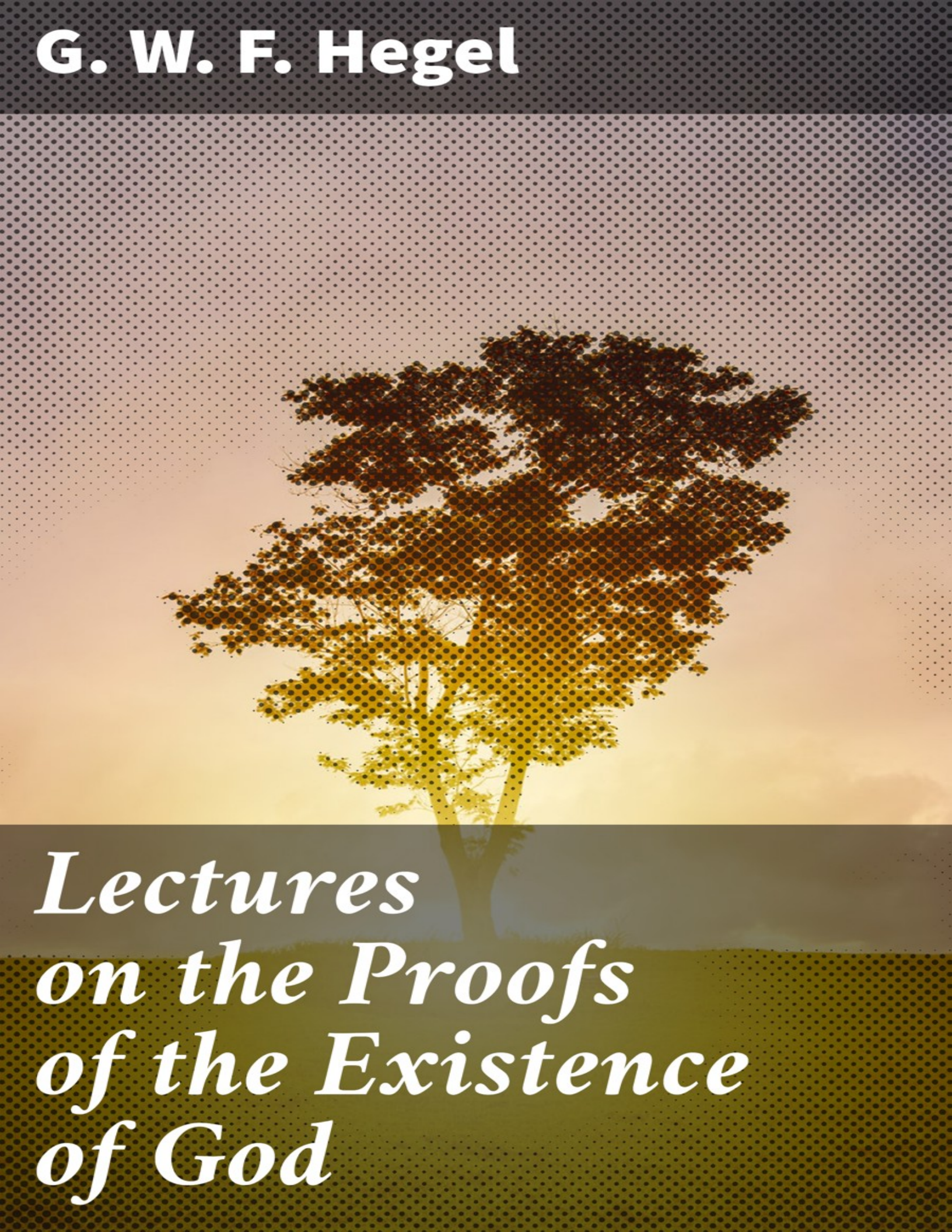
G. W. F. Hegel



Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God

G. W. F. Hegel

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Lecture 1

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FIRST LECTURE

THESE Lectures are devoted to the consideration of the proofs of the existence of God. The occasion for them is this. I had at first to make up my mind to give only one set of lectures in this summer session on philosophical knowledge as a whole, and then afterwards I felt I would like to add a second set on at least one separate subject of knowledge. I have therefore chosen a subject which is connected with the other set of lectures which I gave on logic, and constitutes, not in substance, but in form, a kind of supplement to that set, inasmuch as it is concerned with only a particular aspect of the fundamental conceptions of logic. These lectures are therefore chiefly meant for those of my hearers who were present at the others, and to them they will be most easily intelligible.

