misconceptions prevalent at that time, can be effected only if faith is properly conceived. Now faith, in turn, must be put in right relation to philosophy. Spinoza himself admits this for we can understand faith better through recognition of reason and reason better through recognition of faith. Hence, the right relation between faith and philosophy being named is important in our study particularly.

Again, Spinoza in chapter fourteen, repeats the need to study faith, philosophy, and their relation by saying:

In order, therefore, to establish the limits to which individual freedom should extend, and to decide what persons, in spite of diversity of their opinions, are to be looked upon as faithful, we must define faith and its essentials. This task I hope to accomplish in the present chapter, and also to separate faith from philosophy, which is the chief aim of the whole treatise.¹⁰

Within this passage we should note the intention: "In order ... to decide what persons, in spite of diversity of their opinions, are to be looked upon as faithful..." This consideration is of paramount interest for to Spinoza, as indeed to all, there is the reoccurring problem of judging

10. Ibid., p. 183, (my underlining.)

faith. But by what criterion is it known that a faith is true or false? Can we establish a criterion? If we cannot, then no prescription of faith can be made. Pollock says,

"The Tractatus Thrologico-Politicus affirms that a plain man who does not enter upon philosophy may without harm, or even with profit, believe whatever he finds most edifying, provided he believes it sincerely and allows the like freedom to others."¹¹

While this statement must be later put within a more specific context, the overtones certainly infer a basic problem within the Tractatus. Given the condition of the possibility of freedom to faith subjectively interpreted and understood, what grounds shall establish interpretational guidelines? - or will there be none? And if there are none, how shall the "public peace", which Spinoza strives to engender, ever be attained? Clearly, faith, as considered personalistically authenticated through sincere conviction of interpretation shall be a problem to the grounding of public peace in a State.

With the gate open to personalized faith on the one hand, yet the thesis of public peace having to be secured on the other, the problem of reconciliation was posed. How

11. Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy, by Sir Frederick Pollock, 2d Edition, London: Duckworth & Co., New York, The Macmillan Company, 1899 p. 319 in Chpt XI "Spinoza and Theology".

shall the freedom of faith conform with the necessary unity demanded by a proficient State? How shall there be valid equilibrium attained between theology on the one hand and politics on the other? And, especially for our concern, how shall the understanding of faith be made in that its prescription shall insure just such an equilibrium?

Spinoza sets out also "to separate faith from philosophy." Noting the problems of the day in respect to those who allow one to be grounded and verified by the other, he intends to establish the domains of each so that no further misconceptions could mar possibilities of progress in either. The question of whether reason should serve Scripture or be its master presents itself as a major preoccupation in such an undertaking.

At this point, I should take issue, with Leo Strauss who says, in his Spinoza's Critique of Religion. "For in the Treatise, Spinoza addresses men who are still believers and whom he intends to liberate from their prejudices so that they can begin to philosophize: the Treatise¹² is Spinoza's introduction to philosophy". I take issue with this contention not from the standpoint of its being incorrect, but rather incomplete. As according to Spinoza's own words of intentionality (cited above) for the writing of

12. Strauss, Leo, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, Schocken Books, New York, 1965, p. 28.

such a work, we read that he is just as much concerned to insure the freedom of worship and the place of faith as he is interested in positing the freedom of thought and the place of philosophy. Consequently, if one is to assert that the Tractatus is Spinoza's introduction to philosophy, he must also acknowledge that it likewise is his introduction to faith.

It is precisely the understanding of this introduction to faith (as Spinoza intended it) which fills the preoccupation of this paper. For it is this introduction which takes on a prescriptive nature. And this prescription of faith is made within the framework of problems treated by the Tractatus, so as to facilitate their conquest. For if Spinoza can say, "Faith, therefore, allows the greatest latitude in philosophic speculation...",¹³ then we should understand his reasons for such conclusion. Again, we should moreover seek his understanding of faith if he should state:

The best faith is not necessarily possessed by him who displays the best reasons, but by him who displays the best fruits of justice and charity. How salutary and necessary this doctrine is for a state, in order that men may dwell together in peace and concord.¹⁴

Clearly, the place of faith in the Tractatus is one which demands that it be understood. Also, such need for

13. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 189.

14. Ibid., p. 188.

understanding is increased by the fact that this place is prescriptive, or better, instrumental, in understanding the solutions to problem areas encompassed by this work. Obviously, more evidence of this prescription must be gathered.

b. The instances of prescription within the Tractatus:

The gathering of evidence should proceed with a basis of structure so as to insure both cohesiveness and clarity. This structure would best respect objectivity if it be composed of questions which could be addressed to the text. Although the order of questions could be calculated to determine but one side of Spinoza's thought, it is with this possibility in mind, that we shall commence with the intention to avoid such determination. The questions of address will mean to but initiate from one side the direction that Spinoza's thought may take with questions launched from any side.

It is suggested that five questions be addressed to the text. The first of these should be the primarily necessary interrogation concerning the nature of the prescription of faith. Secondly, we should ask how it is that this faith is prescribed as opposed to other forms of faith that are not. Thirdly, an investigation of the conditions which make possible this prescribeable faith, should be conducted throughout the text. Fourthly, becoming more specific, we will question the relation which faith does share with Scripture. And finally, the reasons for efficacy are sought in

directing a look at why Spinoza maintains this prescription will help reconcile the problems treated in the Tractatus.

The following questions, therefore, are addressed to Spinoza in his Tractatus:

1. What, precisely, is the faith that is prescribed?
What are the properties of such a faith?
2. Is this prescribed faith in contra-distinction^r to another form in which faith may occur?
What are the properties of such a faith?
3. What are the conditions of possibility to faith in obedience?
What knowledge(s) or conviction leads to faithful obedience?
4. How does personal extraction from Scripture, via "reasonable" interpretation, condition the fact that obedience given the product of such interpretation is said to be for God?
What is the validity of interpretation to and through faith?
5. What efficaciousness does faith in obedience possess in grounding piety and public peace?

The gathering of evidence, therefore, begins with a look at the nature of that faith prescribed by Spinoza.

1. What, precisely, is the faith that is prescribed?

14

In Chapter Fourteen of the Tractatus, Spinoza makes his most formal presentation of the prescription of faith. The following assertions do introduce us to this

14. "Definitions of Faith, the True Faith, and the Foundations of Faith which is once for all separated from Philosophy". T.P.T. pp. 182-190. cf. also Hallet, H.F. Creation, Emanation and Salvation: A Spinozistic Study, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, p. 163, ft. 1.

presentation.

"The best faith is not necessarily possessed by Him who displays the best reasons, but by him who displays the best fruits of justice and charity."¹⁵

"Faith, as we have abundantly proved, looks for nothing but obedience and piety."¹⁶

"... each man's faith must be judged pious or impious only in respect of its producing obedience or obstinacy..."¹⁷

"I will go further, and maintain that every man is bound to adapt these dogmas to his own way of thinking, and to interpret them according as he feels that he can give them his fullest and most unhesitating assent, so that he may the more easily obey God with his whole heart."¹⁸

That Spinoza speaks of faith and its validity as being essentially linked to obedience is clear. "... no one is faithful save by obedience alone."¹⁹ Is this obedience²⁰ to be identified with Faith? It would appear not. Obedience is the necessary counterpart to faith. It is the

15. Ibid., p. 188.

16. Ibid., p. 189.

17. Ibid., p. 186.

18. Ibid., p. 188 (my underlining)

19. Ibid., (my underlining)

20. cf. above quote "... each man's faith"... etc.

practical expression of valid or sincere faith. Obedience emanates from the faithful man as action follows being. The commitment of faith necessarily demands respect and responsibility to that object towards which faith has been extended.

This necessity is such to the extent that Spinoza may say "no one is faithful save by obedience alone."²¹ Not that we are to conclude that to obey is to be faithful - rather, to obey that in which you have faith is to possess a valid faith. The 'saying' of faith is no faith - the 'doing' of faith posits the presence of faith.

Obviously, much more must be entailed in Spinoza's prescription. Can we look at faith itself more closely? What are the properties of such a faith?

"Faith consists in a knowledge of God, without which obedience to Him would be impossible, and which the mere fact of obedience to Him implies."²²

Spinoza immediately follows this definition with the assertion that, "this definition is so clear ... that it needs no explanation."²³ But Spinoza's clarity of mind on this point is not generally reflected by commentators. Consequently, this notion of faith is either lost or confused with other notions such as that of Religion. Such a

21. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 186.

22. Ibid., p. 184.

23. Ibid.

definition does need explanation if, what has been very clear to Spinoza, is either disregarded or confused by students of his thought. Questions arise. What kind of a knowledge is faith? Why is it necessary in order to obey God? And, why does obedience itself imply such a knowledge?

With the need for further explanation at hand, let us examine faith as it is considered a knowledge of God. Three clues come to bear in reference to this consideration. The first clue reveals a ground to this knowledge. The second indicates a criterion of faith. And the third clue reveals the object of faith. The following assertions respectively represent these clues.

... no one has knowledge or consciousness of God, except from love towards neighbor... ²⁴

... whosoever loves justice and charity we know, by that fact, to be faithful... ²⁵

... faith does not demand that dogmas should be true as that they should be pious. ²⁶

The properties of faith, then, are properties of a knowledge or consciousness or union with God. Enacted love through obedience follows as necessarily consequent to this knowledge.

24. Ibid., p. 185.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

This property of true faith is necessary if that faith be ever posited "true." ("Faith is not salutary in itself, but only in respect to the obedience it implies".²⁷ and, "He who is truly obedient necessarily possessed true and saving faith."²⁸) As according to the above quote,²⁹ we see that a distinction should be made between the 'truth' of faith' and 'true faith'. That a truth criterion be sought regarding the truth content of faithful principles and propositions is, for Spinoza, an invalid question.

Faith is not to be measured against truth, but against itself. The man with faith must look to his works. If these works produce justice and charity, then that faith which is his, is a true one. Now justice and charity are properties of a true faith but the measurement of these properties is not one performed by faith but by Reason. So the 'truth of faith' lies not in faith but in its properties and 'true faith' is said of faith alone. While 'true faith' does depend on the truth of its properties, how does Spinoza look at such a faith in its own right? He admonishes those who treat Scripture as a philosophical text by saying, "their belief in the Bible is a formal assent rather than a living faith".³⁰ Faith appears as an abiding practice, an habitus

27. Ibid., p. 184.

28. Ibid.

29. cf. ft. 27 "faith does not demand, etc...."

30. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 8.

or virtue which is valid only in constant use. Later on, in the context of affirming the place of Scripture, he asserts that:

"the knowledge of God, required by Him through His prophets from everyone without exception, as needful to be known, is simply a knowledge of His Divine justice and charity." ³¹

and so,

"... we may draw the general conclusion that an intellectual knowledge of God, which takes cognizance of His nature is so far as it actually is, and which cannot by any manner of living, be imitated by mankind or followed as an example, has no bearing whatever on true rules of conduct, on faith or on revealed religion". ³²

In the Tractatus, Spinoza sets great emphasis on separating the realms of Philosophy and Theology. Here again we are told that the knowledge of faith must not be considered to be within the speculative order. This particular knowledge or union is apart entirely from theoretical ³³ idea and its modes of critical clarity and distinctness.

The knowledge of faith is distinguished therefore,

31. Ibid., p. 177. (my underlining)

32. Ibid., p. 180.

33. cf. also Pungner, Bernhard, History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion trans. from German by W. Hastie, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1887, p. 409. Speaking of Spinoza he says: "Between theology and philosophy there subsists no connection or relationship, for the two differ toto coelo in their aim and foundation."

by its relation to true rules of conduct and revelation. But the assent to action requires the use of Reason. For " ... is a man to assent to anything against his reason?"³⁴

The relation of Faith and Reason to conduct must be made more clear. Initial evidence is gathered from the explanation Spinoza puts forth as regards the interpretation of Scripture, the body of revelation.

Scripture should be explained by Scripture so long as we are in difficulties about the meaning and intention of the prophets, but when we have elicited the true meaning, we must of necessity make use of our judgment and reason in order to assent thereto.³⁵

It is evident that the knowledge of faith and the knowledge afforded through reason must be distinguished. While we are aware that the whole man is best in possession of both, we are waiting for the starting gun to signal a commencement of real distinction. And obviously, this task must be accomplished.

³⁴. Ibid., p. 192.

³⁵. Ibid., pp. 191-192.

³⁶. An observation of Pollock is noteworthy here: "This is the burden of the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, and the severance of faith from philosophy there spoken of does not mean that what is disbelieved as matter of reason may be believed as matter of faith, but that when the distinct objects of the two are rightly understood no collision is possible" (op. cit., p. 318.)

Before beginning a study of the relation which faith shares with reason,³⁷ (and the other modes of knowing in Spinoza) we should first look within faith to see if its own mode of occurrence is always one and the same. If not, such an inter-distinction must be examined.

2) Is the prescription of faith in contra-distinction to another form in which faith may occur?

The fact that man is unable to govern all his circumstances by set rules, allows for his often being caught in situations where rules are either "useless"³⁸ or unknown. Fear often besets those in such straights and a grasping faith at any and all suggestions does arise as the prime effect of such fear. Spinoza points to the many omen-filled dogmas of superstitious religious sects and labels those who give assent to their validity as being "very prone to credulity".³⁹ This "faith in credulity" is clearly to be distinguished from Spinoza's idea of "faith in obedience", the latter of which we have seen is his prescription.

a) What are the properties of such a faith?

It is admitted that

"... superstition's chief victims are those persons who greedily covet temporal advantages; ... upbraiding Reason as blind because

37. cf. Chapter II, p.1.

38. Spinoza, op. cit., p. 3 - preface.

39. Ibid.

she cannot show a sure path to the shadows they pursue, and rejecting human wisdom as vain; but believing the phantoms of imagination, dreams and other childish absurdities to be the very oracles of Heaven." ⁴⁰

Those who pursue such as the above, are deemed to be, according to Spinoza, caught in a web of "quasi-religious sedition". ⁴¹ Faith in credulity is, therefore, of a seditious nature to him and is the cause of what he considers to be "quasi-religion". Again, we might note this to be in opposition to the prescription of faith in obedience which is the cause of true religion.

But what is the precise property of faith in credulity that distinguishes it from faith in obedience? Spinoza notes that the former is caused by superstition. And superstition is primarily caused by fear. It is within "homo-emotionalis" (who lives for his body and fears anything that should threaten its well-being) that Spinoza locates the order of superstition. Superstition "... comes to all men naturally ... it can only be maintained by hope, hatred, anger and deceit since it springs, not from reason, but solely from the more powerful phases of emotion". ⁴²

40. Ibid., p. 4.

41. Ibid., p. 5.

42. Ibid.

Since this instance of faith does not "spring from reason", are we to understand that faith in obedience does? And if so, in what way that it may be distinguished from speculative thought? Within the framework of the Tractatus, we can see no further elaboration of grounds for distinction between these two modes of faith. The grounds for understanding the distinction are presented often in Spinoza's earlier works. We shall look to these presently.

3) What are the conditions of possibility to faith in obedience?

It was this very question that led Spinoza to a study of the Bible "in a careful and unfettered spirit."⁴³ In the Preface to the Tractatus he lists his conclusions from this study.

a. Now as in the whole course of my investigation I found nothing taught expressly by Scripture, which does not agree with our understanding.

b. I became thoroughly convinced, that the Bible leaves reason absolutely free, that it has nothing in common with philosophy, in fact, that Revelation and Philosophy stand on totally different footings.

c. ... the multitude ... pays homage to the Books of the Bible rather than to the Word of God...

d. I draw the conclusion that Revelation has obedience for its sole object and therefore, in purpose no less than in foundation and method, stands entirely aloof from ordinary

⁴³. Ibid., p. 8.

44

knowledge.

From these conclusions we can see that an understanding of the conditions of possibility to faith in obedience presupposes for Spinoza an understanding of Revelation itself. Not only then does he turn upon the fact and status of Revelation with the light of Reason, but also does he propose to interpret the revealed. And beyond this does he also "point out the way in which the Bible should be interpreted".⁴⁵

The question may be raised, "For Spinoza, does one judge Revelation or merely give an assent through obedience?" From his definition of prophecy ("Prophecy, or revelation, is sure knowledge revealed by God to man ... prophecy really includes ordinary knowledge"⁴⁶) we understand that within Revelation there is a "knowledgeable content". This content may be analyzed under the light of reason. Again, he states

Seeing then that our mind subjectively contains in itself and partakes of the nature of God, and solely from this cause is enabled to form notions explaining natural phenomena and inculcating morality, it follows that we may rightly assert the nature of the human mind (in so far

44. Ibid., p. 9 (all quotes a-d).

45. Ibid. Small wonder is it that we might question the reasons which Collins puts forth when he locates the Emergence of Philosophy of Religion with David Hume.

46. Ibid., p. 13.

as it is thus conceived) to be a primary cause of Divine revelation. All that we clearly and distinctly understand is dictated to us, as I have just pointed out, by the idea and nature of God; not indeed through words, but in a way for more excellent and agreeing perfectly with the nature of the mind, ... ⁴⁷

So, reminding ourselves of man's attributive participation in God, we may understand Spinoza's confidence in interpretation more clearly. For this participation begets an identification of the Revelation, the revelation, and those to whom it is revealed. All conform in the clarity and distinctiveness of the idea's truth content through the reality of this participation. Spinoza claims the communism of ideas is real, not the idea itself. This "excellent way" of reception and containment of certitude with regard to Revelation is, for Spinoza, a real ground to the possibilities of successful interpretation, thorough obedience and valid ⁴⁸ prescription in matters of faith and morals. So, in that "the power of prophecy implies not a peculiarly perfect ⁴⁹ mind, but a peculiarly vivid imagination" he affirms that, "the prophets perceived nearly everything in parables and allegories and clothed spiritual truths in bodily forms for ⁵⁰ such is the usual method of imagination". From this we

47. Ibid., p. 14.

48. Please refer to section IIIa of this thesis for elaboration.

49. Spinoza, op. cit., p. 19.

50. Ibid., p. 25.

may answer our question of Spinoza, "does one judge Revelation or merely give assent through obedience?" He shall answer, "necessarily both". Yet here we must be careful not to do injustice to Spinoza's meaning - for here the possibility for this appears great. Spinoza does not admit that Reason does judge spiritual truths, only that spiritual truths do not contradict the findings of Reason.⁵¹ Reason discovers the truth in revelation, it does not constitute it. He does not suggest that Revelation is to be understood as a source of knowledge concerning spiritual phenomena⁵² yet he does agree that there is a content of "ordinary knowledge" within the prophecies of the Bible. Spinoza sees revelation as being conveyed through the prophets via their imagination and not in terms of deductive speculations. Hence, while the truth of Revelation is clearly and distinctly such, it is so only in terms of its object, which is obedience. For it is to faithful obedience that the truth of Revelation is addressed. Revelation exhorts pious action and this, through the natural uplift of the imagination. Revelation, as it contains ordinary knowledge does encounter the light of Reason. Revelation, as it is conveyed via the imagination does come under the light of Reason in so far as this light can "see

51. Ibid., p. 9, also p. 25.

52. Ibid., p. 27.

through" the imaginative conceptions of the prophet. But Revelation, as it is known for itself and obeyed, is grasped not in Reason but in faith. De-mytholization then, is ingred-
 dential to Reason yet quite anecdotal to faith. So, when Spinoza says that "our mind subjectively contains in itself and partakes of the nature of God,"⁵³ he lays ground work to the possibility of man's being able to see truth in Revela-
 tion, for he is also a primary cause. Yet further, when he says "God through His prophets required from men no other knowledge of Himself than is contained in a knowledge of His justice and charity"⁵⁴ he lays the foundation for faith in
 Revelation which is obedience accordingly performed via good works. The ground of possibility for faith in obedience is therefore summed as follows:

If a man, by believing what is true, becomes rebellious, his creed is impious; if by be-
 lieving what is false he becomes obedient his
 creed is pious; for the true knowledge of God
 comes not by commandment, but by Divine gift.
 God has required nothing from man but a know-
 ledge of His Divine justice and charity, and
 that not as necessary to scientific accuracy,
 but to obedience.⁵⁵

4) How does man arrive at a knowledge of God's Divine jus-
 tice and charity? Also, how does personal extraction from

53. Ibid., p. 14.

54. Ibid., p. 179.

55. Ibid., p. 181.

Scripture, via interpretation, condition the fact that obedience given the product of such interpretation is said to be for God? In short, what are the conditions of faithful knowledge and, what is the validity of interpretation?