But inasmuch as the task we have set ourselves is to consider the proofs of the existence of God, it would appear as if only one aspect of the matter belongs to the subject of logic, namely, the nature of proof. The other, again, the content, which is God Himself, belongs to a different sphere, that of religion, and to the consideration of it by thought, to the philosophy of religion. In point of fact, it is a portion of this branch of knowledge which has to be set apart and

treated by itself in these lectures. In what follows it will more clearly be seen what relation this part bears to the entirety of the doctrine of religion; and further, that this doctrine in so far as it is scientific, and what belongs to the sphere of logic, do not fall outside one another to the extent that would appear from the first statement of our aim, and that what is logical does not constitute the merely formal side, but, in fact, occupies the very centre point of the content.

The first thing we encounter when we seek to make a beginning with the execution of our design is the general, and, so far as this design is concerned, repugnant, point of view of the prepossessions of present-day culture. If the object, God, is in itself capable of producing exaltation of mind by its very name, and of stirring our soul to its innermost depths, our lofty expectation may just as quickly die away when we reflect that it is the proofs of the existence of God with which we are about to concern ourselves. For the proofs of the existence of God are to such an extent fallen into discredit that they pass for something antiquated, belonging to the metaphysics of days gone by; a barren desert, out of which we have escaped and brought ourselves back to a living faith; the region of arid Understanding, out of which we have once more raised ourselves to the warm feeling of religion. The attempt to renovate, by means of new applications and artifices of an acute Understanding, those rotten props of our belief that there is a God, which have passed for proofs, or to improve the places which have become weak through attacks and counter-proofs, could of itself gain no favour merely by its

good intention. For it is not this or that proof, or this or that form and way of putting it, that has lost its weight, but the very proving of religious truth has so much lost credit with the mode of thought peculiar to our time that the impossibility of such proof is already a generally accepted opinion. Nay more, it has come to be regarded as irreligious to place confidence in such reasoned knowledge, and to seek by such a path to reach a sure conviction regarding God and His nature, or even regarding His mere existence. This business of proof, therefore, is so much out of date, that the proofs themselves are barely even historically known here and there; and even to theologians, that is to say, people who desire to have a scientific acquaintance with religious truths, they are sometimes unknown.

The proofs of the existence of God have originated in the necessity of satisfying thought and reason. But this necessity has assumed, in modern culture, quite a different position from that which it had formerly, and those points of view must first of all be considered which have presented themselves in this reference. Yet since they are known in their general aspects, and this is not the place to follow them back to their foundations, we need only recall them, and, in fact, limit ourselves to the form which they assume within the sphere of Christianity. It is in this region that the conflict between faith and reason in Man himself first finds a basis, and that doubt enters his soul, and can reach the fearful height of depriving him of all peace. Thought must indeed touch the earlier religions of imagination, as we may shortly call them; it must turn itself with its opposite principles directly against their sensuous pictures and all

else in them. The contradictions, the strife and enmity which have thus arisen belong to the external history of philosophy. But the collisions between philosophy and religion here get the length of hostility merely, and have not come to be that inner division of mind and feeling, such as we see in Christianity, where the two sides which come into contradiction get possession of the depth of the Spirit as their single and consequently common source, and in this position, bound together in their contradiction, are able to disturb this spot itself, the Spirit in its inmost nature. The expression “faith” is reserved for Christianity; we do not speak of Greek or Egyptian faith, or of a faith in Zeus or Apis. Faith expresses the inwardness of certainty, and certainty of the deepest and most concentrated kind, as distinguished from all other opinion, conception, persuasion, or volition. This inwardness, at once as being what is deepest and at the same time most abstract, comprises thought itself; a contradiction of this faith by thought is therefore the most painful of all divisions in the depths of the Spirit.

Yet such misery is happily, if we may so express ourselves, not the only form in which the relation of faith and knowledge is to be found. On the contrary, this relation presents itself in a peaceful form, in the conviction that revelation, faith, positive religion, and, on the other hand, reason and thought in general, must not be in contradiction, and not only that they may be in harmony, but also that God does not so contradict Himself in His works, cannot so contradict Himself, as that the human Spirit in its essence, in its thinking reason, in that which it must have come from

the very first to regard as divine in itself, could get into conflict with what has come to it through greater enlightenment about the nature of God and Man's relation to that nature. During the whole of the Middle Ages, theology was understood to mean nothing else than a scientific knowledge of Christian truths, that is to say, a knowledge essentially connected with philosophy. The Middle Ages were far enough away from taking the historical knowledge of faith for scientific knowledge; in the Fathers and in what may be reckoned generally as historical material, they sought only authorities, edification, and information on the doctrines of the Church. The opposite tendency is simply to search out the human origin of the articles of faith by the historical treatment of the older evidences and works of every kind, and in this way to reduce them to the minimum of their most primitive form. This form must be regarded as wholly unfruitful in deeper knowledge and development, because it is in contradiction with that Spirit, which, after the removal of that primitive form as something immediately present, had been poured out on the adherents of these doctrines, in order to lead them now, for the first time, into all truth. The tendency here described was unknown in these times. In the belief in the unity of this Spirit with itself, the whole of these doctrines, even those which are most abstruse for reason, are regarded from the point of view of thinking, and the attempt is made, in the case of all of these which are recognised as in themselves the content of belief, to *prove* them on rational grounds. The great theologian Anselm of Canterbury, whom we shall have to consider elsewhere,

declares in this sense that, if we are firm in the faith, it is idleness, *negligentiæ mihi esse videtur*, not to know what we believe. In the Protestant Church it has in the same way come about that the rational knowledge of religious truths is cherished and held in honour in combination with theology or along with it. The point of interest was to see how far the natural light of reason, human reason by itself, could progress in the knowledge of the truth, with the important reservation that through religion Man can learn higher truths than reason is in a position to discover of itself.

Here we come upon two distinct spheres, and, to begin with, a peaceful relation between them is justified by means of the distinction that the teachings of positive religion are above but not against reason. This activity of thinking knowledge found itself stimulated and supported from without through the example which lay before its eyes in the pre-Christian, or, speaking generally, non-Christian religions. This showed that the human spirit, even when left to itself, has attained to deep insight into the nature of God, and with all its errors has arrived at great truths, even at fundamental truths, such as the existence of God and the purer idea, free from sensuous ingredients, of that existence, the immortality of the soul, providence, and such like. Thus positive doctrine and the rational knowledge of religious truths have been peacefully pursued alongside of one another. This position of reason in relation to dogma was, however, different from that confidence of reason which was first considered, which dared to approach the highest mysteries of doctrine, such as the Trinity, and the incarnation of Christ; whereas, on the contrary, the point of

view referred to after the one just mentioned timidly confined itself to the business of merely venturing through the medium of thought to deal with what the Christian religion possesses in common with heathen and non-Christian religions in general, and what must therefore remain a part merely of what is abstract in religion. But when once we have become conscious of the difference of these two spheres, we must pronounce the relation of equality in which faith and reason are to be regarded as standing each alongside of the other, to be unintelligible, or else to be a misleading pretence. The tendency of thought to seek unity leads of necessity to the comparison of these spheres first of all, and then when they once pass for different, to the agreement of faith with itself alone, and of thought with itself alone, so that each sphere refuses to recognise the other and rejects it. It is one of the commonest self-deceptions of the Understanding to regard the element of difference, which is found in the one central point of Spirit, as though it must not necessarily advance to opposition and so to contradiction. The point at which the conflict on the part of Spirit begins has been reached as soon as what is concrete in Spirit has, by means of analysis, attained to the consciousness of difference. All that partakes of Spirit is concrete; in this we have before us the Spiritual in its most profound aspect, that of Spirit as the concrete element of faith and thought. The two are not only mixed up in the most manifold way, in immediate passing over from one side to the other, but are so inwardly bound up together that there is no faith which does not contain within itself reflection, argumentation, or, in fact, thought, and, on the

other hand, no thinking which does not, even if it be only for the moment, contain faith,—for faith in general is the form of any presupposition, of any assumption, come whence it may, which lies firmly at the foundation—momentary faith. This means that even in free thinking that which now exists as a presupposition, is a comprehended result, thought out either before or after, but in this transformation of the presupposition into a result, again has a side which is a presupposition, an assumption or unconscious immediacy of the activity of the Spirit.