In that, for Spinoza, "the Bible must not be accommodated to reason, nor reason to the Bible,"⁵⁶ then the knowledge which is foundation for faithful obedience is a knowledge which stands apart from reason and is not able to be pronounced "true" or "false" by that faculty. What then, is the certitude of this knowledge?⁵⁷ For Spinoza, the certitude of the people is the same as for the prophets (i.e. "1. a distinct and vivid imagination; 2. a sign and 3. lastly and chiefly, a mind turned to what is just and good".⁵⁸ Now, the problem lies within the last element of this certitude. What is the source of certitude concerning the mind's ability to know that it is "turned to what is just and good"? The following passage may give us better insight into Spinoza's meaning:

The only reason, then, which we have for faith in Scripture or the writings of the prophets, is the doctrine we find therein,

56. Ibid., p. 195.

57. Again, Spinoza states: "we cannot perceive by the natural light of reason that simple obedience is the path of salvation", Ibid., p. 198.

58. Ibid., p. 196.

and the signs by which it is confirmed. For as we see that the prophets extol charity and justice above all things, and have no other object, we conclude that they did not write from unworthy motives, but because they really thought that men might become blessed through obedience and faith ... We are further strengthened in our conclusion by the fact that the morality they teach is in evident agreement with reason, for it is no accidental coincidence that the Word of God which we find in the prophets coincides with the Word of God written in our hearts" 59

We may see here another head of an evidently reoccurring problem. We seem, within the context of Spinoza's very own contention, to be caught in a vicious circle. He affirms that the order of faith is apart from the order of scientific or speculative thought. He also says, "we see that the prophets extol charity and justice",⁶⁰ but by what judgment does he say the acts and the life they prescribe is charitable and just? And by what judgment does he, in turn, re-prescribe such action? From the above we may see his reliance on the testimony of the prophets' lifetime example. Also, it seems he finds additional justification in the fact that the actions which the prophets enacted and prescribed are not in disagreement with reason. Clearly we must look to the relation between Faith and Reason in order

59. Ibid., p. 197.

60. Ibid.

to understand his grounds for such justification.⁶¹ The, conditions of faithful knowledge shall need reference to the conditions of knowledge in order to be better understood.⁶² Of the validity of interpretation for Spinoza, the following should be noted.

a. ... the method of interpreting Scripture does not widely differ from the method of interpreting nature - in fact, it is almost the same.⁶³

b. Scripture very often treats of matters which cannot be deduced from principles known to reason.⁶⁴

c. The universal rule, then, in interpreting Scripture is to accept nothing as an authoritative Scriptural statement which we do not perceive very clearly when we examine it in the light of its history.⁶⁵

d. ... We should depart as little as possible from the literal sense ... if no second meaning can be found, the text must be taken

61. cf. Section IIIB1 of this paper.

62. cf. Section IIIA1 of this paper.

63. Spinoza, op. cit., p. 99.

64. Ibid., p. 100.

65. Ibid., p. 101.

66. (What he means when he says "perceive very clearly" is: "I call passages clear or obscure according as their meaning is inferred easily or with difficulty in relation to the context, not according as their truth is perceived easily or the reverse by reason. We are at work not on the truth of passages, but solely on their meaning".), Ibid.

literally, however repugnant to reason it may be; and all the other passages, though in complete accordance with reason, must be brought into harmony with it. If the verbal expressions would not admit of being thus harmonized, we should have to set them down as irreconcilable, and suspend our judgment concerning them. ⁶⁷

e. ... in order to know what statements are set forth as laws, and what as moral precepts, it is important to be acquainted with the life, the conduct, and the pursuits of their author: moreover, it becomes easier to explain a man's writings in proportion as we have more intimate knowledge of his genius and temperament. ⁶⁸

From the above explanation of the moments of Scriptural exegesis, we can readily perceive that the criterion by which the understanding comes in certain union with the meaning to be found therein is by the sake of its clarity. The assurance of clarity is, for Spinoza, grounded in the reality of attributive participation which man shares with God. This participation is no allusion to a "supernatural faculty". ⁶⁹ Rather, the participation is exercised in a method which "only requires the aid of natural reason". ⁷⁰ And the aid, which reason does offer, is not critical of Scriptural truth - rather Scriptural essay (i.e. history,

67. Ibid., p. 102.

68. Ibid., p. 103.

69. Ibid., p. 114.

70. Ibid., p. 113.

language, custom, semantics etc.). As regards Scriptural truth itself, reason does aid in understanding the meaning, not judging its veracity. This is the validity of interpretation - not that the masses will "be reduced to receiving all their knowledge of Scripture on the authority and testimony of philosophers",⁷¹ but in that "whatsoever is necessary to salvation", "can be understood in any language, because it is thoroughly ordinary and usual".⁷² So, "the highest power of Scriptural interpretation should be nothing but the natural light of reason which is common to all".⁷³ This is ^a~~the~~ condition of faithful knowledge - the openness of the natural light of reason to the apparent clarity of Scriptural Truth which "has not been revealed as a certain number of books, but was displayed to the prophets as a simple idea of the Divine mind, namely obedience to God in singleness of heart".⁷⁴

5) How does faith in obedience ground piety and public peace?

The prescription of faith in Spinoza is made on the basis that faith in obedience does indeed secure desired effects in any state or society - namely, piety and public

71. Ibid., p. 116.

72. Ibid., p. 117.

73. Ibid., p. 119.

74. Ibid., p. 9.

peace. Because, for Spinoza, "the whole Divine law, as taught by Scripture, has come down to us uncorrupted",⁷⁵ and because the "highest power of scriptural interpretation is common to all",⁷⁶ then the grounds for the certitude of agreement between law and obedience have been founded. In Chapter XIII of the Tractatus, ("It is shown that Scripture teaches only very simple doctrines, such as suffice for right conduct"), we witness Spinoza's development of conditions whereby it may be said that faithful obedience does indeed give rise to piety. We may gain insight into Spinoza's frame of mind concerning the simplicity of Biblical teaching and its open insistence that pious obedience distinguishes the faithful man, when he says:

I am consequently lost in wonder at the ingenuity of those ... who detect in the Bible mysteries so profound that they cannot be explained in human language, and who have introduced so many philosophic speculations into religion that the Church seems like an academy, and religion like a science, or rather a dispute.⁷⁷

In accordance with this, we may note that the "explanation" given the contents of the Bible is not, for him, given in terms of logic and science, but rather it is given in terms of obedience and faith. The man who is pious,

75. Ibid., p. 173.

76. Ibid., p. 119.

77. Ibid., pp. 175-6.

the man who obeys, is not the reasonable man with faith - rather is he more the faithful man with reason. Piety demands the knowledge-union of faith through obedience of what is clearly expressed in Scripture, namely the Divine Idea of love and justice. Man's participation in this idea, which is his dignity, finds its perfection in the enacted expression of this idea - this is piety for Spinoza. The possibility of participation in idea is a possibility of man himself. The possibility of expression of idea in act is a possibility of the faithful man. Finally, the possibility of piety is a possibility of the man faithful in obedience.

Spinoza outlines the core of Divine Idea as love
 78
 to our neighbor. It is this core that grounds public peace as being consequent to faith in obedience.

... it follows that no knowledge is commended in the Bible save that which is necessary for enabling all men to obey God in the manner stated, and without which they would become rebellious ... 79

The hypocritical milieu in which Spinoza was encased, conditioned his maintaining that faith without good works was no faith at all. How could one assert that "he had faith" if his works did not proclaim it? Persecutions, intrigues and rivalries all attested that peace could only

78. ... "obedience to God consists solely in love to our neighbor" (Ibid., p. 176).

79. Ibid.

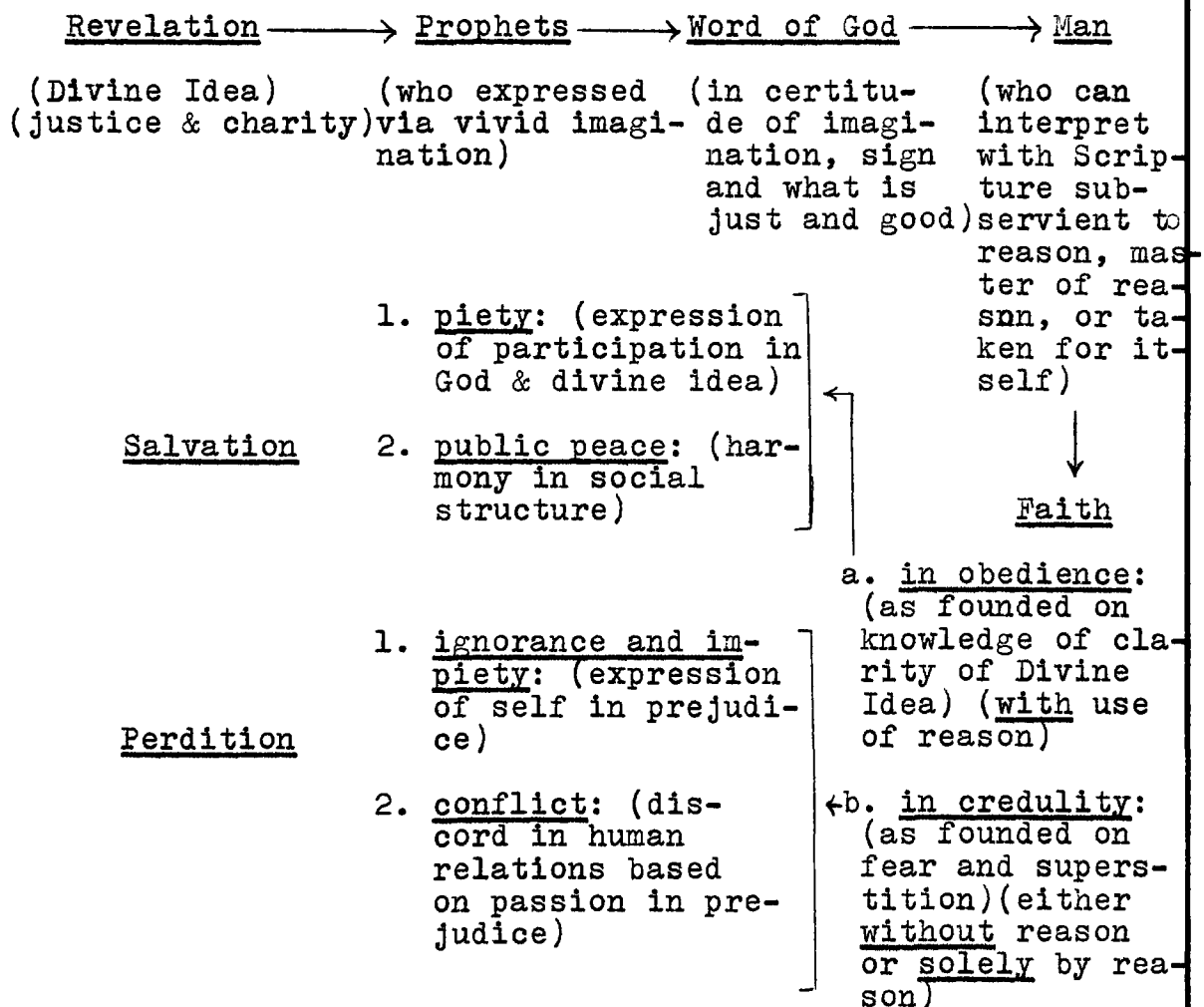
preside where obedience endured. Here we see more clearly why Spinoza sought, within the Tractatus, to delineate the realms of philosophy and faith. He wished to take accusations and animosities away from the realm of speculation. ("We cannot, therefore, think that opinions taken in themselves without respect to actions are either pious or im-⁸⁰pious") He wished to provide philosophy with a freedom from the shackles of personality judgment and spiritual involvement. Simultaneously, he wished to purify the piety of his age by grounding a refreshed openness to the Divine idea in Scripture so that each man could obey in a faith which engendered a communion of mutual respect and understanding, and that would leave the public peace secure. What he did in the latter case was not so much to prove the clarity of Divine Idea within the Word of God as expressed in Scripture, but more, to better unveil and allow this clarity to show forth so that his exhortation to faith in obedience might be the more clearly understood. His exhortation was performed for spiritual (piety) and pragmatic (public peace) reasons. And it was performed so that philosophy would be given room to work unimpaired. Yet this exhortation was duly answered by a hypocritical milieu.

80. Ibid., p. 180.

C H A P T E R I I

NECESSARY GROUNDS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF FAITH'S
PRESCRIPTION WITHIN THE THOUGHT OF SPINOZA

The evidence of prescription from the Tractatus before us, we should attempt to place it within a framework of cohesive understanding. First, the arrangement of evidence in diagrammatic form should be helpful.



a. The Causes of Faith:

Within the Tractatus we have continuously met with Spinoza's insistence as to the nature of faith, its enactment and its effects but we are conscious of a need to explain how faith in man does arise. The matter of interpretation does give foundation or dogma to faith but is this interpretation the very cause of faith? Can or does Spinoza give us some evidence whereby we may understand his meaning behind the paradoxical situation of the following affirmations?

Faith consists in a knowledge of God, without which obedience to Him would be impossible. ¹

and, ... no one has knowledge or consciousness of God, except from love towards neighbor... ²

So, we are back, for a better understanding, at the beginning of our study of his prescription. What moments do lead to faith in the individual? Does knowledge generate the action or action the knowledge? Or, is there a dialectic which returns unwordly each to other so as to generate "faithful man". Clearly, we must have an understanding of knowledge and will in Spinoza, in order to relate the knowledge of faith and the will to obedience more

1. Ibid., p. 184.

2. Ibid., p. 185.

validly.

1. Knowledge and 'intellectual love' in Spinoza:

In the final and unfinished work of Spinoza, we have a clear summary of the four modes of perception or knowledge. These are:

1. Perception arising from hearsay or from some sign which everyone may name as he pleases.
2. Perception arising from mere experience - that is, from experience not yet classified by the intellect, and only so called because the given event has happened to take place, and we have no contradictory fact to set against it, so that it therefore remains unassailed in our mind.
3. Perception arising when the essence of one thing is inferred from another thing, but not adequately, this comes when from some effect we gather its cause, or when it is inferred from some general proposition that some property is always present.
4. Lastly, there is the perception arising when a thing is perceived solely through its essence, or through the knowledge of its proximate cause.³

It is his conclusion that "the fourth mode alone apprehends the adequate essence of a thing without danger of error."⁴ Now what is this 'adequate essence' and why does Spinoza give importance to its understanding? In this

3. Spinoza, Improvement of the Understanding, trans. from Latin by R.H.M. Elwes, intro. by Frank Sewall, London, M. Walter Dunne Publisher, 1901, p. 6.

4. Ibid., p. 9.

treatise, he had "resolved to inquire whether there might be some real good having power to communicate itself, which would effect the midn⁵ singly, to the exclusion of all else: whether, in fact, there might be anything of which the discovery and attainment would enable me to enjoy continuous, supreme, and unending happiness." ⁵ To note this intentionality is important, because Spinoza is now looking for a 'highest good' and a means whereby to perfect himself to the point of its attainment. The reason why perfection and 'adequate essence' are relatedly important is explained in the following passage. (Attention must be paid this development for in these words do we witness the driving undercurrent to Spinoza's whole system of thought. And in these words do we also find grounds to the importance of understanding the significance of faith and its prescription in Spinoza)

... man conceives a human character much more stable than his own, and sees that there is no reason why he should not himself acquire such a character. Thus he is led to seek for means which will bring him to this pitch of perfection, and calls everything which will serve as such means a true good. The chief good is that he should arrive, together with other individuals if possible, at the possession of the aforesaid character. What that character is we shall show in due time, namely, that it is the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature. This, then,

5. Ibid., p. 1.

is the end for which I strive, to attain to such a character myself, and to endeavor that many should attain to it with me. ⁶

The essential perfection which man, of his own nature, does see before him, is a conceptual character that prescribes the manner by which any man shall go about re-constituting his own character and shall, through recognition of his own possibilities, commence to "make over" his state of perfection to the highest state of perfection which calls from ahead. - This character is the "adequate essence" which Spinoza says "the fourth mode (of perception) alone apprehends". ⁷ And it is the approximation one attains in regard to this character that establishes the "proportion" ⁸ between fulfillment met and highest fulfillment. Spinoza seeks the best manner by which he, and others, can achieve a 1:1 ratio in such a proportion. It is interesting to note that this study is the final work of his life and that it departs in method from the first four parts of the Ethics. I say the "first four parts" because I, as others, ⁹ have noticed that the subject matter of the fifth Part presents a pronounced change in emphasis and commitment from the earlier states of

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 9.

8. Ibid., p. 8.

9. Pollock, op. cit., p. 313.

the work. Although this may well be subject for another study, I should comment on the fact that the *Ethics* was begun¹⁰ before 1661 and not published until after Spinoza's death. Now the *Tractatus* was published in 1670. It seems probable that the conclusions which he reached in the *Tractatus* did actually stimulate a revised intentionality in Spinoza as he returned to finish the *Ethics*. And it seems probable that the subject matter of the Fifth Part is the consequence. Moreover, it seems correspondingly significant that his next and final (perhaps even knowingly, for Spinoza was aware that he was suffering from phthisis, "a malady which... never allowed its victims to escape"¹¹) work should propose to establish the grounds whereby man could "direct all sciences to one end and aim"¹² and whereby he could achieve his highest perfected character - "the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature"¹³. The high degree of probability concerning these facts shall aid us in seeing the significance of faith in the thought of Spinoza.

Now we are concerned with the fourth mode of perception or knowledge. We seek an understanding of this mode in particular for we wish to understand the knowledge of faith

10. Elwes, *Ethics* intro. by Frank Sewall, p. viii.

11. Elwes, *The Chief...* intro. by Elwes, p. xx.

12. Spinoza, *Improvement...*, p. 5.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

which, in the course of gathering evidence from the Tractatus we saw Spinoza to maintain is, "a knowledge of God without which obedience to Him would be impossible".¹⁴ Also, we saw that this knowledge "is bestowed and not commanded by the Deity",¹⁵ and that Spinoza had "absolutely established that this basis of theology i.e. man may be saved by obedience alone cannot be investigated by the natural light of reason."¹⁶ and therefore, revelation was necessary". Correspondingly it was admitted that, "... revelation is sure knowledge revealed by God to man".¹⁷ Therefore, we look to the fourth mode of knowledge, as it is understood by Spinoza, because the other three modes of perception are contrary to that perception whereby man unites himself with the Divine Idea of justice and charity as presented in the Word of God.

1. "Perception arising from hearsay" is never of the essence of a thing and "must always be uncertain".¹⁸

2. "Perception arising from mere experience" is uncertain and indefinite because "we shall never discover anything in natural phenomena by its means, except accidental properties".¹⁹

3. "Perception arising when the essence of one thing is inferred from another", does only infer

14. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 184.