Yet the explanation of the nature of free self-conscious thought we must here leave on one side, and rather remark that for the attainment of this essentially and actually existent union of faith and thought a long time has been necessary—more than fifteen hundred years—and that it has cost the most severe toil to reach the point at which thought has escaped from its absorption in faith, and attained to the abstract consciousness of its freedom, and thereby of its independence and its complete self-sufficiency, in the light of which nothing can have validity for thought which has not come before its judgment-seat, and been then justified as admissible. Thought thus taking its stand upon the extreme point of its freedom—and it is only completely free in this extreme point—and rejecting authority and faith in general, has driven faith in like manner to take its stand in an abstract fashion upon itself, and to attempt entirely to free itself from thought. At all events, it has arrived at the point of declaring itself to be freed from and not to require thought. Wrapped up in unconsciousness of the at all events small amount of

thought which must remain to it, it goes on to declare thought to be incapable of reaching truth and destructive of it, so that thought is capable of comprehending one thing only, its incapacity to grasp the truth and see into it, and of proving to itself its own nothingness, with the result that suicide is its highest vocation. So completely has the relation in the view of the time been reversed, that faith has now become exalted as immediate knowledge in opposition to thought, as the only means of attaining to the truth, just as formerly, on the other hand, only that could give peace to Man of which he could become conscious as truth through proof by thought.

This standpoint of opposition cannot better show how important and far-reaching it is than when it is considered in relation to the subject which we have set ourselves to discuss, the knowledge of God. In the working out into opposition of the difference between faith and thought, it is immediately apparent that they have reached formal extremes in which abstraction is made from all content, so that in the first instance they are no longer opposed as concretely defined religious faith and thought about religious subjects, but abstractly, as faith in general, and as thought in general, or knowledge, in so far as this last does not yield merely forms of thought, but gives us a content in and with its truth. From this point of view the knowledge of God is made dependent on the question as to the nature of knowledge in general, and before we can pass to the investigation of the concrete it seems necessary to ascertain whether the consciousness of what is true can and must be thinking knowledge, or, faith. Our proposed

consideration of the knowledge of the existence of God thus changed into this general consideration of knowledge, just as the new philosophical epoch has made it the beginning and foundation of all philosophical speculation that the nature of knowledge itself is to be examined before the actual, i.e., concrete knowledge of an object. We thus incurred the danger—a danger, however, necessary in the interests of thoroughness—of having to trace the subject further back than the time at our disposal for carrying out the aim of these lectures would permit of our doing. If, however, we look more closely at the demand which appears to have met us, it becomes perfectly plain that it is only the subject that has changed with it, not the thing. In both cases, either if we admitted the demand for that inquiry, or stuck directly to our theme, we should have to know, and in that case we should have a subject, too, in the shape of knowledge itself. And as in doing so we should not have emerged from the activity of knowledge, from real knowledge, there is nothing to hinder our leaving the other subject which it is not our aim to consider, alone, and thus stick to our own subject. It will further appear, as we follow out our purpose, that the knowledge of our subject will also in itself justify itself as knowledge. That in true and real knowledge the justification of knowledge will and must lie, might admittedly be said in advance, for to say so is simply a tautology, just as we may know in advance that the desired way round, the desiring to know knowledge before actual knowledge, is superfluous just because it is inherently absurd. If under the process of knowledge we figure to ourselves an external operation in which it is

brought into a merely mechanical relation with an object, that is to say, remains outside it, and is only externally applied to it, knowledge is presented in such a relation as a particular thing for itself, so that it may well be that its forms have nothing in common with the qualities of the object; and thus when it concerns itself with an object, it remains only in its own forms, and does not reach the essential qualities of the object, that is to say, does not become real knowledge of it. In such a relation knowledge is determined as finite, and as of the finite; in its object there remains something essentially inner, whose notion is thus unattainable by and foreign to knowledge, which finds here its limit and its end, and is on that account limited and finite. But to take such a relation as the only one, or as final or absolute, is a purely made-up and unjustifiable assumption of the Understanding. Real knowledge, inasmuch as it does not remain outside the object, but in point of fact occupies itself with it, must be immanent in the object, the proper movement of its nature, only expressed in the form of thought and taken up into consciousness.

We have now provisionally indicated those standpoints of culture which in the case of such material as we have before us ought in the present day to be taken into account. It is pre-eminently, or, properly speaking, only here that it is self-evident that the proposition already laid down, according to which the consideration of knowledge is not different from the consideration of its object, must hold good without limitation. I will therefore at once indicate the general sense in which the proposed theme, the proofs of the existence of God, is taken, and which will be shown to be the true one. It

is that they ought to comprise the elevation of the human spirit to God, and express it for thought, just as the elevation itself is an elevation of thought and into the kingdom of thought.

And to begin with, as regards knowledge, Man is essentially consciousness, and thus what is felt, the content, the determinateness which a feeling or sensation has, is also in consciousness as something presented in the form of an idea. That in virtue of which feeling is religious feeling, is the divine content; it is therefore essentially something of which we have knowledge. But this content is in its essence no sensuous perception or sensuous idea; it does not exist for imagination, but only for thought; God is Spirit, only for Spirit, and only for pure Spirit, that is, for thought. This is the root of such a content, even though imagination and even sense-perception may afterwards accompany it, and this content itself may enter into feeling. It is the elevation of the thinking Spirit to that which is the highest thought, to God, that we thus wish to consider.

This elevation is besides essentially rooted in the nature of our mind. It is necessary to it, and it is this necessity that we have before us in this elevation, and the setting forth of this necessity itself is nothing else than what we call proof. Therefore we have not to prove this elevation from the outside; it proves itself in itself, and this means nothing else than that it is by its very nature necessary. We have only to look to its own process, and we have there, since it is necessary in itself, the necessity, insight into the nature of which has to be vouched for by proof.

Lecture 2

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SECOND LECTURE

If the undertaking which is commonly called proof of the existence of God has been understood in the form in which it was set forth in the first lecture, the chief objection to it will have been got rid of. For the nature of proof was held to consist in this, that it is only the consciousness of the proper movement of the object in itself. If this thought might be attended with difficulties in its application to other objects, these difficulties would necessarily disappear in the case of the object with which we are concerned, for it is not a passive and external object, but really a subjective movement, the elevation of the Spirit to God, an activity, the following of a certain course, a process, and thus has in it that necessary procedure which constitutes proof, and which has only to be taken up and studied in order that it may be seen to involve proof. But the expression proof carries with it too definitely the idea of a merely subjective line of thought to be followed on our behoof, to allow of the conception of it just stated being considered sufficient in itself apart from any attempt to expressly examine and get rid of this contrasted idea. In this lecture, then, we must first come to an understanding about the nature of proof in general, and with especial definiteness as regards that

aspect of it which we here put aside and exclude. It is not our business to assert that there is no proof of the kind indicated, but to assign its limits, and to see that it is not, as is falsely thought, the only form of proof. This is bound up with the contrast drawn between immediate and mediated knowledge, in which in our time the chief interest centres in connection with religious knowledge, and even the religious frame of mind itself, which must accordingly be likewise considered.

The distinction, which has already been touched upon in connection with knowledge, implies that two kinds of proof must be taken into account, of which the one is clearly that which we use simply as an aid to knowledge, as something subjective, whose activity and movement have their place within ourselves, and are not the peculiar movement of the thing considered. That this kind of proof finds a place in the scientific knowledge of finite things and their finite content, becomes apparent when we examine the nature of the procedure more closely. Let us take for this purpose an example from a science in which this method of proof is admittedly applied in its most complete form. If we prove a geometrical proposition every part of the proof must in part carry its justification within itself, so also when we solve an equation in algebra. In part, however, the whole course of procedure is defined and justified through the aim which we have in connection with this, and because that end is attained by such procedure. But we are very well aware that that of which the quantitive value has been developed out of the equation, has not as an actual thing run through these operations in order to reach the quantity which it

possesses, and that the magnitude of the geometrical lines, angles, and so on, has not gone through and been brought about by the series of propositions by which we have arrived at it as representing a result. The necessity which we see in such proof corresponds indeed to the individual properties of the object itself, these relations of quantity actually belong to it; but the progress in connecting the one with the other is something which goes on entirely within us; it is a process for realising the aim we have in view, namely, to see into the meaning of the thing, not a course in which the object arrives at its inherent relations and their connection. It does not thus create itself, and is not created, as we create it and its relations in the process of attaining insight into it.