15. Ibid., p. 179.

16. Ibid., p. 195.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Spinoza, Improvement..., p. 8.

19. Ibid., p. 9.

the idea by deduction. But it does not of itself (of its own mode of knowing)²⁰ put us in possession of the perfection we aim at".²⁰ (We must remember that Spinoza seeks perfection through knowing-union of what is "eternal and infinite... wherefore it is greatly to be desired and sought for with all our strength".²¹

It is in relation to the fourth mode of knowing that we shall understand the knowledge of faith. Now, Spinoza says that "a true idea is something different than its correlate".²² (The idea of circle is not the circle with circumference and centre.) Then, "as it is something different from its correlate, it is capable of being understood through itself".²³ Because of this contention, Spinoza distinguishes the "actual essence" of the thing and the "subjective essence".²⁴ the true idea of the thing. Spinoza treats this subjective essence as real and understandable. Because it is real and understandable, then, "certainty is nothing else that the subjective essence of a thing".²⁵

Hence, again it is clear that no one can know the nature of the highest certainty, unless he possesses an adequate idea, or the subjective essence of a thing: for certainty is identical with such subjective essence.²⁶

Continuing, he indicates that "truth needs no

-
20. Ibid.,
 21. Ibid., p. 3.
 22. Ibid., p. 10.
 23. Ibid.,
 24. Ibid.
 25. Ibid., p. 11.
 26. Ibid.

sign".²⁷ As such, it is sufficient to possess the subjective essence of things. The clarity of representation is the every adequacy whereby the truth presents itself in possession of the subjective essence. As the mind is open to all, "it follows, therefore, that ... the[method [reflective knowledge] will be more perfect in proportion as the mind attains to the comprehension of a greater number of objects, and that it will be absolutely perfect when the mind gains a knowledge of the absolutely perfect being or becomes conscious thereof".²⁸ We should here look back to the Tractatus and remind ourselves of what Spinoza said the knowledge given in revelation is and what it is not. First the latter

Thus to suppose that knowledge of natural and spiritual phenomena can be gained from the prophetic books, is an utter mistake...²⁹

and,

... prophecy cannot afford certainty, and the prophets were assured of God's revelation by some sign, and not by the fact of revelation...³⁰

From the above we see that the certitude of prophecy was "moral",³¹ not mathematical or philosophical. But here we speak of the knowledge of prophecy of which Spinoza says,

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 12.

29. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 27.

30. Ibid., p. 28.

31. Ibid., p. 29.

"I shall conclude that prophecy never rendered the prophets more learned, but left them with their former opinions, and that we are, therefore, not at all bound to trust them in matters of intellect".³² His conclusion to this was:

... We have determined, then, that we are only bound to believe in the prophetic writings, the object and substance of the revelation; with regard to the details, every one may believe or not, as he likes...³³

In terms of faith in the "object and substance" of revelation, we should, then, remind ourselves that "we can follow with certainty the intention of Scripture in matters relating to salvation and necessary to blessedness".³⁴

God clearly gave to us, as substance of Revelation and corresponding object of Scripture, the command of Divine Law.

That the Divine Law has come down to us uncorrupted, is an assertion which admits of no dispute. For from the Bible itself we learn, without the smallest difficulty or ambiguity, that its cardinal precept is: 'To Love God above all things, and one's neighbor as oneself.' This cannot be a spurious passage nor due to a hasty and mistaken scribe, for this is the cornerstone of religion, without which the whole fabric would fall headlong to the ground.³⁵

We have seen before that Spinoza distinguishes the

32. Ibid., p. 33.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., p. 113.

35. Ibid., p. 172. (my underlining)

message of the prophets from the meaning and/or essence of the Divine Idea in Scripture. The prophetic message is understood and known by the imagination, by means of a sign because the listener or reader has his mind turned to what is just and good. Now the meaning, or subjective essence, by which man perfects his character runs throughout all Scripture. And it is this meaning, or substance of Scripture that constitutes the known object in the fourth mode of perception. For that knowledge which gives the highest perfection is of God and it is within the fourth mode where the union of the knowledge of God's essence and man's mind does occur. The knowledge of God's charity and justice is such a knowledge. The knowledge of faith, in Spinoza, is "a knowledge of God",³⁶ and he exemplifies such knowledge in quoting from Scripture: "Hereby ... know we that we dwell in Him and He is us because He hath given us of His Spirit".³⁷ (i.e. Love) Now we may admit that there is a knowledge in faith and that this knowledge "apprehends the adequate essence" of God as He revealed it. But we are still no further to answering why Spinoza agrees with John when he says ... "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar"....³⁸ It will aid us now, then, to

36. Ibid., p. 184.

37. Ibid., p. 185.

38. Ibid.

look at the Ethics and its Vth Part so that we can understand an important concept in Spinoza which is that of "Intellectual love".

As in the Improvement of the Understanding, the fifth Part of the Ethics acknowledges that "the highest endeavour of the mind, and the highest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge".³⁹ From the union of this type of knowledge, "necessarily arises the intellectual love of God. From this kind of knowledge arises pleasure accompanied by the idea of God as cause, that..., the Love of God; not in so far as we imagine him as present..., but in so far as we understand him to be eternal; this is what I call the intellectual love of God".⁴⁰ Therefore, we understand Spinoza to propose the following development: the attainment or "having" of knowledge in the fourth mode does generate pleasure in the knowing subject such that he is anxious to renew this knowing constantly, - whereby this desire to ever keep present the knowledge he possesses does place the known in an eternal union with the knower who, appreciative of the knowledge-union he has attained does

39. Spinoza, Ethics, prop XXV. - note that in the Ethics the third mode of knowledge is identical to the fourth mode in the Improvement. This so because in the Ethics, "hearsay" and "knowledge from mere experience" are treated as subdivisions of "knowledge from experience" whereas in the Improvement, each is treated in its own right.

40. Ibid., Prop XXXII, Corollary.

strive to maintain both the knowledge and the appreciation - the striving "is intellectual love". Greater insight into this concept can be had from the following:

The intellectual love of the mind toward God is that very love of God whereby God loves himself, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as ~~he~~ can be explained through the essence of the human mind regarded under the form of eternity... ⁴¹

Understood under this light, we can now answer our confusion as regards the words of Spinoza, ...⁴²"no one has knowledge"...? Can we say that faith is such an intellectual love? To investigate properly our ability to make such a predication, we should bear the following in mind: if we do answer "yes", it shall not be to the exclusion of what has previously been established - i.e. that faith is a knowledge in the fourth mode. If we say "no", we must make clear how intellectual love is not that property of faith which does necessitate love towards neighbor before the faith, or knowledge can itself be named "true". And finally, before we make any answer we must understand "will" and its relation to "obedience" in Spinoza. For, throughout our gathering of evidence we clearly were aware that faith without obedience is no faith at all!

41. Ibid., Prop XXXVI.

42. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 185.

2. The Act of Willing in Spinoza

In Proposition III of Part III of the Ethics, Spinoza maintains that "the activities of the mind arise solely from adequate ideas; the passive states of the mind depend solely on inadequate ideas".⁴³ This affirmation is illustrated by still another preposition.

Man, in so far as he is determined to a particular action because he has inadequate ideas, cannot be absolutely said to act in obedience to virtue; he can only be so described, in so far as he is determined⁴⁴ for the actions, because he understands.

Man's understanding therefore does approximate the quality of idea beknown to him. If inadequate, his activity will be necessarily the same for action will be determined by the presence of ignorance, and as such, true obedience does not transpire. The highest activity of the mind is therefore generated by the possession of the highest adequate knowledge. Since, in faith's knowledge-union we are dealing with adequate ideas, we should see that obedience in faith shall be true obedience. But is obedience "free"? For Spinoza the "Will cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary cause".

⁴³. Spinoza, Ethics Prop.

⁴⁴. Ibid., Part IV, Prop XXIII.

Will is only a particular mode of thinking, like intellect: therefore... no volition can exist, nor be conditioned to act, unless it be conditioned by some cause other than itself, which cause is conditioned by a third cause, and so on to infinity. But if will be supposed infinite, it must also be conditioned to exist and act by God, not by virtue of his being substance absolutely infinite, but by virtue of his possessing an attribute which expresses the infinite and eternal essence of thought... Thus, however it be conceived, whether as finite or infinite, it requires a cause by which it should be conditioned to exist and act. Thus... it cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary or constrained cause. ⁴⁵

This proof was presented almost in entirety because its grounds so set forth are the boundaries to which the question of the will's freedom can be pushed when one interrogates the system of Spinoza. To him, adequate and inadequate knowledge cause respective actions in the Mind. The assent to such action is performed as a mode of thought. This mode is dependent upon, or caused by, the type of knowledge which the Mind has thus far achieved concerning the particular action. How does the mind "disobey"? - one might ask of Spinoza. He answers such a question with the fact that disobedience to one alternative signifies obedience to but another. It is not that one assents to disobedience, rather one obeys the strongest cause. Why some men may

45. Ibid., Part I, Prop XXXII, Proof.

decide to obey an action contrary to the highest good is that these men have stronger cause to act in accord with the emotions. The upcoming discussion of virtue in Spinoza shall pursue this matter further.

For now, we should see that this conception of freedom and the willing act is informative ground to our better understanding of Spinoza when he should say:

... in life it is before all things useful to perfect the understanding, or reason, as far as we can, and in this alone man's highest happiness or blessedness consists, indeed blessedness is nothing else but the contentment of spirit which arises from the intuitive knowledge of God...⁴⁶

Freedom consists as a property of the will in its assent to adequate idea, and therefore the corresponding perfection of the Understanding. Freedom abides in the life of reasoning through adequate idea and the possession of adequate knowledge. Obedience, therefore, becomes the completion of perfection. To make over oneself as totally as possible in act to that adequate knowledge which does and can perfect him, is man's moral and social responsibility. Indeed, if man does obey in act, or better, act in obedience to the adequacy with which his mind shares nature, then the validity of that adequacy is thereby consummated

46. Ibid., Part IV, Appendix, heading IV.

through commitment. The attributive participation through thought and extension which man shares with all nature, in the Philosophy of Spinoza, is the ground of principle which conditions the importance of obedience to knowledge. This⁴⁷ will be studied at length presently.

The will to obey in the case of the knowledge presented by faith, shall therefore, be of the highest nature and strength. Because man needs God to reveal the Divine idea in Scripture, his blessedness shall lie in embracing it totally in mind and action (Thought and Extension). And because the Idea revealed by God is of its very nature a command to action, (Love God! - Love Neighbor!), then the validity of faith shall be commensurate with the assiduousness by which man obeys throughout his daily life. To gain better understanding into this matter, we would best go back to Spinoza's first work, On God, Man and His Well-Being, where he says,

Thus we see that man, being a part of the whole of Nature, on which he depends, and by which also he is governed, cannot of himself do anything for his happiness and well-being...⁴⁸

... we are servants, aye slaves to God, and it is our greatest perfection to be

47. cf. Section VI of this paper.

48. Spinoza, On God, Man and His Well-Being, Edited with intro, by Dagobert D. Runes, Wisdom Library, New York, 1958, p. 84.

such necessarily...⁴⁹

Shall we say that obedience is free, then? Spinoza would refer to these words in answer.

For as we cannot perceive by the natural light of reason that simple obedience is the path to salvation, and are taught by revelation only that it is so by the special Grace of God, which our reason cannot attain, it follows that the Bible has brought a very great consolation to mankind.⁵⁰

Clearly the manner in which Revelation was given does seem to indicate that faith in its contents (or knowledge of its command) does necessitate obedience. Spinoza looks upon the fact of obedience to the command of Scripture as necessarily following its knowledge. The fact of disobedience is not explained by a "free" will which has inclined towards the best (or seemingly best) alternative, but rather the fact of disobedience to the command of Scripture is explained through the presence of a stronger cause. (such as a life bent by the emotions). A "faith in obedience" is, therefore, the highest fulfillment of possible union the mind (Soul) of man can have with God (Nature). Man is a "necessary being". His mode of being is always necessarily directed to God in one degree or another. The highest

49. Ibid.

50. Spinoza, Tractatus, pp. 198-199.

degree of necessity designates the deepest intimacy with God for He is the model of necessity. It is man's greatest achievement to make-over that which is unnecessary in himself to a union and identification through participation in that which is necessary in God.

Returning to our original question pertaining to the "causes of faith", then, let us re-ask Spinoza: "Does interpretation cause our faith?" And, "What is the status of knowledge and the obedient act in the man who is obediently faithful or who possesses a faith in obedience?" The tools of interpretation are many (knowledge of Hebrew, knowledge of History etc.) but Spinoza has told us that the understanding of Scripture for the attainment of a valid faith is common to all. Therefore, the highest gift of interpreting the Bible which Spinoza says is also common to all, must be that interpretation which understands the substance of the Bible or, the Divine Idea. Now this understanding is not "ordinary" knowledge but rather, intuitive knowledge of the fourth mode. The cause, or better, the condition of faithful knowledge is therefore the ability of each and every man to understand the essence of God's Idea (Law) in Scripture.

The fine tools of interpretation are not every man's. And clearly the exercise of these tools occurs in the third mode of perception - or Reasoning. While the product of such interpretation does give the learned better insight

into the meaning of Scripture, it does not bring them "one wit" closer to blessedness and salvation.

Man approximates blessedness only through obedience. So much is this so that we cannot even say "we have the faith" unless we do show constant obedience to its essence. Our two seemingly cross-contradictory statements⁵¹ may therefore be resolved. It is not so much that we should ask, "which comes first knowledge or obedience?" - for clearly the knowledge is present to the mind before man proceeds to obey its essence. But rather, we should see what, in the light of Spinoza's regard for perfection through knowledge and completion through willing, he means when he affirms that "no one has knowledge...except from love...". From our study we see that acts of love do complete the valid knowledge or true union. From this it follows that charitable acts must necessarily flow from such a union. Conversely, only such acts do indicate or prove the presence of true faith. The prescription which Spinoza makes must be seen in this light. It is a prescription that each man bear efficacy in his faith, that each man see piety lies only in

51. "Faith consists in a knowledge of God, without which obedience to Him would be impossible" (Tractatus, p. 184) and, "... no one has knowledge or consciousness of God except from love towards neighbor..." (Tractatus, p. 185)

participation through just and charitable works and that the highest perfection of man is not through knowledge but through the knowledge of faith which of its especial nature, is not validly constituted unless obedience be proper to its essence. At this point first mention should be made concerning our ever growing awareness that the place of faith in Spinoza is central, and that the meaning of faith in obedience does constitute a point of synthesis wherein the findings of Reason, the control of the emotions and the respect for human dignity do find connection and direction.

b. The Habitus of faith:

We are led, therefore, to consider first, such connections. The in-dwelling of faith in the mind of man does conjure the question - What is its relation to the quantum of findings stored in the mind as a result of Reason? What is the relation and distinction between faith and Reason for Spinoza? Also, we would like to understand better the relation which such an in-dwelling shares with Love (emotional and intellectual). Finally, we should understand the meaning of "virtue" for Spinoza and then ask if the in-dwelling of faith is considered by him to be a virtue.

1. Faith and Reason

In his earliest work, Spinoza makes a most illustrative statement which shall aid us greatly in understanding his concept of the power of Reason. He says in his earliest work, ... "reasoning is not the principle thing in us...only

a staircase".⁵² In this light, we see Reason as a power exercised by the mind. Reason is an active power, Reasoning is a natural activity. It gives four effects:

- 1) It teaches us what the thing ought to be (not what it is).⁵³
- 2) It brings us to a clearer understanding (makes us more aware of our possibilities).⁵⁴
- 3) It gives us knowledge of good and will (able to separate passions).⁵⁵
- 4) It enables us to examine the true and the false.⁵⁶

Knowledge gained through reasoning is therefore, of the third mode of perception. Such knowledge is to be distinguished from the fourth mode of which Spinoza affirms, "this kind of knowledge does not result from something else, but from a direct revelation of the object itself, to the Understanding".⁵⁷ Knowledge from reasoning is "consequent knowledge" in Spinoza, while knowledge from revelation as present to the Understanding is "immediate knowledge" or "intuition".⁵⁸ We should conclude from this, that the knowledge of faith is to be located within the Understanding. Of the Understanding, Spinoza says:

52. Spinoza, On God..., p. 117.

53. Ibid., p. 33.

54. Ibid., p. 34.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., p. 71.

57. Ibid., p. 101.

58. Ibid., p. 102.

Understanding... is a mere or pure passivity, that is, that our soul is changed in some way that it receives other modes of thought, which it did not have before. ⁵⁹

and,

The Understanding is that in us which must know God, and as it stands in such immediate union with Him, it is incontrovertibly evident from this that no thing can ever come into such close touch with the Understanding as God Himself can. It is also impossible to get to know God through something else. ⁶⁰

If we wish to push back further and ask, "how does this revelation of God to Man take place?" Spinoza answers by merely pointing to the fact and saying, "As to the particular law of Nature by which the communications took place, I confess my ignorance". ⁶¹ We must, then, look into the status of knowledge in the understanding and see its relation to Reason.

Referring back to the points covered in discussion concerning the fourth mode of knowledge, we can continue by studying a statement from the Ethics.

The endeavour or desire to know things by the third [or fourth] ⁶² kind of knowledge cannot arise from the first [or first and second] , but from the second [or third] kind of knowledge. ⁶³

59. Ibid., p. 74.

60. Ibid., p. 111.

61. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 25.

62. Please refer to footnote (39) of this chapter for explanation of brackets.

63. Spinoza, Ethics, Part V, Prop XXVIII.

From this we perceive that Reasoning does not refer us to the fragmentary and confused knowledge of hearsay, or the expertential knowledge of accidentals of the second mode but rather as it deals with the clear and distinct idea, so does it produce in us the desire to enter upon a union that is both necessary and immediate. As reasoning does refer us to Understanding, so too does it also gain impetus from the knowledge of the fourth mode. Such is the case in the knowledge of faith. The revealed knowledge of faith does generate in the active power of the mind, the desire to find clarity and distinctiveness in the many details and problems which surround it. Not that reasoning does attempt to ground the knowledge of faith - for this is farthest from the intention of Spinoza. Reason does not substantiate or establish the knowledge of faith. We must read Spinoza carefully. We must remember that he calls upon "the aid of natural reason".⁶⁴ The knowledge of faith in the fourth mode, that is, the subjective essence of God possessed in immediate and necessary knowledge within the Understanding is sufficient unto itself. ("It is impossible to get to know God through something else"⁶⁵) The aid of reason does distinguish the truth of the dogma of faith - not the truth

64. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 113.

65. Spinoza, On God..., p. 111.

of faith itself. ("The power of reason does not extend so far as to determine for us that men may be blessed through simple obedience..."⁶⁶) The essential knowledge of faith is given in revelation, not Reason. The dogmas of faith are derived in theology, not Reason. The truth of faith is self-evident because it is of the fourth mode. The truth of the dogmas of faith are subject to the light of Reason⁶⁸ for theology does prescribe dogma as commands to obedience in terms of actions which are distinct from the actual knowledge of faith. The assent necessary in these actions requires Reason ("... for is a man to assent to anything against his reason?"⁶⁹) In that, "the basis of theology ... cannot be proven by reason",⁷⁰ then theology does not depend on reason, but on faith and its knowledge. "We should, however, make use of our reason in order to grasp with moral certainty what is revealed..."⁷¹

We may now look at faith and reason in the following ways. Reason, in Spinoza, seems to be the discursive, active power of the Mind that does constantly attempt to

66. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 194.

67. Ibid., p. 195.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p. 192.

70. Ibid., p. 195.

71. Ibid.

critically constitute the veridical weight of all knowledge in the third mode. Faith, in Spinoza, seems to be an abiding power of the Understanding - Mind that does ever re-constitute its own knowledge-union with Highest good through works obedient to the meaning of that union. The relation of Reason to Faith is of power to power and knowledge to knowledge. The relation is not causal. It is a real relation within the Mind. It is a relation that leaves each in its own domain and neither subservient to the other. Reason seeks truth, Faith seeks obedience. But neither opposes the other. For, in fact, the findings of Reason do aid in cultivating the Mind's perfection as regards matters of faith and the knowledge of faith does stimulate renewed interest and speculation within Reason.

We have looked at length into the status of faith as a knowledge, but in the last paragraph, we began referring to the "power" of faith. Now nowhere do we find Spinoza speaking of faith as a "power". Yet, only too often do we witness his affirmation that "faith seeks nothing but obedience". With what efficacy does faith generate such obedience? What means does it employ? The fact of obedience, for Spinoza, does signify the presence of faith. How? The link between man's knowledge of Divine essence and his performance of action meant to obey it must be located in the fact of his desire or love for that knowledge and consequent action. Clearly, faith does in some way generate love.

2. Faith and Love

In the work, On God, Man and His Well-Being, Spinoza distinguishes the effects of the three general modes of perception. From hearsay and mere experience we derive the passions. From the reasoning of things known through conviction, we derive the good desires. And from the clear knowledge of essences we derive true and sincere love.⁷²

Love is defined as "... nothing else than the enjoyment of a thing and union therewith".⁷³ Love has the properties of being both impossible and necessary. By "impossible", he means that it is not a matter of free choice - that it doesn't depend on us "but only on the good and useful which we discern in the object".⁷⁴ By "necessary" he means that love gives the solace of strength which is a need due to our weak nature.

Elsewhere Spinoza affirms, in statement, a relation that we are particularly interested in.

We have said that love is a union with the object which our understanding judges to be good and glorious: and by this we mean a union whereby both the love and what is loved become one and the same thing: or together constitute one whole.⁷⁵

72. Spinoza, On God..., p. 27.

73. Ibid., p. 37.

74. Ibid., p. 38.

75. Ibid., p. 39.

That the mind is capable of understanding, then, the union so constituted is good. Likewise, in revelation, the understanding does attain an immediate and necessary union with God, through participation in the Divine Idea of His nature so given. In this knowledge of faith, the understanding is confronted with the essence of God through the essence of His command. This union in knowledge is considered as the highest perfection. He says, "if we use our understanding aright it will be impossible for us not to love God".⁷⁶ The fact of presence to this or that degree of knowledge does stimulate a reaction in the person to the very union in which he himself partakes. This reaction is impossible and necessary especially so in the case of the highest knowledge-union in the understanding of God's essence. Faith, then, does stimulate the highest reaction of love in regards to the knowledge which it signifies. "Whatsoever we understand by the third [or fourth] kind of knowledge, we take delight in, and our delight is accompanied by the idea of God as cause".⁷⁷ This explanation from the Ethics adds another dimension to the union of this knowledge and its subsequent effects. This mode of knowledge fulfills our highest possibilities of proximity to the

76. Ibid., p. 40.

77. Spinoza, Ethics, Part V, Prop XXXII.

essence which is our highest perfection. Our attribution to the cause of such knowledge is natural in that, for Spinoza, we attributively participate in his essence. The awareness of what that essence is, therefore, is naturally attributed to cause in God.⁷⁸ Love of this attributive participation is therefore stimulated. The loving respect of the relation of the mind to God generates action which seeks to preserve such a relation. To Spinoza the understanding is immutable and eternal. It is an attribute (as general nature naturata)⁷⁹ which depends immediately on God. The fact of this dependency adds to love, generated^{by} knowledge in the understanding, a quality of efficaciousness. Love begets or effects an impossible and necessary response to the impossible and necessary union from which it follows. This response is obedience. Obedience is nothing but the efficacious reflection of love in action. The quality of obedience is as proportionate to Love as love is to knowledge of the fourth mode - or faith. The performance of works just and charitable reflects, in the reverse, a love as necessary as the knowledge from which it is derived. In this vein, Spinoza is clear in affirming that love does not

78. "Things are conceived by us as actual in two ways: either as existing in relation to a given time and place, or as contained in God and following from the necessity of the divine nature." (*Ibid.*, Part V, Prop XXIX, note to proof)

79. This doctrine is clearly set forth in: Spinoza's Treatise On God, pp. 16-17.

flow from the obedience - rather obedience bespeaks a love. We know, therefore, that a man shows obedience because he has love, not that a man has love because he shows obedience. "For the love of God is not a state of obedience: it is a virtue which necessarily exists in a man who knows God rightly".⁸⁰ We should better understand more of our original evidence now.

... Revelation has obedience for its sole object and therefore, in purpose no less than in foundation and method, stands entirely aloof from ordinary knowledge.⁸¹

The purpose of revelation, which is obedience to its essence, does bespeak a foundation and method quite apart from the ordinary modes of knowing. Obedience bespeaks a foundation in the Word of God "displayed to the prophets as a simple idea of the Divine mind".⁸² Likewise does it bespeak a "method" of love. ("Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."⁸³)

For Spinoza, "God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things".⁸⁴ This he substantiates

80. Spinoza, Tractatus; note 28, p. 276.

81. Ibid., pp. 9-10

82. Ibid., p. 9.

83. Ibid., pp. 184-185 (Spinoza quotes John: 1 Ep. iv.7.)

84. Spinoza, Ethics, Part I, Prop XVII.

by the fact that "all things which are, are in God and must be conceived through God".⁸⁵ The nature of God, therefore, is most important as regards his involvement with God in the knowledge of His Nature. Before, while laying forth evidence, we found Spinoza to admit that the mind of man was a primary cause of the revelation he was receiving! In comprehending such an assertion, we must remind ourselves that it is the understanding which receives the knowledge of God in revelation. Now, the understanding has for its indwelling the presence of God. The passive readiness of the understanding to receive intimate knowledge of God is a readiness God-prepared. The man who receives revelation is said to be primary cause because it is his place in God that allows God to know Himself. God is not made to depend on the mind of man for God is in the mind of man already. God turns upon himself through the instance of himself - this instance is the mind of man. ("Our mind, in so far as it knows itself and the body under the form of eternity, has to that extent necessarily a knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God, and is conceived through God"⁸⁶) Wherefore, the presentation of God to Himself in the mind does generate a love. This love pervades the understanding for this knowledge, in this mode, is an occasion of God's infi-

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., Part V, Prop XXX.

nite self-love. ("The intellectual love of the mind toward God is that very love of God whereby God loves himself,... the intellectual love of the mind toward God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves Himself".)⁸⁷

Is love in daily actions to be identified with the love about which we have been speaking? Yes, but some clarifications must be made. The love in daily actions, for Spinoza, is the obedience present in action. Obedience occurs when one is in love. An act of love is an act that bespeaks the love which prompts it. The act itself is obedient to that nature which one knows and necessarily loves. The subject of morality shall discuss this consideration at length.

Thus for in discussing the habitus of faith, we have seen its place to be of especial importance, in the thought of Spinoza. Let us briefly recapitulate. Reason cannot prove to the fact of Revelation. Revelation had to be "given". The content of Revelation is knowledge of God. The object of Revelation is obedience. The knowledge of God occurs in the understanding. The understanding, as all creation, participates in God but in an especial way for it is a power open to the conscious awareness of the goodness or essence of God. This consciousness stimulates a love for its own sake. The faithful man, therefore, is one whose

⁸⁷. Ibid., Part V, Prop XXXVI.

nature has fulfilled itself highly in knowing and loving God. Such a habitus is reflected throughout the whole of this man's situation in life - to the least significant of daily actions. The faithful man's potentiality to the reception of highest participation in Nature has been fulfilled. His nature, therefore, has been made over. The fullness of participation is realized in the fact that this "making over" is an instance of God's intimacy with Himself. Such intimacy affects action in the dwelling-place (the thought of man) so that it ever seeks to preserve a conformity with itself. Such conformity is met thru obedience. We are therefore led to another consideration concerning the habitus of faith and that is the relation which faith and virtue in man do share.

3. Faith and Virtue

Such questions that we may ask ourselves should be: Is faith also a virtue? If not, what is virtue and its relation to faith? Finally, why is it that Spinoza makes a prescription of faith for the sake of virtue when he also says,

... every man is bound to adapt these dogmas to his own way of thinking, and to interpret them according as he feels... ⁸⁸

Taking this last question first, we are faced with

⁸⁸. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 188 (my underlining)

a seeming paradox in the exhortation of Spinoza. If the first ground of Divine Idea given through revelation is "there exists a God, that is, a Supreme Being, Who loves justice and charity, and Who must be obeyed by whosoever would be saved",⁸⁹ how can Spinoza suggest each man to adopt this to his own way of thinking (which sounds as if this ground should be placed into a previously established system which has been established by the individuals personal will) and to interpret as he feels? This paradox was exploited by many authors. One of Spinoza's earliest biographers sums their interpretation and attitude as follows:

If what Spinoza affirms were true, one might indeed very well say, that the Bible is a Wax-Nose, which may be turned and shaped at one's will; a Glass thr' which every body may exactly see what pleases his fancy; a Fool's cap, which may be turned and fitted at one's pleasure a hundred several ways. The Lord⁹⁰ confound thee, Satan, and stop thy mouth!

The immediate problem is: if virtue is decided by the individual, what is not virtuous? Indeed, how can Spinoza ever hope to elicit a prescription that should even suggest its path of virtue? While our understanding of faith's relation to Scriptural interpretation shall be

89. Ibid., p. 186.

90. cf. Appendix I to this paper: sheet reproduction of p. 402.

discussed below,⁹¹ we should see if the above quote concerning the individual's interpretation of dogma can be more clearly understood for its intentionality.

We see that Spinoza is speaking of interpreting dogmas. These dogmas are dogmas of faith. Now faith, as we have seen at length, is a knowledge in love that seeks obedience. The pragmatic problem of "what to obey?" in each occasion of choice is the problem which prompts Spinoza to the advocacy of the individual's interpretation of faith's dogmas. The status of dogma is, therefore, important to our understanding.

Theology tells us nothing else, enjoins on us no command save obedience, and has neither the will nor the power to oppose reason: she defines the dogmas of faith (...) only in so far as they may be necessary for obedience, and leaves reason to determine their precise truth: 92

Earlier we saw that Reason cannot pronounce judgment upon the knowledge of faith. Here, however, we find that Reason can critically determine the truth of dogma. Does this mean that reason establishes dogma? Spinoza above tells us that theology establishes dogma. Now theology seeks obedience in derivation from faith. How does the knowledge of Theology differ from the knowledge of faith? And how

91. Section V.

92. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 194.

is theology understood to establish dogmas?

By theology, I here mean, strictly speaking, revelation in so far as it indicates the object aimed at by Scripture - namely, the scheme and manner of obedience, or the true dogmas of piety and faith. This may truly be called the Word of God... Theology, thus understood, if we regard its precepts or rules of life, will be found in accordance with reason; and, if we look to its aim and object, will be seen to be in no wise repugnant thereto, wherefor it is universal to all men. 93

I nowhere find that Spinoza ever refers to Theology as a science or learned discipline. Theology is clearly not to be identified with faith, and we admit its distinction from Reason. What is, therefore, Theology to be understood as? If I may take the liberty of interpreting Spinoza, I should suggest that theology be understood, in his framework, as a virtuous doctrine. This doctrine flows from the fact of a specific knowledge-union in faith. To be seen within the central principle of faith are certain secondary principles which are not known intuitively but do follow from the object of Scripture in its due course of engendering obedience. These secondary principles are derived as a necessary consequence to the intuitive knowledge in the fourth mode. These principles are the "schema" and the "manner" necessary to obedience. They are the dogmas of faith. They are founded in conformity to the Divine Idea in

93. Ibid., p. 195.

which the mind participates. The "having" of this participation is a perfection. Therefore, this is not a doctrine of virtues - but rather, a virtuous doctrine. The principles are appropriate to the object of faith, they are not "arrived at" through reasoning. (Now, reason can and does pass judgment on these principles.) Spinoza says, "there can be no doctrines in the Catholic, or universal religion, which can give rise to controversy among good men". The principles which fall outside the realm of controversy are seven.⁹⁴ "No one can deny that all these doctrines are before all things necessary to be believed, in order that every man, without exception, may be able to obey God according to the bidding of the Law..."⁹⁵ We should see, therefore, a universal theology and an individual theology in Spinoza. This is so because the doctrine (or dogmas) of theology have obedience for their object and not truth. Consequently, theology is not just a doctrine but a virtuous doctrine - or a habitus of principles in the faithful man. They may be made over to knowledge but they are specifically present as conditions to obedience. The individual theology is composed of those principles which best enable this or that individual to fulfill his particular nature so, "that he may the more easily obey God with his whole

94. Ibid., pp. 186-187.

95. Ibid., p. 187.

heart".⁹⁶ If "good men" do agree in doctrine it is because they are good. Goodness is derived from virtue: - these men are then virtuous. Virtue flows as habitus of that which is good. The Divine Idea of revelation and subsequent principles are good "indwelling" the mind of man. Indeed, Spinoza even refers to the knowledge of faith - the subjective essence adequately known - as the major "doctrine".⁹⁷ This, we know, is a knowledge which does not, in its own right, become valid until the obedience which it commands, transacts. Simple obedience is piety. Piety is a virtue. Faith is only made valid through the habitus of virtue it seeks.

c. The effects of faith

We are brought to study this virtuous habitus more closely. From all that has gone before, we are led to affirm that faith is as dependent upon virtue for its validation as virtue is upon faith for its initiation. In an earlier work,⁹⁸ Spinoza outlines the relation between thought and passions. Of this we shall state a summary.

Thoughts either relate to things or to the person. Thoughts relate to things either in a necessary or accidental manner. Thoughts relate to the person either in a way

96. Ibid., p. 188.

97. Ibid., p. 186.

98. Spinoza, On God..., pp. 53-59.

he should act to advance the thing or in a way that he should act to prevent it. In any of the four cases, the passions do react in their respective ways. On the side of the thing, if it is good, hope ensures, if bad, fear. If the good is necessary, confidence is the passionate reaction. If the bad is necessary, despair. On the side of the person; if something must be done but there is indecision vacillation will follow. If he resolves to advance it, bravery. If he copies it, emulation. If he knows how to advance it but doesn't, pusillanimity. (In the extreme, there ensues a passion of timidity) If there is anxiety from another's enjoyment, jealousy, etc. This is discussed at greater length in the Ethics. The more mature Spinoza of this work states

All emotions are attributable to desire, pleasure, or pain... But desire is each man's nature or essence (...); therefore, desire in one individual differs from desire in another individual, only in so far as the nature or essence of the one differs from the nature or essence of the other. ⁹⁹

Further on we read:

Thus, although each individual lives content and rejoices in that nature belonging to him wherein he has his being, yet the life, wherein each is content and rejoices, is nothing else but the idea, or soul of the said

99. Spinoza, Ethics, Part III, Prop LVII, proof.

individual, and hence the joy of one differs only in nature from the joy of another, to the extent that the essence of one differs from the essence of another. 100

There is an extent of essential change in the one who enjoys the contentment of high perfection. This effect must certainly be effected by the life of faith in obedience

1. Credulity vs. piety

The credulity which man is prone to extend on object is fostered only by fear. On the side of the thing, therefore, there must be an aspect of bad to which man would react with such a passion. This object, therefore stimulates an obedience through fear rather than love. While this fear may even be due to an unknown aspect in the object to which a faith in credulity has been extended, this is entirely against, for Spinoza, the highest form of love which is generated by a most intimate knowledge. We obey in love what we know well - that is the joy of obedience. In this joy, virtue is its own reward. We should not obey in fear what we are afraid of through ignorance and superstition. The reward is only a temporary respite from fear and the joy is only the negative thankfulness that no harm has come. The indwelling of credulity effects an essential change towards the passion upon which it thrives - namely fear. Not only worship but, social relations, politics and the working

100. Ibid., note.

of Reason must all be permeated with the passion that conditions them. Freedom is never allowed in such a state for the object of decision is also conditioned by the darkness of soul which contains the choice. Spinoza highlights this superstition through fear as the cause of all major bigotries and wars. Credulity "springs not from reason but from the more powerful phases of emotion".¹⁰¹

Piety or blessedness is the overall habitus - the essential character of the man who lives with a faith in obedience. There is, for Spinoza, an essential difference between the man who grounds his piety in emotion and the man who grounds his piety in knowledge of the fourth mode. The necessity which he describes as being between the "beholding" of God and the love towards neighbor, poses a problem. If, for him, the person cannot say he has faith if his works do not show it, does this mean that the faith is once for all invalidated at the first act of disobedience as regards its accordance? We have no direct answer to this question in his texts. Spinoza proposes little doctrine on "sin". He does say when speaking about remorse and repentance:

If, however, we will get a proper insight into them, we shall find that they are not only not good, but that they are, on

101. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 5.

the contrary, pernicious, and that they are consequently bad. For it is obvious that we always succeed better through Reason and the love of truth than through remorse and sorrow. ¹⁰²

SHOULD

He suggests that we ^A accentuate the positive rather than dwell upon the negative in our nature. The return to virtue and pious living is made only through a redirected gaze. This gaze turns back up to the knowledge of faith, - it should not be redirected to a emphasis of sorrow for past. This only impedes future action and hinders ascent to perfection of nature. The understanding of "sin" for Spinoza is made in reference to disobedience. This disobedience is performed against the habitus of faith which is most perfectly fulfilled only in love. An act disrespectful of this habitus (God-man essentially united) is sinful as regards the perfection which knowledge of perfection implies. Action necessarily follows in quality, the quality of knowledge which is the person's indwelling. The greatest problem is not understanding what sin is for Spinoza - but rather, how it is possible. If man, as we studied in our discussion of his conception of freedom, is necessarily determined by cause to choice, how is it that the presence of the highest knowledge, once gained, would ever allow another cause to overrule its influence?

102. Spinoza, On God..., p. 59.

2. Obstinacy vs. obedience

... a perfect man is moved to help his fellow-man by sheer necessity only, and by no other cause... ¹⁰³

What are the possibilities of "obstinary"? ¹⁰⁴

Obstinacy implies a stubbornness in the face of greater or even overwhelming force. Is there some modification of interpretation that Spinoza would have us make? It appears so, - as he says:

... each man's faith must be judged pious or impious only in respect of its producing obedience or obstinacy, and not in respect of its truth... ¹⁰⁵

If a man acts in obstinacy to a faithful knowledge he possesses, he acts to prevent it from bearing fruit. The possibilities to obstinacy reflect the actuality of faith's quality. As the man's works bear obstinacy to the universal Idea in Revelation, so too, do they indicate a lack of appropriation as concerns this Idea. If the knowledge or habitus of that knowledge were present, obstinacy to its principle would be impossible. So, when Spinoza speaks of works which bespeak a lack of valid knowledge, he affirms that that knowledge is not present or else the works would

¹⁰³. Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁰⁴. term used in Spinoza, cf. especially Tractatus, p. 186.

¹⁰⁵. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 186.

be different.

Can a man disagree with the Bible? This question is the most difficult to answer. Spinoza answers, not if he uses his reason aright! The truthfulness of Reason to itself implies that if used, the man will be turned to what is just and good! Therefore, the mind if conditioned for the reception of the core of Scripture. ("Do they think that faith and religion cannot be upheld unless men purposely keep themselves in ignorance, and turn their backs on reason?"¹⁰⁶) The powers of the mind are, in their potency, in accordance with the dependence they owe God. This Spinoza treats as self-evident. For, "how can anyone, desirous of loving justice and obeying God, adore as Divine what he knows to be alien from the Divine nature"¹⁰⁷. Obviously this, and other passages, presuppose that the individual is desirous. If he is not, then he has not ever been in a valid knowledgeable contact with his own nature or God's. But why is he not open to this contact if his powers be as Spinoza admits they must be? We are caught in a circle. This man, for one reason or another, is in ignorance. Not an ignorance of the truth of faith - but in ignorance of true faith. If this man begins to antagonize

106. Ibid., p. 192.

107. Ibid., p. 185.

others in the true faith, he becomes "an enemy of Christ".

Some understanding comes from Spinoza's discussion on Law. Law depends either on natural necessity or on human
109
decree.