Besides proof proper, of which the essential characteristic—for this is all that is necessary for the purpose of our investigation—has been brought out, we find further, that in the region of finite knowledge the term proof is also applied to what, when more closely examined, is only the indicating of something, the pointing out of an idea, a proposition, a law, and so on in experience. Historical proof we do not require from the point of view from which we here consider knowledge, to elaborate in detail; it depends for its material on experience, or rather perception. Looked at in one light, it makes no difference that it has reference to foreign perceptions and their evidences; argumentation, that is to say, the exercise of understanding proper regarding the objective connection of circumstances and actions, makes these data into presuppositions and fundamental assumptions, just as its criticism of evidences

has done in drawing its conclusions. But in so far as argument and criticism constitute the other essential side of historical proof, such proof treats its data as being the ideas of other people; the subjective element directly enters into the material, and the reasoning about and combination of that material is likewise subjective activity; so that the course and activity of knowledge has quite different ingredients from the course followed by the circumstances themselves. As regards the pointing things out in everyday experience, this is certainly concerned, in the first instance, with individual perceptions, observations, and so on, that is to say, with the kind of material which is only pointed out, but its interest is by so doing to prove further that there are in Nature and in Spirit such species and kinds, such laws, forces, faculties, and activities as are mentioned in the sciences. We pass by the metaphysical or common psychological reflections about that subjective element of sense, external and internal, which accompanies perception. But the material, however, in so far as it enters into the sciences, is not so left to itself as it is in the senses and in perception. On the contrary, the content of the sciences—the species, kinds, laws, forces, and so on—is built up out of that material, which is, perhaps, already called by the name of phenomena, by putting together through analysis what is common, the leaving aside of what is not essential, the retention of what is called essential, without any certain test having been applied to distinguish between what is to be regarded as non-essential and what as essential. It is admitted that what is perceived does not itself make these abstractions, does not compare its individuals (or individual

positions, circumstances, and so on), or put what is common in them together; that therefore a great part of the activity of knowledge is a subjective affair, just as in the content which has been obtained a part of its definitions, as being logical forms, are the product of this subjective activity. The expression “predicate,” or mark (Merkmal), if people will still use this stupid expression, directly indicates a subjective purpose of isolating properties for our use in marking distinctions, while others, which likewise exist in the object, are put aside. This expression is to be called stupid, because the definitions of species and kinds directly pass for something essential and objective, and not as existing merely for us who mark distinctions. We may certainly also express ourselves by saying that the species leaves aside, in one kind, properties which it places in another, or that energy in one form of its manifestation leaves aside circumstances which are present in another, that these circumstances are thus shown by it to be unessential, and it of itself gives up the form of its manifestation, and withdraws itself into inactivity or self-containedness; that thus, for example, the law of the motion of the heavenly bodies penetrates to every single place and every moment in which the heavenly body occupies that place, and just by this continual abstraction shows itself to be a law. If we thus look on abstraction as objective activity, which it so far is, it is yet very different from subjective activity and its products. The former leaves the heavenly body to fall back again after abstraction from this particular place and this particular moment into the particular changing place and moment of time, just as the species may appear in the kind

in other contingent or unessential forms and in the external particularity of individuals. On the other hand, subjective abstraction raises the law like the species into its universality as such, and makes it exist and preserves it in this form, in the mind.

In these forms of the knowledge which progresses from mere indication to proof, from immediate objectivity to special products, the necessity may be felt of considering explicitly the method, the nature, and fashion of the subjective activity, in order to test its claims and procedure; for this method has its own characteristics and kind of progress which are quite different from the characteristics and process of the object in itself. And without entering more particularly into the nature of this method of knowledge, it becomes immediately apparent, from a single characteristic which we observe in it, that inasmuch as it is represented as being concerned with the object in accordance with subjective forms, it is only capable of apprehending relations of the object. It is therefore idle to start the question whether these relations are objective and real or only subjective and ideal, not to mention the fact that such expressions as subjectivity and objectivity, reality and ideality, are simply vague abstractions. The content, be it objective or merely subjective, real or ideal, remains always the same, an aggregate of relations, not something that is in-and-for-itself, the notion of the thing, or the infinite, with which knowledge must have to do. If that content of knowledge is taken by perverted sense as containing relations only, and these are understood to be phenomena or relations to a faculty of subjective

knowledge, it must, so far as results are concerned, always be recognised as representing the great intellectual advance which modern philosophy has achieved, that the mode of thinking, proving, and knowing the infinite, which has been described, is proved incapable of reaching what is eternal and divine.

What has been brought out in the preceding exposition regarding knowledge in general, and especially what relates to thinking knowledge (which is what alone concerns us), and to proof, the principal moment in that knowledge, we have looked at from the point of view from which it is seen to be a movement of the activity of thought which is outside the object and different from the development of the object itself. This definition may in part be taken to be sufficient for our purpose, but partly, too, it is to be taken as what is essential in opposition to the one-sidedness which lies in the reflections about the subjectivity of knowledge.