A law which depends on natural necessity is one which necessarily follows from the nature, or from the definition of the thing in question; a law which depends on human decree, and which is more correctly called an ordinance, is one which men have laid down for themselves... 110

This is the expression of law in the abstract. Spinoza defines law more particularly as "being a plan of living which men have for a certain object laid down for themselves... 111 This view of law sees it divided into human law and Divine law. "By human law I mean a plan of living which serves only to render life and the state secure". "By Divine Law I mean that which only regards the highest good, in
112
other words, the true knowledge of God and love". The founding of Divine Law is the establishment of highest Good. Obedience to the law effects highest perfection. Now, "the intellect is the best part of our being". Therefore, we should engender its highest perfection in order that we should ever realize fulfillment. Continuing, all our

108. Ibid.

109. Law in the Tractatus is treated in Chapter IV (pp. 57-68)

110. Ibid., p. 57.

111. Ibid., p. 59.

112. Ibid.

knowledge depends "solely on the knowledge of God". (1. because without God nothing can exist and 2. because we should remain in universal doubt concerning all our knowledge if this knowledge were not possessed) It follows that knowledge of God is man's highest good. The "good" which this knowledge of necessity is, does reflect itself in action. "Hence the most perfect and the chief share in the highest blessedness is he who prizes above all else, and takes especial delight in, the intellectual knowledge of God, the most perfect Being".¹¹³ Obstinacy, therefore, can only be exercised in proportion to the quality of this knowledge possessed by the agent. We have seen Spinoza categorically refuse the possibility of a man's possessing the knowledge and acting contrary to its mandate. The mandate is explained as such:

Hither, then, our highest good and our highest blessedness aim - namely to the knowledge and love of God; therefore, the means demanded by this aim of all human actions, that is, by God, in so far as the idea of Him is in us, may be called the commands of God, because they proceed, as it were, from God Himself, inasmuch as He exists in our minds, and the plan of life which has regard to this aim may be fitly called the Law of God.¹¹⁴

Obedience to the law is commensurate with knowledge of the law. If obedience is not displayed, knowledge is not present. If we return to human law, then, we see that its security of correct legislation lies in a dependency upon

113. Ibid., p. 59.

114. Ibid., p. 60.

this higher knowledge. This knowledge not possessed, legislation must be based on inferior knowledge (of the 1st and 2d modes). The possibility to obstinacy is conditioned, therefore, by law passed in knowledge of this nature to which the passions have more control and the necessity of obedience is minimized. The following two diagrams shall hopefully represent the causes, habitus and effects of faith as a fact. The first represents the fact of faith as present to the mind. The second depicts Spinoza's concept of the mind devoid of faith.

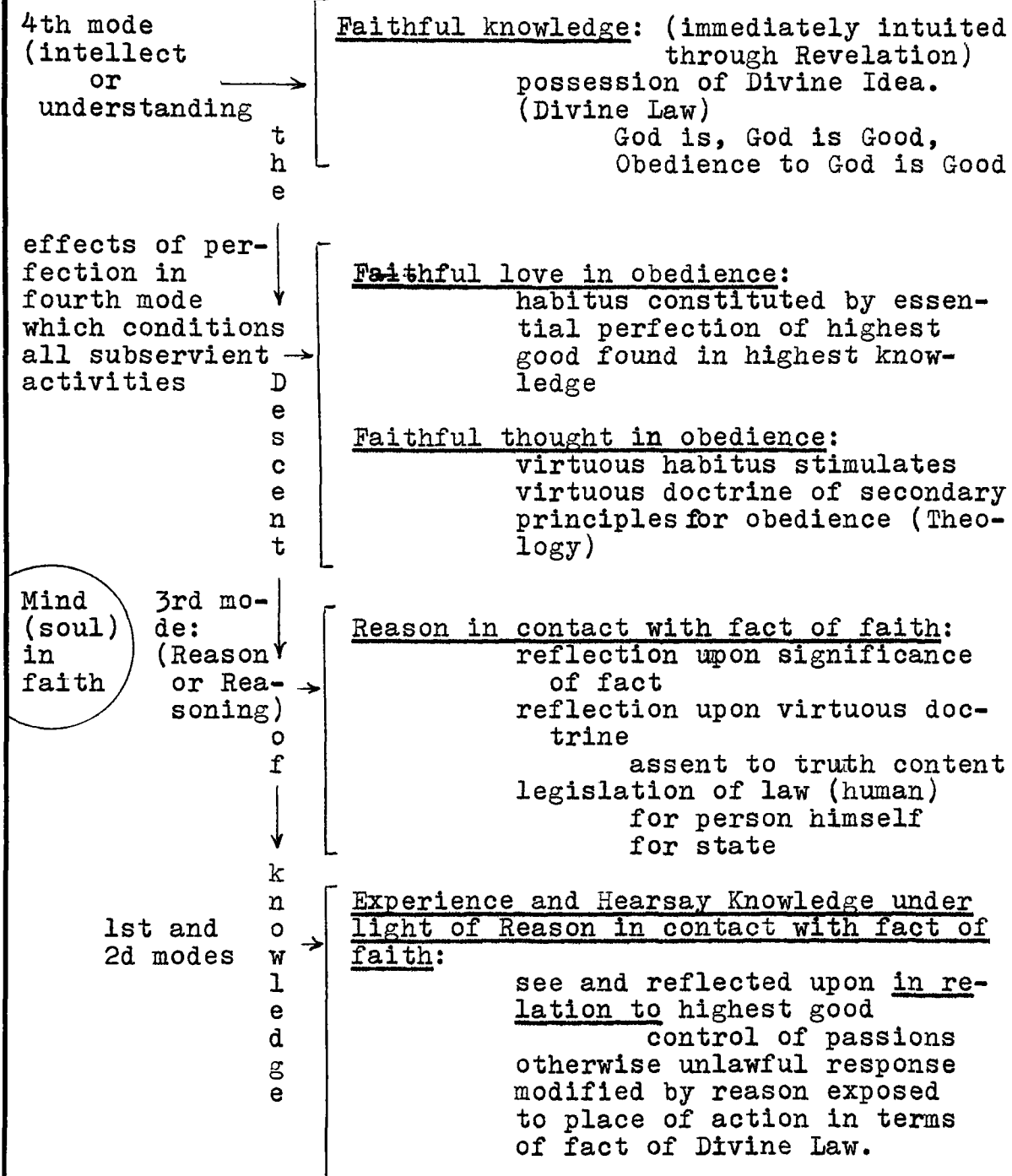
REFER TO NEXT PAGE FOR THE TWO DIAGRAMS.

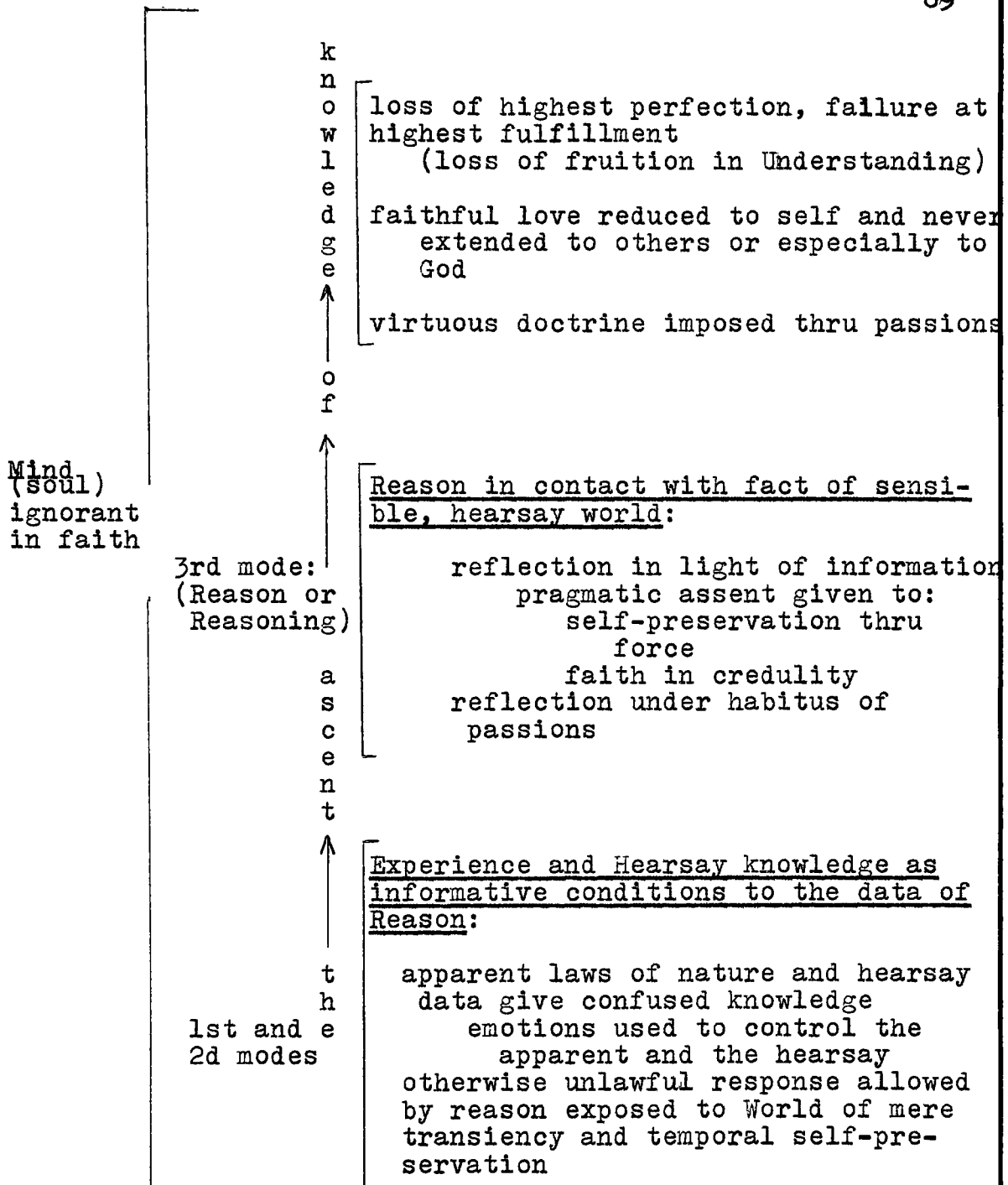
3. Evil, Good, and morality

One last aspect concerning the effects of faith should be considered. What is the status given good and evil in Spinoza? How does this status relate to his understanding of faith? And finally, we should ask of him, what is morality?

In his earliest essay, he states, "... the foundation of all good and evil is Love bestowed on a certain object".¹¹⁵ We might ask how this foundation relates to faith, as we understand its prescription in Spinoza. Also, we should refer to the above two diagrams in order to situate the place of this foundation.

¹¹⁵. Spinoza, On God..., p. 68.





It has often been argued¹¹⁶ that Spinoza's conception of good and evil and his grounding of morality are incapable of founding an Ethics because his system of thought destroys the possibilities of an "ought". Spinoza is charged with the exclusion of moral value from his morality. It does appear that the foundation we find in his Treatise of God... leaves a path open only for an admittance to relativism. If, as he says, the bestowing of love upon an object founds the good or evil therein, certainly reality becomes relative to the minds that give it value. A.E. Taylor says, "Though Spinoza had find things to say about the virtue of benevolence, he is curiously silent about the great virtue in which the concept of a debitum is most markedly prominent,¹¹⁷ the virtue of justice."

While the presentation of Spinoza's ethics is beyond us here, we feel that the prescription of faith is a most significant factor to consider in regards to this point. It is most significant because its very presence contradicts those many critics of Spinoza who claim his system is a relativistic one. Even in his first work he is saying

116. Hallet, H.F., "Creation, Emanation, and Salvation: a Spinozistic Study," The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, cf. Chpt. VIII, pp. 159-162.

117. Taylor, A.E., "Some Inconsistencies in Spinozism," Mind XLVI, N.S. p. 286.

something which Taylor has just denied of him.

... a perfect man is moved to help his fellow-man by sheer necessity only, and by no other cause, and therefore he feels it all the more to be his duty to help the most godless, seeing that his misery and need are so much greater. ¹¹⁸

'The perfect man' - who is he, for Spinoza? Who is he if there is not, in his thought, the intention to prescribe action leading to his character? We have seen that the 'character of human perfection' present to every man is, for Spinoza, a model that calls from ahead. Our movement through life is a dialectic given over to fulfill the essence of that character. The essence is given in knowledge and it is approximated, not in the knowing of the essence - for if that were true, he would not deride those who give 'formal assent' to the perfection and who show it not in good works commensurate with its adequate valid possession. The approximation of perfection is an 'ought' of the highest order - it is the ought of obedience. This obedience is a debitum which arises from the virtue of justice. This virtue of justice is again of the highest order for, to Spinoza, man's knowledge of God is part of God's knowledge of Himself. Action in obedience to this knowledge is therefore, a response to the fact of being inherent in such a

¹¹⁸. Spinoza, On God..., p. 65.

union. As man becomes aware, through intuition, of the conscious participation which he is with God, so must he turn on himself with respect for who he is. This respect, or love, is out of justice. The turning on oneself is performed by the light of reason. ("... true Belief, or Reason, leads us to the knowledge of good and evil".¹¹⁹) It is by the very fact of obligation to the perfection of union with God that Spinoza can say, "... our well-being is the love of God".¹²⁰ The foundation of good and evil, therefore, has not, in Spinoza, the relativistic footing which is alluded when he says, "... the foundation of all good and evil is love bestowed on a certain object".¹²¹ This statement is meant in light of the fact of the following:

... after we have come to the understanding of things, and have tasted the excellence of knowledge, the natural knowledge teaches us ethics and true virtue.¹²²

The importance of the intuition of faith in the understanding, therefore, is central in reaching true cogency of Spinoza's explanation regarding the status of good and evil. Their status is a relative one. It is relative in that they are related not to the ordination of man's imagination and sensual inclinations (for we have seen the

119. Ibid., p. 67.

120. Ibid., p. 87.

121. Ibid., p. 68.

122. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 67.

place and provisions with which Spinoza treats the emotions). But the status of good or evil is determined necessarily by the object which is known to be loved. The object of the fourth mode is the essence of God as He reveals it. In this revelation is contained the Divine Law. In knowing Divine Law, man necessarily is exposed to the necessity of obedience. Now obedience does not determine that the Law is good. Rather, obedience, by its very presence in action, reflects goodness in the law. For, we have seen Spinoza maintain that the law, if truly known, must necessarily be truly obeyed. Hence, he discerns wrong action in obedience even in those who claim to know the law. For him, the knowing of object is an intimacy wherefrom the quality of action cannot be found in contradiction. The charge of relativism, however, could seemingly, even in the last analysis, still be laid against Spinoza. The problem arises in our recollection that he posits man as a primacy cause of Revelation. Also, even within the Tractatus, we find him saying:

... The Divine Law, which renders men truly blessed, and teaches them the true life, is universal to all men: may, we have so intimately deduced it from human nature that it must be esteemed innate, and, as it were, ingrained in the human mind.¹²³

We must qualify our previous understanding of the Divine Law, then. We note its dependence upon the presence

123. Ibid., p. 69.

of Revelation in so far as the possibility of its wholesome deduction can be stimulated. But we cannot say that the content of Revelation does include this law as a bucket contains water. Let us rather depict the overflowing container (of intellect) of water (revelation) which does spill on the ground below (3rd mode of Reason) and give condition to the proper cultivation (Reasoning) of fruit¹²⁴ (Divine Law).

Now, according to Spinoza, some few men can reach knowledge of Divine Law through ascent via knowledge of the first and second modes. But no man can, by the light of natural reason, reach knowledge of the means to salvation except through descent via knowledge of the fourth mode. Consequently, the knowledge of good and evil, while formally established within the third mode of Reasoning, is best conditioned by the intuitive knowledge of Revelation.¹²⁵

Therefore, we may see more clearly that the Love given the object of knowledge in the fourth mode (God) is the foundation of all good and evil. Our reflective life must revolve about the fact ^{that} ~~of~~ this love and knowledge, whereby actions and objects of thoughts are deemed good or evil, is grounded in proportionate relation to the habitus

124. cf. diagrams above.

125. Ibid.

of highest good in its appropriated form. Morality, or the moral aspect of action, is determined, in so far as this highest good has been appropriated. Spinoza hands all men the capacity and/or the responsibility of acquiring such knowledge but he does not pass judgment on those who perform acts out of ignorance except in so far as they suffer from lack of capacity - fulfillment. The only evoked enemy of highest good which he names openly is the one who lives in ignorance and who actively antagonizes the well-being of those who live in the reality of union with highest good. The morality of human action, therefore, is inherent to the action of he who is able to reasonably judge the effects of his love. Obedience, the response to love of the object-known, is, ⁱⁿ its own right, known for the quality of action it produces.

Spinoza's early idea of "Regeneration", while not presented within the Tractatus, is a condition of understanding whereby we may gain further meaning from the significance of faithful knowledge in its relation to morality. The moments of Spinoza's explanation of idea are as follows:

1. There is nothing in Nature of which there cannot be an Idea in the Soul.
2. The Thing knows is either more or less perfect.
3. Correspondingly, so is the union as according to that thing with which the Soul is united thru its Idea.

126. Spinoza, On God..., pp. 102-105.

4. Now, Nature is a whole or one substance:
 - a. all is united in One, or God
 - b. the essence of the One is infinite.
5. The body is the first thing of which the Soul becomes aware (the first idea)-so that thing is the first cause of the Idea.
6. But, this Idea yearns to be fully explicitated and, as such, it must be known in its relation to that without which it could never be - or God.
7. So, the Idea becomes united with the knowledge through Love - this is a knowledge of the effects of union with things in truth.
8. In this union by knowledge thru love, we are "born again" - or, regenerated:
 - a. first birth is the knowledge of things
 - b. second birth is the knowledge of the effect of union with things - and this knowledge is one "at a distance" which engenders love or respect for the fact of the union with thing and qualifies action on behalf of it.

Although the early Spinoza here is still engaging the problem of certitude within a Cartesian framework, we can see that the mature Spinoza of the Tractatus still holds to the importance of re-birth, but now thru the necessity of faithful knowledge. For regeneration of the Soul is possible only if man can put his knowledge in relation to the presence and nature of God. The possibilities of knowing such a relation are commensurate with his capacity for knowing God. The knowledge of God comes through the Understanding in Union with Revelation. ("It is impossible to get to know God through something else" ¹²⁷)

Action as regards "that other" is determined by

127. Ibid., p. 111.

the knowledgeable awareness we have of that other. This awareness is complete not just in the knowing of other, but in being able to situate the other as regards the Whole of Nature. Without an awareness of God, the knowledge of place is impossible. With the awareness of God, does arise better Idea of action which should befit the other in its place or relation to God. The man who lives in a Universe of "parts" has great difficulty in deciding upon the approach he should make to each. The possibility of morality in human action is therefore dependent upon the knowledge one has of the Whole - or God. Revelation is regenerative. It is a re-birth not only in that it gives over an essential distinctiveness in knowledge of God, but also, of its own object, does it exhort obedience to what that knowledge implies. Spinoza prescribes to man the perspective of Whole, afforded by faith, in the light of such a fact.

CHAPTER III

THE PRESCRIPTION OF FAITH AND ITS INFLUENCE

We are by now brought to the distinct realization that the notion of faith and the meaning which it extends, through relation, to all other notions, is, in the thought of Spinoza, of no small significance.

The substratum of faithful knowledge is a ground wherefrom the certitude and meaning of the sciences and social living find initial security and ultimate term. Spinoza has a "world-view" and this vantage is best approached by way of faith. The immediate knowledge which faith is and the object of obedience for which it strives, filters down and permeates the whole of Nature. Man's dignity, as most intimate revelation of Nature to Itself, is grounded and fulfilled only through a life in faith. The essential perfection of the One, reveals to Itself, through man, the moment of truth and good which it always is. This revelation is not only a Word to be known but also, it is a Word to be. The eternal Incarnation of the One finds its essential perfection in acts of obedient Love.