In the opposition of the process of knowledge to the object to be known lies the finiteness of knowledge. But this opposition is not on that account to be regarded as itself infinite and absolute, and its products are not to be taken to be appearances only because of the mere abstraction of subjectivity; but in so far as they themselves are determined by that opposition, the content as such is affected by the externality referred to. This point of view has an effect upon the nature of the content, and yields a definite insight into it; while, on the contrary, the other way of looking at the question gives us nothing but the abstract category of the subjective, which is, moreover, taken to be absolute. What we thus get as the result of the way in which

we look at the proof, for the otherwise quite general quality of the content, is, speaking generally, just this, that the content, inasmuch as it bears an external relation to knowledge, is itself determined as something external, or, to put it more definitely, consists of abstractions from finite properties. Mathematical content as such is essentially magnitude. Geometrical figures pertain to space, and have thus in themselves externality as their principle, since they are distinguished from real objects, and represent only the one-sided spatiality of these objects, as distinguished from their concrete filling up, through which they first became real. So number has the unit for its principle, and is the putting together of a multiplicity of units which are independent, and is thus a completely external combination. The knowledge which we have here before us can only attain its greatest perfection in this field, because that field contains only simple and definite qualities, and the dependence of these upon each other, the insight into the nature of which is proof, is thus stable, and ensures for proof the logical progress of necessity. This kind of knowledge is capable of exhausting the nature of its objects. The logical nature of the process of proof is not, however, confined to mathematical content, but enters into all departments of natural and spiritual material; but we may sum up what is logical in knowledge in connection with proof by saying that it depends on the rules of inference; the proofs of the existence of God are therefore essentially inferences. The express investigation of these forms belongs, however, partly to logic, and for the rest the nature of the fundamental defect must be ascertained in the course of

the examination of these proofs which is about to be taken in hand. For the present it is enough to remark further, in connection with what has been said, that the rules of inference have a kind of foundation which is of the nature of mathematical calculation. The connection of propositions which are requisite to constitute a syllogistic conclusion depends on the relations of the sphere which each of them occupies as regards the other, and which is quite properly regarded as greater or smaller. The definite extent of such a sphere is what determines the correctness of the subsumption. The older logicians, such as Lambert and Ploucquet, have been at the pains of inventing a notation by means of which the relation in inference may be reduced to that of identity, that is, to the abstract mathematical relation of equality, so that inference is shown to be the mechanism of a kind of calculation. As regards, however, the further nature of knowledge in such an external connection of objects, which in their very nature are external in themselves, we shall have to speak of it presently under the name of mediate knowledge, and to consider the opposition in its more definite form.

As regards these forms which are called species, laws, forces, and so on, knowledge does not stand to them in an external relation; they are rather its products. But the knowledge which produces them, as has been shown, produces them only by abstraction from what is objective; they have their root in this, but are essentially separated from what is actual; they are more concrete than mathematical figures, but their content differs essentially

from that from which the start was made, and which must constitute their only foundation of proof.

The defective element in this mode of knowledge has thus attention drawn to it in a different form from that shown in the way of looking at it, which declares the products of knowledge to be mere phenomena, because knowledge itself is only a subjective activity. But the general result, however, is the same, and we have now to see what has been set over against this result. What is determined as insufficient for the aim of the Spirit, which is the absorption into its very nature of what is infinite, eternal, divine, is the activity of the Spirit which in thinking proceeds by means of abstraction, inference, and proof. This view, itself the product of the mode of thought characteristic of the period, has jumped straight over to the other extreme in giving out a proofless, immediate knowledge, an unreasoning faith, a feeling devoid of thought, as the only way of grasping and having within oneself divine truth. It is asserted that that kind of knowledge which is insufficient for the higher kind of truth is the exclusive and sole kind of knowledge. The two assumptions are most closely connected. On the one side, we have, in the investigation of what we have undertaken to consider, to free that knowledge from its one-sidedness, and in doing so at the same time to show by facts that there exists another kind of knowledge than that which is given out as the only kind. On the other side, the pretension which faith as such sets up against knowledge is a prejudice which occupies too firm and sure a position not to make a stricter investigation necessary. In view of this pretension it must be borne in mind that the true, unsophisticated faith, the more