Up to this point, we have been concerned with understanding what the notion and meaning of Spinoza's prescription is. Now, we shall concern ourselves with the attempt to understand why he performs such an exhortation.

We shall look to the political foundations which he later establishes within the Tractatus, to see how his earlier prescription relates to such a structure. Next, we shall return to his explanation of the status of Scripture in order to ascertain the relationship it shares with faith. Finally, we shall examine Spinoza's notion of salvation. Hence, in taking a look at the influences of his prescription, we are to remain within his thought and we shall see how such a notion conditions his theory in ancillary fields.

a) The Status of State and Freedom of Thought

We recall from our discussion on the purpose of the Tractatus, that Spinoza wished to situate practical and speculative thought in such a relation as they would not hinder each other's respective domains. His solution to such a relationship brought down upon him the cruelest forms of criticism and derogation. Although conscious of Machiavelli's teachings, and most assuredly influenced by the stratagem of his thought, to label Spinoza's prescriptions concerning the founding and ruling of State as "Machiavelian" is to do great injustice to the depth of his foresight. Moreover, the pronouncement of such swift categorization clouds the importance of his own self-admissions concerning his theory and therefore denies one an access to understanding the place of faith and personal piety which he also prescribed must be allowed in the State he so suggests. While such an admission on this author's part appears that he intends

to vindicate Spinoza, the truth is that an understanding of his notions concerning State-Hood does of itself, vindicate a great deal of mis-information that has, since Spinoza's death, been circulated against his intentionality. The political theory of Spinoza has undergone great examination at the hands of many honest scholars. Presentation here, therefore, is limited to a consideration of how, in the light of his political theory, the place of faith and personal piety is situated. From this we shall gain greater understanding as to why Spinoza's prescription of faith was established as it was.

In discussing the foundations of a State, Spinoza considers that the point of departure for legislation must be made with an understanding^{of} rights due the individual. Of these rights, he distinguishes two kinds; a) natural rights and b) civil rights

a) By the right and ordinance of nature, I merely mean those natural laws wherewith we conceive every individual to be conditioned by nature, so as to live and act in a given way ¹

b) By private civil right we can only mean the liberty every man possesses to preserve his existence, a liberty limited by the edicts of the sovereign power, and preserved only by its authority ²

Whether a man be foolish or wise, he has in his

1. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 200.

2. Ibid., p. 207.

power the right to act as his nature dictates. The natural right, therefore, lies not in the individual prowess of reason particular to each mature, but rather, it is seated within his "desire and power".³ This right of power which flows from an ordinance of nature is that right which all men do give over to the Sovereign ruler (to be one or many). It is power which all men have in common, not prowess of reason. Therefore, it is power that all men should pool in common lest the power of some be ill-used. For, power, of itself, desires its end quite apart from regard for force, cunning, entreaty, deceit or other such means.

Spinoza grounds the possibilities of man's giving over these natural rights with the following condition:

Now it is a universal law of human nature that no one ever neglects anything which he judges to be good, except with the hope of gaining a greater good, or from the fear of a greater evil; nor does anyone endure an evil except for the sake of avoiding a greater evil, or gaining a greater good.⁴

Inasmuch as this law would prevail in a state where no ruling hand was provided, the result would be an occasion of mistrust and suspicion. For the above law being considered a valid predication of man's nature, (considered

3. Ibid., p. 201, cf. also Chpt II of Spinoza's A Political Treatise.

4. Ibid., p. 203.

independently of individual capabilities in Reasoning) "a compact is only made valid by its utility, without which it becomes null and void".⁵ This would be so because "men make promises with all the appearance of good faith"⁶ yet, the power of natural right in man is also one which enables him to act deceitfully, dishonestly etc. Qua power, then, the power of man's nature knows no moral propensities or limitations. The most valid pragmatic safeguard to the misuse of individual power and the most beneficial order to adopt so as to secure a common power-stability is to establish a body politic.

In this manner each entrust his own natural right a society can be found without any violation of natural right, and the covenant can always be kept - that is, if each individual hands over the whole of his power to the body politic, the latter will then possess sovereign natural right over all things; that is, it will have sole and unquestioned dominion, and everyone will be bound to obey, under pain of the severest punishment. A body politic of this kind is called a Democracy.⁷

Thus, all natural right (qua power) is transferred to the hands of the Sovereign. The Sovereign is, therefore, given absolute dominion over all power-expenditure within the State. The assumption is twofold: on the one hand, the sovereign is granted the trust that his power be given

5. Ibid., p. 204.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 205 - my parentheses

over to beneficial legislation and enforcement thereof; on the other hand it is assumed that the preservation of State is a duty primary to preservation of any individual. ("For reason bids us choose the least of two evils."⁸)

This last aspect of assumption reflects Spinoza's view of the Whole State. The accomplishment of nature's task is performed through power^(u). The power of nature is the power of God, which has sovereign rights over all things".⁹ It is therefore, the power of nature which has precedence over the power of any one State because Nature must fulfill herself as a Whole - as this Whole is God. In turn, the State takes precedence over the individual for, understood within the state of nature, the individual comprises a very small part.

Spinoza also looks upon the individual under the light of his civil rights and treats his dignity in marked distinction from his consideration of man as a natural part in a natural whole. Now, it is reasonable to give over one's natural rights (power) for the security of the common good. But the sovereign who is handed such authority may legislate quite unreasonably. Spinoza insists, as above¹⁰, that the reasonable citizen must obey the unreasonable legislation for the good of the State. (He also voices the viewpoint

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 200.

10. Ibid., p. 205 (cf. ref. 8.)

that tyranny cannot long endure.) Once the compact of government has been settled - once the natural rights of each citizen have been endowed to the common good, then the individual's use of reason in social action must be regulated as according to the common reason of all (in the case of a democracy) or the specific reason of the ruler (in Monarchy) etc. What about the personal conviction which the individual owes himself? (for there is the possibility that the popular reason in voting can be irrational and there is an even greater possibility to irrationality when legislation is in the hands of a few or one.)

This question gives rise to the reason for a dichotomy concerning the individual's relation to himself and to the state. Spinoza insists that "the state of nature is, both in nature and in time, prior to religion".¹¹ This means a distinction must be made between the obligation man owes the State and the obligation which he owes his moral and spiritual (religious) conscience together with his speculations of thought. Can these obligations ever be opposed to each other within the same individual? And if so, is the reconciliation of this opposition possible?

By saying that the state of nature is prior to religion, Spinoza means that no one knows by nature that he owes any obedience to God, "nor can he attain thereto by any exercise of his reason, but solely by revelation confir-

11. Ibid., p. 210.

med by signs".¹²

The state of nature must by no means be confounded with a state of religion, but must be conceived as without either religion or law, and consequently, without sin or wrong.¹³

Such an affirmation is forwarded under the fact that if the Divine Law were present in the understanding of all men as a natural endowment, then even the need for public welfare would be dissolved. In fact, the majority of men live quite apart from any strenuous exercise of reason and all too many men live without faith in obedience. Because, therefore, the knowledge of God grounds knowledge of good and true, then, the state, which is founded on natural right, has its authority from knowledge devoid of such grounds. Also, because what is common to all (namely natural rights) does substantiate the order of authority in the state, then the particular perfections of many individuals must remain personal unto themselves. Such perfections include knowledge of God and Divine Law, and from these, knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong.

To Spinoza, the danger of delegating political authority to those involved with philosophy and religion, is not so much in terms of harm to the state, but in terms

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

of harm to pure philosophy and true religion. In the Tractatus, Spinoza is primarily interested in saving the freedom of speculative thought and personal piety - not the welfare of the State. This is not to say that he cares not for the state's welfare and thus throws it fatalistically into an order of survival of the fittest as many have charged him of doing.

Let us look at what thought Spinoza has developed in the Tractatus that we could see is beyond the immediate impression gathered by others. He has begun by noting the deplorable persecution of speculative thought and the bigoted inquisitions of quasi-religions. Consequently, he sets about to give speculative thought a freedom whereby it shall not be a matter for political issue. Also, and this has been our particular concern he has striven to elaborate the meaning and significance of true faith and its love through obedience. In each instance, he has insisted upon the roles which each does play in the attainment of personal perfection. Next, within the context of attempting to lay foundations for a State that does allow full possibilities for personal perfection, he has endorsed the opinion that this State shall not be one of religion and that the dictates of government are without religion or law, sin or wrong. Even does he go so far as to say,

The possessor of sovereign power whether he be one, or many, or the whole body politic,

has the sovereign right of imposing any commands he pleases: and he who has either voluntarily, or under compulsion, transferred the right to defend him to another, has, in so doing, renounced his natural right and is therefore bound to obey, in all things, the commands of the sovereign power; and will be bound so to do so long as the king, or nobles, or the people preserve the sovereign power which formed the basis of the original transfer. I need add no more. ¹⁴

It is at this point that many have attacked Spinoza for the object paradox of this development. How can the reconciliation of such a paradox be attained? They have posed this question but have not looked to Spinoza's intentionality for the justification of allowing just such a paradox to arise. Certainly he is aware of the problem for he states;

We may be asked, what should we do if the sovereign commands anything contrary to religion, and the obedience which we have expressly vowed to God? should we obey the Divine Law or the human law? I shall treat of this question at length hereafter, and will therefore merely say now that God should be obeyed before all else, when we have a certain and indisputable revelation of His will. ¹⁵

Why then does Spinoza hold so strongly to the separation of State and religion? Why, in giving conditions to freedom of thought, must he subject man to the possibilities of irrational rule? It appears to this student, that

14. Ibid., p. 207.

15. Ibid., p. 211.

Spinoza, in his work, The Tractatus Tehologico-politicus, was addressing a message to two people. On the one hand, the message was addressed to those in positions of sovereignty (kings and princes of the day.) On the other hand, the message was addressed to the man who was open to the prescription of faith which Spinoza endorsed with manifold conviction.

Now, in the first case, the method and content of the Tractatus was intended to awaken those in authority to the awesome scope of absolute responsibility they owed the welfare of those who had given over their rights. ("Either dominion does not exist, and has no rights over its subjects or else it extends over every instance in which it can prevail on men to decide to obey it"¹⁶) But, an exposure to the scope of responsibility due subjects was not alone addressed to those in ruling positions. Beyond this awareness was the presented fact that subjects are free within their reason. And obedience, while external, is not complete, nor is there harmony or total human fulfillment until obedience becomes internal. ("... the firmest dominion belongs to the sovereign who has most influence over the minds of his subjects."¹⁷) Thus, if the ruler wishes to attract complete allegiance of his subjects to his commands, he must be

16. Ibid., p. 215.

17. Ibid.

assured of their internal disposition. But, and this is further within the message, the conditions under which legislation can be imposed with the certainty of total obedience on the part of the subjects, are those which relate to the regard for faith and proper use of reason. While the sovereign has the right to expect even obedience through fear, Spinoza's message is clear in showing that such obedience cannot long endure. (... "dominions have always been in as much danger from their own subjects as from external enemies".¹⁸) The final aspect of the message given rulers, is the fact that the exposition of the Tractatus makes each reading ruler thereafter responsible to the considering of its truth content. Hence, the ruler must reflect on this notion of faith, freedom of thought, and their relation to political activity.

In the second case, the message of Spinoza is addressed to the man who is open to the prescription of faith. The importance of such a prescription cannot evade the gaze of the man who is yearning to learn more of his place in Nature, of his possibilities, of his path to blessedness. The importance of the prescription we have studied. But let us look at its influence upon the man who agrees to its significance.

Firstly, this man does seek the essential perfection of the Revealed Law. The love of this law is studied

18. Ibid., p. 214.

by reason and personal piety in obedience to the law is cultivated. Secondly, this man, as citizen, strives to obey the full of whatever the sovereign decrees. In this, however, he does no right or wrong but merely contributes to conformity and harmony within Nature's course. At the same time, he works to live in obedience to the love of essential perfection which he is from his faithful union with God. Two forms of obedience do arise. The first is obedience for its own sake,¹⁹ the second is obedience out of love for God. But it often occurs that obedience in the first instance will contradict the obedience owed God - and this within the same act. (Let us say that the sovereign commands that no aid shall be extended the poor members of the State) How shall this conflict of calls to obedience be reconciled?

It is precisely on behalf of the reconciliation of this problem that Spinoza addressed his message to both people - not in order to reconcile (for some one force in each particular instance must win out) but to prevent. It is on behalf of preventing such conflict (as did pollute the politics and religion of his day) that Spinoza entrusts his message to those two parties involved. For how should he best prevent such conflict?

If he should suggest that the rulings of reason control the state, then the natural inclination of man would often exercise the use of power to persecute those whose

19. Ibid., p. 215.

speculations were in disagreement. If he should suggest that the rulings of religion guide legislation, then the way would be open to those who would use religion as a "deus ex machina" for their decisions, hence obedience through fear and superstition would still abide and persecution would follow those who sow even nuance of contestation with the interpretation afforded by those in power. In the first case, freedom of thought would be lost. In the second case, freedom of religion would be lost. In each case, the search for truth would be destroyed and true religion would be abandoned. In each case, the State would remain in the same confusion it had been for decades. Spinoza saw the danger of placing religion and speculation in a position whereby they might be confused and used as powers.

But if he should suggest that complete autonomy from political power be granted speculative reason and personal piety, and that the obedience due sovereignty had to be complete if a dominion were to succeed, then different consequences might follow. For is it not more reasonable to suspect that influence most validly flows from the individual to state - rather than state to individual? If free speculation is first adopted by the state, then the individual, especially those deep in the life of the emotions, would suffer from ignorance and often react unjustly. Also, those in power are often prone to misuse the freedom and impose on others their conclusions - which leaves citizens

and, in turn, the State, in a confused and mistrusting situation. But, if free speculation is first left to an autonomous state within the individual, and the ends and dignity of speculation are made known to all, then will not the use of such freedom be reflected within the harmony of the state and its everyday life? Will not persecution for contradictory speculation cease and tolerance of ideas in dispute be given a healthy atmosphere wherefrom progress within even the State will ensue?

Correspondingly, if personal piety is identified with the state's prescription of faith and religion, then will not the opportunity for blessedness be likewise obliterated? Also, if the state is given authority over Divine law primarily, then the possibility for each individual's enthusiasm in piety shall be diminished - for closeness to God is the foundation of this zeal - not closeness to official interpretation of what God has said. And what of the possibility that those in power shall wantonly distort the law and persecute those who refuse to give assent to such distortion? Dischord in civil matters can be the only result. But, if freedom of personal worship is accorded each individual, and if he be exposed to the prescription of faith, then will not the acts of love and the subsequent reasonings concerning dogma of each citizen reflect itself within the populace and ultimately within the State? Will not disagreement's in faith be limited to details of action,

(which each will allow the other), rather than be located in universal faithful assent?

Spinoza has the state in mind, but he first wishes speculation and the individual's faith to prosper. The State will prosper only by way of this beginning. The state of nature proceeds its way under the power of the order of nature - "that is, the God's eternal decree unknown to us".²⁰ But the personal freedom proper to the dignity of the individual proceeds its way first through reason under power of itself to locate and know truth, and secondly (and most importantly) through faith in union with the Word and expressed obediently in love. The best that man can do, being a subject to the power of nature, is to first achieve a personal habitus of faith and exercise his reason soundly, and then to allow the appropriation he has made through understanding and reasoning to manifest itself as often as possible within the state of nature. The sovereign must be aware of this option - as well as the citizen. This is why Spinoza delivers his message in such a manner. Also, this is why Spinoza takes such great pains to prescribe even a form of government - for one form provides a better receptacle for the sum total of each individual's influence than another.

I think I have now shown sufficiently clearly

20. Ibid., p. 211.

the basis of a democracy: I have especially desired to do so, for I believe it to be of all forms of government, the most natural, and the most consonant with individual liberty. In it no one transfers his natural right so absolutely that he has no further voice in affairs, he only hands it over to the majority of a society, whereof he is a unit. Thus all men remain, as they were in the state of nature, equals.

This is the only form of government which I have treated of at length, for it is the one most akin to my purpose of showing the benefits of freedom in a state. ²¹

In writing such a message, Spinoza took a gamble. He gambled that the method he proposed would be seen in the light of the dignity of faith he prescribed. In his own time, he lost the gamble. For those who read saw only the method taken by itself. They envisioned the method being used by such men as lived with reason and religion proper to the day. They did not see Spinoza's prescription when they look at his notion of sovereign. They did not think that the life in accordance with the prescription might ever reflect itself in the sovereign.

Spinoza was committed to purifying obedience. He saw obedience in the state of nature to be ever in its purest form. Yet, he saw obedience in faith to be lost for the sake of its misuse in power. How best to enable the possibilities of ascent to piety through loving obedience? And, how best to allow each man to live in respect of all other's performance of this task? This was his commitment.

21. Ibid., p. 207.

b. The Status of Scripture and Freedom of Worship

Now that we have looked into the first major influence for which the prescription of faith is responsible, we should turn now to consider a second major influence which this prescription exercises. This consideration involves the place of the Bible or the Word of God. What is the status of this Word in that it allows itself to be freely appropriated in so many ways as there are individuals? What is the status of Religion? And finally, in what ways is Worship said to be free?

That the Word of God is not a "wax nose" for Spinoza is plainly evident.

But if men really believed what they verbally testify of Scripture, they would adopt quite a different plan of life: their minds would not be agitated by so many contentions, nor so many hatreds, and they would cease to be excited by such a blind and rash passion for interpreting the sacred writings, and exco-
gitating novelties in religion. On the contrary, they would not dare to adopt, as the teaching of Scripture, anything which they could not plainly deduce therefrom. ²²

For Spinoza, revelation "is the Divine Law given through the prophets and Apostles to the whole human race". ²³
He says this for he clearly and distinctly sees that the Divine Law is given from Scripture and not from reason.

22. Ibid., p. 98.

23. Ibid., p. 9.

Reason can realize what it itself cannot give by reflecting on the nature of that which it has not given. For reason²⁴ knows what it can give. But the manner by which the prophets spoke is different from the manner by which reason utters a truth. From his historical research, Spinoza saw the prophets as narrators of truth to nations ignorant of sound reasoning and 'prone to credulity'. For, like Rudolf Bultmann, Spinoza affirmed that the age of the writing of scriptural texts was an age in search of the miraculous or extraordinary. And for the prophets to engender faith in the Divine law was for them to bend to the way by which man then could have faith.

The world of Spinoza was deeply influenced by the scientific gaze of Galileo and the mathematical gaze of Descartes. The manner by which faith could then be appropriated and extended into action was distinctly different from that manner proper to the days of the prophets. The message is eternally the same, but the medium is constantly changing. In order to uncover the eternal Word, the historical medium must be understood. Language, customs, idioms, events - all these comprised the world of the prophets.

... as the prophets perceived the revelations of God by the aid of imagination, they could indisputably perceive much that is beyond the boundary of the intellect; for many more ideas can be constructed from words and figures than from the principles and notions on which the

24. cf. above Chpt III references 53-56.

whole fabric or reasoned knowledge is rested... Thus we have a clue that the prophets perceived nearly everything in parables and allegories, and clothed spiritual truths in bodily forms, for such is the usual method of the imagination.²⁵

Therefore, the status of the Word is lodged within the eternal truth and goodness of Divine Law. The status of prophecy is seen as being true to revelation but subordinated to the vivid imaginative powers of the prophet. Spinoza urges everyone to "acknowledge the reason which God has given you",²⁶ lest we submit reason to the imagination of the prophets, forgetting that on behalf of which they spoke, and embrace a faith in credulity.

Spinoza saw that the problem of interpreting Scripture lay in the approach one made via the natural light of his reason. He maintained that "men, who flatly despise reason ... lay down beforehand, as a foundation for the study and true interpretation of Scripture, the principle that it is in every passage true and divine".²⁷ This principle is one provided by reason for "... is a man to assent to anything against his reason?"²⁸ And, "the sphere of reason is truth and wisdom".²⁹ Hence, this principle of reasoning is used as a premise to interpretation of Holy Writ. Yet,

25. Ibid., p. 25.

26. Spinoza, Correspondence Letter LXXIV, 1675, p. 425 of Elwes translation of Ethics.

27. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 8.

28. Ibid., p. 192.

29. Ibid., p. 194.

Spinoza would argue, "the above doctrine should be a conclusion, after ³⁰scrutiny and comprehension of the Sacred Books (for they stand in need of no human fictions) and it should not be a premise".

The "approach of reason" is initiated, therefore, after the fact of faith. Reason does not constitute the knowledge of faith but it does substantiate its circumstances. What if the Bible ran, in its entirety, counter to the findings of reason? This would be a new fact, after which reason would approach - but the question cannot even be validly posed, regardless of whether it could be validly answered. The knowledge of faith is, therefore, open to the man who does not use reason. But faith in Obedience is open to the man who employs reason to guide the use of faith in action. Religion, is then, a practice of faith. It necessarily requires the Supreme doctrine of Scripture and the natural light of reason. A "Universal Religion"³¹ is possible on the level of certain basic doctrines to which each man necessarily would give assent - had he the faith of Scripture.

The prescription of faith which Spinoza performs, is an exhortation to see the essential perfection within the Word. Spinoza cannot 'give' faith, so he prescribes that whereby other men may accomplish their own perfection

30. Ibid., p. 8. (my underlining)

31. Ibid., p. 186.

in faith. This prescription in the Tractatus gives status to the Word of Scripture. This status may be taught through reason and so he "gives" this knowledge. Spinoza's prescription does not endorse that man approach with reason what is not and shall not be given to reason. Use can be made of reason only after the knowing subject has appropriated his own participation in knowledgeable union with God. Religion, therefore, does not begin with reflection but with revelation. Yet, religion is never constituted without the assent being given by reason.

The possibilities of conformity in religious doctrine between many individuals, is grounded in the likeness of the powers of understanding and reason, and the identity which the Supreme doctrine has with itself. ("There exists a God, that is, a Supreme Being, Who loves justice and charity, and Who must be obeyed by whosoever would be saved."³²) Universal doctrine is possible from the fact of the understanding and reason being universal to all. The doctrine is possible to universality in that it remains close to the Supreme doctrine. For his part, Spinoza sees seven doctrines³³ to which no man in faith and with proper use of reason would hesitate to give assent.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., pp. 186-188.

Finally, Worship is said to be free, not on the basis of choosing whether to have ~~faith~~ or not to have faith. (For Spinoza admits that "the knowledge of God is bestowed and not commanded by the Deity".³⁴) Rather, worship is free in that the personal assent of obedience in love with regard to everyday acts is nuanced as according to the individual's use of reason in interpreting how his own obedience shall best approximate the call of Divine Law. ("he alone is free who lives with free consent under the entire guidance of reason".³⁵)

The prescription of faith influences the freedom of Worship in that, if faith is understood as knowledge of God without which reason cannot attain the option to obey in love the perfection of God, then "free consent under the entire guidance of reason" is modified to the point where Worship is dependent upon the groping ascent which reason performs as it withdraws from the modes of hearsay and experiential knowledge the criteria upon which it shall judge and determine its "ought". True freedom, therefore, can only abide in mind with the knowledge of faith. We must see more clearly now, how it is that Spinoza fulfills an intention which he names in the Preface.

... I must first point out the misconceptions which, like scars of our former bondage, still

34. Ibid., p. 179.

35. Ibid., p. 206.

disfigure our notion of religion, and must expose the false views about the civil authority which many have most impudently advocated, endeavouring to turn the mind of the people, still prone to superstition, away from its legitimate rulers, and so bring us again into slavery. ³⁶

We must acknowledge the above outline of intentionality to be most significant to our awareness of Spinoza's emphasis upon the purification of the notion of religion. "Our notion of religion" must first be re-conceived, then, we must "expose the false views about the civil authority". If we do not know the place and importance of religion, Spinoza is telling us, then, civil authority ill-used, shall keep us always in "slavery". Freedom and civil order begin with a proper notion of religion. This notion, we have amply seen, is ultimately grounded upon the only valid form of faith - faith in obedience. Our "legitimate rulers" are the Word of God as seen through knowledge and love of his nature, and the Word of civil authority as seen through knowledge of authority's place and importance in respect to the "whole" of man's situation.

Spinoza addresses this intentionality to the "Philosophical Reader". ³⁷ Some interpreters claim that this is done because it is only philosophy with which Spinoza is concerned in the Tractatus. According to our research, such

36. Ibid., p. 6.

37. Ibid., p. 11.

such affirmation seems most contradictory to the content of the Tractatus. Being true to this content, we should better say that the above intentionality (and the significance of the prescription of faith) was addressed to the philosopher - for, if he be a philosopher, then he is in the best position (for the most part free of hearsay and experiential preoccupation) to acclimate himself and appropriate unto himself the message which Spinoza puts forth. Thus, the work is addressed, not to the "philosophy student", but to the "philosophical reader", who may walk from any of life's occupations to a proper understanding of what Religion in the Tractatus means.

This paper has not the intention to pass judgment on the validity of this meaning - a task which ^{many} ~~among~~ other author's have performed. But the performance of this task has come to some conclusions which should here be presented. We shall not spend time arguing over the validity of these judgments but we shall merely allow the foregoing development of this paper to show that one must approach these judgments with a methodical doubt.

George Stewart Fullerton gives the following conclusion:

I feel inclined, therefore, to sum up my discussion of the religious element in Spinoza, by stating that there is a religious element in Spinoza, but that there is nothing religious about Spinozism as a system. 38

38. Fullerton, George Stewart, On Spinozistic Immortality:
~~University of Pennsylvania 1895, p. 132.~~
 UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA - SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

We find it strange that such an assertion can be made in a work which does not once refer to the Theological-Political Tractatus of Spinoza. From our own observations, we must acknowledge the importance of faith's knowledge as being paramount in conditioning the entire system of Spinoza. Without such knowledge, the communion with God cannot be established, the validity of dogma is without its most important ground, the obedience in decision loses its profound rationale, the Reason must grope to lower levels of perfection, the political man is weakened from lack of right to personal piety, and the religious man is kept from blessedness and salvation. That some few can reverse all the above solely through exercise of their Reason is left as a possibility. But Spinoza depicts such a possibility in this way:

We have seen that the way which reason teaches is very difficult; hence those who persuade themselves that the multitude, or men distracted to live solely according to the dictates of reason, are dreaming of the poet's golden age or of a fabulous tale. ³⁹

What the characteristics of a religious system may be that they evade the system of Spinoza should be a matter for long discussion. For my part, if the proposed or prescribed system of his thought does begin with a dependence upon faith (yes, even as he understands it), and if this

³⁹. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 231.

system falls counter to his prescription without such faithful knowledge as present to the condition of Man, then it would seem that to properly understand the meaning of Spinoza's system, one must acknowledge its profound religious context.

Elmer Ellsworth Powell says,

Whether Spinoza's atheism is practically inferior or superior to religion, and whether it is theoretically less true or more true, are questions which we are not called upon to decide; but that it is not religion is sufficiently clear. So far from being the religious philosopher par excellence, which he is often supposed to be, he represents the diametrically opposite spirit and world-view.⁴⁰

The manner by which this author can arrive at such a⁴¹ conclusion, can be examined within his own work. What matters for our concern is that we recall Spinoza's intention to be that of correcting our notion of religion. We also recall that Spinoza notes two types of religion: the external (the exercise of piety before State) and internal⁴² (the exercise of piety before oneself.) Perhaps this commentator has dwelt too exclusively to the former. Finally, we recall that religion is not to be identified with

40. Powell, Elmer Ellsworth, Spinoza and Religion, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co. 1906, p. 240.

41. Ibid., pp. 221-245.

42. Spinoza, Tractatus, p. 245,

faith. Yet, in the course of Powell's development (which never mentions the status of faith in Spinoza) we find such an identification. ("We have called 'the intellectual love of God', Spinoza's substitute for religion".⁴³) It is in this framework that we also find the assertion,⁴⁴ "There is no escape from calling his system atheism".

The student has not wished to pick quote from honest labor and decry what is but human imperfection in us all. What has been intended above is but to show the importance of understanding the place and prescription of faith in Spinoza. There is a wide discrepancy, obviously, between the understanding of the many readers of Spinoza. What is suggested here is that a return to his words and a renewed look at his notion of faith, might diminish the extremities of such divergent interpretations and help to constitute a new vantage from which many judges may see even the entire system of Spinoza anew. The status of State and freedom of thought, together with the status of Scripture and freedom of Worship seem rightly to require first the understanding of the status of faith.

43. Powell, Spinoza...., p. 260.

44. Ibid., p. 240.

CHAPTER IV

FAITH AND THE FAITHFUL MAN IN THE THOUGHT OF SPINOZA

The prescription of faith that we have studied in the Tractatus lends its most profound contribution to the thoughts which Spinoza put forth concerning immortality, or better, eternal life, and salvation. The need for intuitive communion with the Whole in the knowledge of faith, is a requirement for most men that they "become" eternal and that their eternity be one of blessedness. The faithful man is the man in God. The man in faith is the "God-full" man.

We should better understand his prescription to faith in obedience, then, if we could recall why there is a need for intuitive knowledge. Secondly, we should examine how it is that man is eternal and the role which faith does play in this reality. Lastly, we will look at Spinoza's notion of salvation and consider his thoughts as to why his prescription of faith does condition the most befitting means to salvation.

It is important to note, in the beginning that the fourth and fifth part of Spinoza's Ethics bear these respective title-heads. - "Of Human Bondage, or the Strength of the Emotions", and, "Of the Power of the Understanding, or of Human Freedom". It is this basic distinction that grounds the call to man's need of perfecting himself (freeing

himself from bondage to emotional vascillation) through the knowledgeable enrichment of the mind.

Spinoza asserts that "the essence of our mind consists solely in knowledge, whereof the beginning and the foundation is God".¹

The constitution of the mind's essence finds its most perfect term under the power of the understanding. He says, "The highest virtue of the mind is to know God, or to understand things by the third or fourth kind of knowledge, and this virtue is greater in proportion as the mind knows things more by this said kind of knowledge".²

Earlier on, (cf. Chapter II, "The Causes of Faith"), we spoke in reference to this proportion. The immediate and impossible knowledge of essence in the fourth mode does put the knowing subject in union with an object known 'sub specie aeterni'. The essence of the mind being knowledge, therefore, the essence of the known does constitute the essence of the mind. If the essence be eternal, ("Eternity is the very essence of God"³), then too, does the constitution of the mind become self same.

1. Spinoza, Ethics, Part V, Prop XXXVI, note.

2. Ibid., Prop XXVII, proof. (my brackets: we must necessarily bear in mind the two sets of numerations given the modes of knowledge in the different works of Spinoza) In the Ethics, the third mode corresponds to the fourth of the Improvement...

3. Ibid., Prop XXX, proof.

Hence, a knowledge of God is the highest perfective constitution of the eternally enduring mind. What role does faith, earlier defined as a "knowledge of God",⁴ play in the constitution of the eternal mind?

It has been previously established that the knowledge of faith is a knowledge of the fourth mode. For, "we cannot perceive by the natural light of reason that simple obedience is the path to salvation".⁵ And, the perception of reason constitutes knowledge of the third mode.

Consequently, the knowledge of God which is properly called "faith", is a perfective constituent of the eternal mind, and is perceived by the Understanding which perception is that of the fourth mode.

This intuitive knowledge was revealed to the prophets and is the core of Scripture passed down through history. "This if we had not the testimony of Scripture, we should doubt of the salvation of nearly all men".⁶

Clearly, the perfection afforded the mind by the knowledge of faith does constitute a particular determination whereby "salvation" of that mind is affected. The faithful man, therefore, can be said to be bound to salvation. This affirmation can only be made if the faith be that of faith in obedience.

4. Tractatus, p. 184.

5. Ibid., p. 198.

6. Ibid., p. 199.

The general belief of the multitude seems to be different. Most people seem to believe that they are free, in so far as they may obey their lusts, and that they cede their rights, in so far as they are bound to live according to the divine law. They therefore believe that piety, religion and generally, all things attributable to firmness of mind, are burdens, which after death, they hope to lay aside, and to receive the reward for their bondage, that is, for their piety and religion; it is not only by this hope, but also, and chiefly, by the fear of being horribly punished after death, that they are induced to live according to the divine commandments, so far as their feeble and infirm spirit will carry them. ⁷

This reference to those who possess a faith in fear, exemplifies Spinoza's affirmation that the mind with a faith in credulity is not a mind with a knowledge of God. For the knowledge of God engenders love, not fear. Hence, the absence of this knowledge signifies that the unfaithful man lives by the emotionally-riddled influences of lower modes of knowledge and is hence, in a state of bondage and not apt to find salvation.

What then, is Spinoza's notion of salvation? And more importantly, how does faith in obedience constitute the blessedness whereby one is said to be 'saved'?

To the first question, he answers that, "Blessedness consists in love toward God, which love springs from the third kind of knowledge; therefore this love must be referred to the mind, in so far as the latter is active; therefore

7. Spinoza, Ethics, Prop XLI, note.

it is virtue itself".⁸

The union, through knowledge, of man and God is only made blessed if respect or love for the perfection this union bespeaks is engendered. Such a love is more a love in knowledge rather than a love of knowledge. This is due to the fact that the essential disposition of the mind in knowing is a disposition that conforms to itself a loving defense of what it is. This defense presents itself in the habitual obedience of action befitting such a perfection. Obedient action is commensurate with perfected being.

This intellectual love follows necessarily from the nature of the mind, in so far as the latter is regarded through the nature of God as an eternal truth.⁹

From this we may derive "wherein our salvation, or blessedness, or freedom, consists; namely, in the constant and eternal love toward God, or in God's love toward men".¹⁰

Now we should consider what role the prescription of faith, (faith in obedience), plays in constituting the eternal state of blessedness which is man's salvation.

The most profound and foremost aspect of Divine Law which is revealed in Scripture, understood intuitively in the fourth mode of perception, and which is the heart of

8. Ibid., Prop XLII, proof.

9. Ibid., Prop XXXVII, proof.

10. Ibid., Prop XXXVI, note.

the knowledge of faith is "that there exists a God, that is, a Supreme Being, Who loves justice and charity, and Who must be obeyed by whosoever would be saved".¹¹

The appropriation of this Law effects an essential disposition of mind that seeks the implementation of that Law. The Law identifies itself with the mind and vice versa. The faithful man identifies himself with God. Not that the identification is in the order of supremacy of being, but rather is it in that this being, aware of God and his nature, does also seek to love what He loves and therefore begins to obey on behalf of such identification. In the commitment to obedience through justice and charity does man participate in the nature of God. To the degree (or proportion) that such participation is authenticated in action, does man appropriate a certain eternal blessedness that is most perfectly God's.¹²

Spinoza cites James the apostle and quotes, "faith without works is dead". And again he asserts through James, "Show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works".¹³ Clearly, Faith is the embrace of God's law, and the embrace of a law is authentic

11. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 186.

12. This doctrine is not a question of a "becoming God", but rather is it an explanation of man's becoming God-like.

13. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 184.

only when one lives in its abidance. Faith, as a perceptual embrace, is explained in this way:

... we cannot, except through revelation, know whether God wishes in any way, to be honoured as a sovereign. Again, we have shown that the Divine rights appear to us in the light of rights or commands, only so long as we are ignorant of their cause: as soon as the cause is known, they cease to be rights, and we embrace them no longer as rights but as eternal truths; in other words, obedience passes into love of God, which emanates from true knowledge as necessarily as light emanates from the sun. Reason then leads us to love God, but cannot lead us to obey Him; for we cannot embrace the commands of God as Divine, while we are in ignorance of their cause, neither can we rationally conceive God as a sovereign laying down laws as a sovereign.¹⁴

The status and place of knowledge in the mind of the faithful man having been presented, we should now look more to the whole man and attempt to depict his status and place in the universe of Spinoza. The clearest depiction might be afforded by looking at this man under the following three conditions: 1. pre-faithful man, 2. faithful conversion of man, 3. man in faith. This depiction shall be considered as summary of all previous discussions.

14. Ibid., note 28 to Chapter XVI. (Those who see Spinoza as following Descartes in a straight line should re-read the suggestions for limiting the universe of rational verification inherent in this passage.)

1. pre-faithful man:

This term is a predication which emphasises the lack of knowledge of God in the understanding. This knowledge is appropriated by the individual at whatever age he is open to .the task of knowing God by an act of receiving adequate knowledge of his essence. This act is a task because the perfection inherent to such knowledge is a responsibility. A living obedience commensurate with the similtude of God's nature which one does appropriate, is a responsibility of love for that nature and a responsibility to improve its simulation. Therefore, pre-faithful man is said more aptly of he who acts without an adequate God-ground. The God-ground is the union one begins in knowledge. The adequate God-ground is the union one completes in the "actual" assent, through love of the responsibility to become God-like, in God.

The pre-faithful man is possible to intuitive union with God only in so far as he is "open" to the eternal necessity of God's nature. A pre-occupation with hearsay knowledge, opinion, prejudice and temporal satisfactions, "closes" one to possible simulation because the nature of such pre-occupation is far unlike the pre-occupation of God. One may "open" his possibility to God's nature through use of reason. For reason can situate the place of inferior pre-occupations and thus ready the mind for the reception of the most highly perfective knowledge.

Spinoza does not insist^s that this openness is made possible only through reason. In fact, we have seen that he has admitted only a rare few can make the ascent to this knowledge through reason. Further, the exact mode of communication whereby this knowledge is given and received is not given explanation by Spinoza for he confesses that he knows not how it occurs.

The pre-faithful man must be disposed to the reception of that whereby he does become faithful. This disposition is a readiness conditioned by the nature of mind (soul) so determined by the idiosyncratic circumstances which surround it. The re-occurring problem of determination unto faith and even salvation does again present itself here. It is a problem within Spinoza that demands much more research.

The look at faith shared in the Tractatus is a reasonable one. Spinoza looks with his reason in order to situate and better esteem the place of faith in man's life. The pre-faithful man, (as according to the prescription of faith set by Spinoza), in looking with the author, should hopefully (according to Spinoza's intention) realize that at another pole lay a knowledge of God so immediate and necessary that its possession demands obedient authentication fully proper to its perfective mode. He should realize, with Spinoza, that the possession of this knowledge, is not asserted through a formal assent consequent to rational deduction. And he should finally acknowledge that, while reason is able

to look at faith, and philosophy is able to look at religion, the poles at which reason and philosophy stand on the one hand and faith and theology on the other, are entirely distinguishable from one another.

2. the faithful conversion of man:

The nature of that knowledge whereby man does become faithful, is such that it must be revealed, for the source of intelligibility is that in the object which offers itself as intelligible. The level of intelligibility extended by God to man is the highest source of perfective acquisition available to him. For, in acquiring an intelligible contact with the One Substance, man encounters the sum deposit of what is. This encounter exceeds the scope of change afforded only by new knowledge, for by its nature, this encounter commands a responsibility that "makes over" the mind or soul of man. If one is given charge to keep watch over the possessions of a friend, the knowledge of this charge induces ("leads into") a respect for its responsibility. This respect, or love, is the awareness of self in charge. A conversion of interest is made. One turns from previous pre-occupation to action devoted on behalf of a new life position. This being "born again" is the "regenerative" aspect of the faithful conversion of

15
man.

The actual conversion, then, as one begins to engage in the faithful encounter, is necessarily a re-birth of one's very nature. But what steps do lead from the confrontation by revelation to the regeneration of faithful conversion? Certainly, we cannot formulate a dialectic that does not reflect what we have studied in Spinoza's thought. But we can re-examine the status of scripture from the standpoint of its efficaciousness in conditioning such a conversion. Evidently, the content of Scripture, for Spinoza, does bear a knowledge that is, of its own significance, capable of converting all men open to its account. This account is given through the prophets, the apostles and Christ. We might gain more understanding on this matter, then, if we look at the status of each account so that the approach to Scripture, made by all men desirous of salvation, can be better situated in Spinoza's context.

Of the prophet's account of this knowledge, Spinoza says,

... the knowledge of God, required by Him through His prophets from everyone without exception, as needful to be known, is simply 16
a knowledge of His Divine justice and charity.

15. cf. the notion of re-birth and regeneration which Spinoza presents most explicitly in his Treatise on God..., pp. 102-103.

16. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 177.

The account of God rendered through the prophets was made on behalf of a revelation that does not submit itself to rational scrutinization as to its authority.

("We know that they possessed a knowledge above the ordinary..."¹⁷) So, Spinoza asserts,

The authority of the prophets does not submit to discussion for whosoever wishes to find rational ground for his arguments, by that very wish submits them to everyone's private judgment.¹⁸

Of the Apostles' account of faith in obedience, he says,

Furthermore, if we examine the manner in which the Apostles give out evangelical doctrine, we shall see that it differs materially from the method adopted by the prophets. The Apostles everywhere reason as if they were arguing rather than prophesying; the prophecies, on the other hand, contain only dogmas and commands.¹⁹

The vocation of Apostles is, therefore, to be distinguished from the task of the prophet. The Apostles "were granted not only the faculty of prophecy, but also the authority to teach".²⁰ In Chapter Eleven of the Tractatus,²¹ Spinoza explains the latter aspect of the Apostle's

17. Ibid., p. 159.

18. Ibid., p. 158.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 161.

21. "Of the Apostolic Mission"

vocation.

... the Apostles, from what they saw and heard, and from what was revealed to them, were enabled to form and elicit many conclusions which they would have been able to teach to men had it been permissible.²²

Now the teaching performed by the Apostles was "solely by the light of natural reason."²³ But they were able to instruct on matters outside the scope of natural knowledge. Teaching was a rational act. But reason spoke on behalf of a "revealed". The revealed gave to them their gift of prophecy or insight. This insight is best described in a letter of 1675 to Henry Oldenburg.

I will tell you that I do not think it necessary to salvation to know Christ according to the flesh: but with regard to the Eternal Son of God, that is, the Eternal Wisdom of God, which has manifested itself in all things and especially in the human mind, and above all in Christ Jesus, the case is far otherwise. For without this no one can come to a state of blessedness, inasmuch as it alone teaches, what is true or false, good or evil. And, inasmuch as this wisdom was made especially manifest through Jesus Christ, as I have said, his disciples preached it in so far as it was revealed to them through him, and thus showed that they could rejoice in that spirit of Christ more than the rest of mankind.²⁴

22. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 162.

23. Ibid., p. 161.

24. Spinoza, Letter XXI, located in Correspondence of Elwes translation of Improvement... and Ethics, p. 303.

The insight which is taught by the Apostles is then, the "Eternal Wisdom of God" as it was existentially embodied before them for three years through the example of Christ. This especial manifestation was the revelation wherefrom their prophecy could follow. The command to "go and teach" was the command that gave them their especial vocation as apostles. The path to salvation, as it is to be realized in the faithful conversion of man, must necessarily lead open to the reasoned teachings of the Apostles. For these teachings are grounded in the particular revelation given to them by Christ.

The account, or revelation, which is rendered by Christ to the man open to faithful conversion is the highest expression of the Eternal Wisdom that is God. Christ gives, "by his life and death a matchless example of holiness"²⁵

For, as John says, justice and charity are the one sure sign of the true Catholic faith, and the true fruits of the Holy Spirit. Wherever they are found, there in truth is Christ; wherever they are absent, Christ is absent also. For only by the spirit of Christ can we be led to the love of justice and charity.²⁶

An openness to the Word of God in Scriptural revelation is the proper ground which conditions for pre-faithful man, his faithful conversion. This Word is given

25. Ibid., Letter XXIII, p. 307.

26. Ibid., Letter LXXIV, p. 422.

through three accounts. Each account addresses itself on behalf of this Word. The faithful knowledge revealed to the prophets and apostles and embodied in Christ, is that revelation, through each of these, that is carried forth to the reader of Scripture. Each account conditions the conversion to one's appropriation of faith, by its own specific approach. The Presence of the Word is understood in each approach. This Presence pervades the imaginative exhortations of the prophets, the moral teachings of the apostles and the law of love exemplified by the life of Christ. Each is conformative to the other in that very Presence of Divine essence. All were, "in God", through faithful knowledge. The expression of this participation was uttered in distinguishable accounts. But that which was shared is also distinguishable. The core of revelation runs throughout Scripture. The core of revelation is the knowledge of faith. All the prophets, apostles and Christ possessed a faith in obedience.

3. man in faith:

The understanding of Spinoza's notion of faith has brought us to see that his prescription is made out of an attempt to ground freedom in and between faithful and philosophical matters. Also, the prescription is meant to condition healthy relations in and between the world of speculation and politics. Finally, we have seen that the

prescription to a faith in obedience conditions, for Spinoza, the best possibilities for personal piety and public peace.

The covenant of God with man is the intimate ground they share in being One. The articulation of this covenant is performed by God in revelation and by man in true faith.

Reason can never predicate totally such a covenant. We have seen Spinoza to admit this: The one who attempts to understand this notion in Spinoza, therefore, must acknowledge such a limitation. This paper, however, has attempted to understand faith in Spinoza under the premise that this notion warrants much greater study than it has²⁷ been given in the past.

The man in faith is the man in possession of God and himself. Possession here denotes a responsible awareness. For the possession of God must be understood in terms only of the mind's knowledge of His essence. "In a way", this knowledge is a possession. The possession of oneself advances through the call to obedience. The discipline of oneself in the Presence of God, is the responsible awareness of one's relation to and place before such

27. For example, cf. the definition of faith given in Runes, D.D., The Spinoza Dictionary, New York, The Philosophical Library, 1951, p. 79.

Presence.

Perhaps the notions of beatific vision and hell could be seen in Spinoza in the light of such an understanding. The pursuit of such notions shall not begin here. For, the understanding of his prescription of faith does now find its term. Perhaps such understanding as has been cultivated should be considered introductory. Whatever the matter, faith in Spinoza, and the faith of Spinoza, should be a concern, perhaps even an "ultimate concern" to many as the years ahead will unfold the true depth of his thought.

... God's eternal Word and covenant, no less than true religion, is Divinely inscribed in human hearts, that is, in the human mind, and this is the original of God's covenant, stamped with His own seal, namely the idea of Himself, as it were, with the image of His Godhood. ²⁸

28. Spinoza, Tractatus..., p. 165.

Doctrine is built upon the Principles, which *Hobbes* made use of in his *Leviathan*.

Monsieur *Bayle* tells us, that the Style, Principles and Design of *Antistius's* Book were like that of *Spinoza*, which is entituled, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*; but this does not prove that *Spinoza* was the Author of it. Tho' the first Book came out just at the same time that *Spinoza* began to write his; and tho' the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was published soon after; yet it is not a proof neither, that the one was the fore-runner of the other. It may very well be, that two Men will undertake to write and advance the same impious things; and tho' their Writings shou'd come out much about the same time, it cou'd not be inferred from thence, that they were written by one and the same Author. *Spinoza* himself being asked by a Person of great Consideration, whether he was the Author of the first Treatise, denied it positively; I have it from very good Hands. The *Latin* of those two Books, the Style, and the Expressions are not so like neither, as 'tis pretended: The former expresses himself with a profound respect, when he speaks of God: he calls him often *Deum ter Optimum Maximum*. But I find no such Expressions in any part of the writings of *Spinoza*.

Several Learned Men have assured me, that the impious Book Printed in 1666 in *Quarto*, and entituled, *The Holy Scripture explained by Philosophy: Philosophia Sacræ Scripturæ interpret*, and the above-mentioned Treatise were both written by one and the same Author, *viz. L. M.* and tho the thing seems to me very likely, yet I leave it to the judgment of those who may be better informed.

It was in the year 1670 that *Spinoza* published his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. He who translated it into *Dutch*, thought fit to entitle it, *The judicious and political Divine; De Regtzenninge¹ Theologant, of Godgeleerde Staatkunde*. *Spinoza* does plainly say, that he is the Author of it in his 19th Letter, directed to Mr. *Oldenburgh*: He desires him in that same Letter, to send him the Objections, which Learned Men raised against his Book; for he design'd then to get it Reprinted, and to add some remarks to it. If we believe the Title Page of that Book, it was printed at *Hamburg*, by *Henry Conrad*. But it is certain, that the Magistrates, and the Reverend Ministers of *Hamburg* had never permitted, that so many impious things shou'd have been Printed and publickly sold in their City.

There is no doubt but that Book was Printed at *Amsterdam* by

¹ *Sic.*

Christopher Conrad. Being sent for to *Amsterdam* in 1679 for some Business, *Conrad* himself brought me some Copies of that Treatise, and presented me with them, not knowing that it was a very pernicious Book.

The *Dutch* Translator was also pleased to honour the City of *Bremen* with so noble a Production: as if his Translation had come from the Press of *Hans Furgel Vander Weyl*, in the year 1694. But what is said of those Impressions of *Bremen* and *Hamburg* is equally false: and they would have met with the same difficulties in either of those Towns, if they had undertaken to Print and Publish such Books therein. *Philopater*, whom we have already mentioned, does openly say in the continuation of his Life, pag. 231, that old *John-Hendrikzen, Glasemaker*, whom I knew very well, was the Translator of that Book: and he assures us at the same time, that he had likewise Translated into *Dutch* the Posthumous Works of *Spinoza*, Published in 1677. He values and extols so much that Treatise of *Spinoza*, that one would think the World never saw the like. The Author, or at least the Printer, of the continuation of *Philopater's* Life, *Aard Wolsgryk*, heretofore a Bookseller at *Amsterdam*, in the corner of *Rosmaryn-Steeg*, was punish'd for his Insolence, as he deserv'd, and confin'd to the House of Correction, to which he was condemn'd for some years. I wish, with all my heart, he may have repented of his fault during the stay he made in that place; I hope he came out of it with a better mind, and that he was in such a disposition, when I saw him here (at the *Hague*) last Summer, whither he came to be paid for some Books, which he had Printed heretofore, and deliver'd to the Booksellers of this Town.

To return to *Spinoza* and his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, I shall say what I think of it, after I have set down the judgment, which two famous Authors made of it, one whereof was of the *Confession of Aushurg*,¹ and the other *Reformed*. The first is *Spitzelius*, who speaks of it thus, in his Treatise entituled *Infelix Literator*² p. 363. "That impious author (*Spinoza*) blinded by a prodigious presumption, was so impudent "and so full of Impiety, as to maintain that Prophecies were only "grounded upon the fancy of the Prophets; and that the Prophets and the "Apostles wrote naturally according to their own light and knowledge, "without any Revelation or Order from God: That they accommodated "Religion, as well as they cou'd, to the Genius of those who lived at "that time, and established it upon such Principles as were then well

¹ *Sic.*

² Van der Linde, *Bibliogr.* No. 358, n.

“known, and commonly received. *Irreligiissimus*¹ *Author stupenda sui fidentia plane fasciatus, eo progressus impudentiæ & impietatis fuit, ut prophetiam dependisse dixerit a fallaci imaginatione prophetarum, eosque pariter ac Apostolos non ex Revelatione & Divino mandato Scripsisse, sed tantum ex ipsorummet naturali judicio; accommodavisse insuper Religionem, quo ad fieri potuit, hominum sui temporis ingenio, illamque fundamentis tum temporis maxime notis & acceptis super ædificasse.* Spinoza pretends in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, that the same Method may and ought to be observed still for explaining the Holy Scripture; for he maintains, amongst other things, that, as the Scripture, when it was first published, was fitted to the established opinions, and to the capacity of the People, so every Body is free to expound it according to his Knowledge, and make it agree with his own opinions.

If this was true, good Lord! What respect cou'd we have for the Scripture? How cou'd we maintain that it is Divinely inspired? That it is a sure and firm Prophecy; that the holy Men, who are the Authors of it, spoke and wrote by God's order, and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; that the same Scripture is most certainly true, and that it gives a certain Testimony of its Truth to our Consciences; and lastly, that it is a Judge, whose Decisions ought to be the constant and unvariable Rule of our Thoughts, of our Faith, and of our Lives. If what Spinoza affirms were true, one might indeed very well say, that the Bible is a Wax-Nose, which may be turned and shaped at one's will; a Glass, thro' which every Body may exactly see what pleases his fancy; a Fool's Cap, which may be turned and fitted at one's pleasure a hundred several ways. The Lord confound thee, Satan, and stop thy mouth!

Spitzelius is not contented to say what he thinks of that pernicious Book; but he adds to the judgment he made of it, that of Mr de Manseveld heretofore Professor at Utrecht, who speaks of it thus, in a Book Printed at Amsterdam, in 1674. *My opinion is, that that Treatise ought to be buried for ever in an æternal oblivion: Tractatum hunc ad æternas damnandum tenebras, &c.* Which is very judiciously said; seeing that Wicked Book does altogether overthrow the Christian Religion, by depriving the Sacred Writings of the Authority, on which it is solely grounded and established.

The second Testimony I shall produce is, that of Mr. William van Blyenburg of Dordrecht,² who kept a long correspondence with Spinoza,

¹ Sic.

² Sic.

and who in his 31st Letter to him, (See Spinoza's Posthumous Works pag. 476) says, speaking of himself, that he had embraced no Profession; and that he lived by an honest Trade, *Liber sum nulli adstrictus professioni, honestis mercaturis me alo.* That Merchant, who is a learned Man, in the Preface of a Book entituled, *The truth of the Christian Religion*, Printed at Leyden, in 1674, gives his judgment about the Treatise of Spinoza in these words. *It is a Book, says he, full of curious, but abominable discoveries, the Learning and Inquiries whereof must needs have been fetched from Hell. Every Christian, nay, every Man of Sense, ought to abhor such a Book. The Author endeavours to overthrow the Christian Religion, and baffle all our hopes, which are grounded upon it: In the room whereof he introduces Atheism, or at most, a Natural Religion forged according to the humour or interests of the Sovereigns. The wicked shall be restrained only by the fear of Punishment; but a Man of no Conscience, who neither fears the Executioner nor the Laws, may attempt anything to satisfy himself, &c.*

I must add, that I have read that Book of Spinoza with application from the beginning to the end; but I protest at the same time before God, that I have found no solid arguments in it, nor anything that cou'd shake, in the least, my belief of the Gospel. Instead of solid reasons, it contains meer suppositions, and what we call in the School, *petitiones principii*. The things which the Author advances, are given for Proofs, which being denied and rejected, the remaining part of his Treatise will be found to contain nothing but Lies and Blasphemies. Did he think that the World wou'd believe him blindly upon his word, and that he was not obliged to give good reasons and good proofs for what he advanced?

Lastly, several Writings, which Spinoza left after his death were Printed in 1677, in which year he also died. They are called his Posthumous Works, *Opera Posthuma*. These three Letters B. D. S. are to be found in the Title of the Book, which contains five several works. The first, is a Treatise of Morals demonstrated Geometrically, *Ethica more Geometrico demonstrata*. The second, is about Politicks. The third, treats of the Understanding, and of the means of rectifying it, *De emendatione Intellectus*. The fourth, is a Collection of Letters, and Answers to them, *Epistolæ & Responsiones*. The fifth, is an Abridgement of the Hebrew Grammar, *Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebrææ*. The Printer's name and the place wherein that Book was Printed, are not mention'd in the Title-page; which shews that

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- APFUHN, Ch., Oeuvres de Spinoza, trad. et notes, Paris, Garnier-Flammarion, 1964-1966, 4 vol.
- BIDNEY, David, The Philosophy and Ethics of Spinoza, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940, 454p.
- COLLINS, James, The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, 517p.
- COPLESTON, Frederick, s.j., A History of Philosophy, Volume 4, Descartes to Leibniz, Garden City, New York, Image Books, 1963, 400p.
- DUFF, Robert A., Spinoza's Political and Ethical Philosophy, Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, 1903, 515p.
- DUMMER, Joseph, Baruch Spinoza and Western Democracy, Philosophical Library, New York, 1955.
- ELWES, R.H.M., trans. of Improvement of the Understanding - Ethics and Correspondence of Spinoza from Latin, intro. by Frank Sewall, New York, Tudor Press, 1936, 427p.
- ELWES, R.H.M., The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza trans. from Latin with intro. Also with bibliographical Note by Francesco Cordasco, Vol. I, New York, Dover Publications, 1951.
- FULLERTON, George Stuart, On Spinozistic Immortality, University of Pennsylvania, 1899 (Number B in Philosophical Series)
- HALLET, H.F., Benedict de Spinoza; The Elements of His Philosophy, University of London, The Athlone Press, 1957, 171p.
- HALLET, H.F., Creation, Emanation and Salvation: A Spinozistic Study, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, 234p.
- HAMPSHIRE, Stuart, Spinoza, London, Penguin Books, 1953, 237p.

- HAYES, Frank A., Earlier Philosophical Writings of Spinoza, trans. from Latin on The Cartesian Principles and Thoughts on Metaphysics, intro. by David Bidney, Indianapolis, Bobs-Merrill, 1963, 161p.
- LACHIEZE-REY, Pierre, Les Origines Cartésiennes du Dieu de Spinoza, Paris, Librairie Felix Alcan, 1932, 288p.
- KAYSER, Rudolph, Spinoza: Portrait of a Spiritual Hero: intro. by Albert Einstein, trans. by Amy Allan and Maxim New Mark, New York, Philosophical Library, 1946, 326p.
- MALET, Andre, Le Traite theologico-politique de Spinoza et la pensee biblique, Paris, Les Belles-Lettres, 1966, 318p.
- OKO, Adolph S., The Spinoza Bibliography, published under auspices of Columbia Univ., Boston, G.K. Hall, 1964.
- PARKINSON, G.H.R., Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1954, 197p.
- PFLEIDERER, Otto, The Philosophy of Religion: On the Basis of its History, Williams & Norgate, Covent Garden, London, 1886.
- PUNGER, Bernhard, History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion, trans. from German by W. Hastle, pref. by Robert Flint, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1887.
- POLLOCK, Sir Frederick, Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy, London, Duckworth and Co., 2d ed., 1909, 427p.
- RATNER, Joseph, The Philosophy of Spinoza, selections from his chief works, with life and intro., New York, The Modern Library, 1927, 376p.
- RUNES, Dagobert, D., The Spinoza Dictionary, forward by Albert Einstein, New York, The Philosophical Library, 1951, 309p.
- SAW, Ruth, Lydia, The Vindication of Metaphysics: A Study in the Philosophy of Spinoza, London, Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1951, 173p.

- STRAUSS, Leo, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, New York, Schocken Books, 1965.
- VAN VLOTEN, Opera quotquot reperta sunt - et J.P.N. Land, Editio Testia, Hague Comitum, M. Njhoff, 1913-14.
- WETLESEN, Jon, A Spinoza Bibliography, University of Forlaget, Oslo, 1968, 88p. - Lists of publications from 1940 to 1967.
- WOLF, A., trans. of Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being by Spinoza with intro. and commentary and biography, New York, Russell and Russell, 1963, 246 p.
- WOLF, A., trans. of The Correspondence of Spinoza, with intro. and annotations, New York, Russell and Russell, 1966, 502p.
- WOLFSON, Harry Austryn, The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Univ. Press, 1934, 2 vols.