

ORTHODOX ETHICS OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV AND MYSTICAL ETHICS OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

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The article provides a comparative analysis of the Orthodox ethics of the Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Solovyov and the mystical ethics of the Renaissance representative Dante Alighieri. The aim of the study is to identify points of contact between the ethical concepts of these two very different philosophers. Two works were selected for comparison: "Readings on God-Manhood" by V. S. Solovyov and "The Divine Comedy" by Dante. The ethics of man's abstraction from natural principles and the acquisition of a metaphysical existence by the individual are explored. Three stages of human ethical development are considered in the concept of V. S. Solovyov. It is shown that in the process of ethical development, the human personality perceives the Divine principle and reunites nature with it. It is noted that for Solovyov, ethical development is a positive and objective process — a divine-human process. A significant place is devoted to the symbolic-metaphysical understanding of ethics in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy. It is indicated that Dante shows an inexhaustible source of possibilities for man to overcome the burden of earthly existence and turn to the true ethics of divine revelation. It is concluded that both Dante Alighieri and V. S. Solovyov came to the realization that the religious principle in man is the only real implementation of the free ethical process.

Key words: ethics, the ethical process, humanism, divine principle, worldview, nature, a person, personalities, freedom, religious philosophy

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ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ ЭТИКА ВЛАДИМИРА СОЛОВЬЕВА И МИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭТИКА ДАНТЕ АЛИГЬЕРИ

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В статье предпринят сравнительный анализ православной этики русского религиозного философа Владимира Соловьева и мистической этики представителя эпохи Возрождения Данте Алигьери. Цель исследования: выявить моменты соприкосновения этических концепций этих двух столь непохожих философов. Для сравнения выбраны две работы: «Чтения о Богочеловечестве» В. С. Соловьева и «Божественная комедия» Данте. Исследуются этика отвлечения человека от природных начал и обретение личностью метафизического существования. Рассматриваются три ступени этического развития человека в концепции В. С. Соловьева. Показано, что в процессе этического развития личность человека воспринимает Божественное начало и воссоединяет с ним природу. Отмечено, что у Соловьева этическое развитие есть положительный и объективный процесс — богочеловеческий процесс. Значительное место уделено символически метафизическому пониманию этики в «Божественной комедии» Данте Алигьери. Указано, что Данте показывает неиссякаемый источник возможностей для человека преодолеть бремя земного существования и обратиться к подлинной этике божественного откровения. Делается вывод о том, что и Данте Алигьери и В. С. Соловьев пришли к осознанию того, что религиозное начало в человеке является единственным действительным осуществлением свободного этического процесса.

Ключевые слова: этика, этический процесс, гуманизм, божественное начало, мировоззрение, природа, человек, личность, свобода, религиозная философия

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It seems important today to compare the mystical ethics of Dante Alighieri, a representative of European social thought, and the ethical concept of Vladimir Solovyov, the largest representative of Russian religious philosophy. It is important not only to pay attention to the original aspects of religious ethics in Russia, but also to understand more deeply the features and traditions of Russian culture and the nature of its interaction with the culture of people from other countries and other eras. As Paul Ricoeur rightly noted, "reflection is appropriation of our effort to exist and of our desire to be, through the works which bear witness to that effort and desire" [1]. In this regard, comparison of such different thinkers should be the apotheosis of lasting ethical values.

Dante Alighieri introduced the humanistic tradition into the system of medieval scholastic thought. The idea of natural existence sinfulfulness served only as a starting point for his reflection. Dante considered abstract formulas justifying Goodness, substantiating the transcendent essence of the

Divine principle, undertaken by representatives of medieval philosophy as the basis for discussing the true virtues of a man. Guardini R notes that Dante expresses his thoughts based not on precise theories, but symbolically; he wishes to form images, and his worldview is constructed speculatively [2]. Dante Alighieri's philosophy is a challenge to the medieval era. As depicted by Dante, a man tries to release his creative energies while satisfying his needs. Therefore, we can say that Dante goes beyond his era, and his creation serves as the introduction to the Renaissance humanistic ethics. According to Guardini R, "Dante is committed to the Middle Ages seriously and unreservedly, but at the same time he is on the border of the Middle Ages, and part of his human existence is already beyond its borders" [2], writes Guardini R.

Solovyov V defines the moral basis of a human through a comprehensive religious and philosophical concept of freedom. The process of mutual transformation of captivity into freedom needs an active human mind, which contains reserves

of human knowledge and through which the ethical process is implemented. Thus, Solovyov offers conditions for movement of cognition and activity from captivity to freedom. Meanwhile, both Dante and Solovyov start the ethical process of a human movement from understanding the natural existence to consideration of the foundations of Divine existence from an ethical sensation. Therefore, an attempt to find the common ground between the ideas of Dante Alighieri and Vladimir Solovyov is undoubtedly of great importance.

Vladimir Solovyov and Dante Alighieri could accumulate achievements in the sphere of spiritual culture of their era and did it each in their own way. Solovyov V made a significant impact during his years, forming new layers and directions of philosophical research in the field of ethics. Our generation will have to find new landmarks in the history of philosophical thought of past years. Researchers are finding their own way to creations of Dante Alighieri, and that of Solovyov V, in particular. "The great creations of the human spirit are like mountain peaks: the more we distance ourselves from them, the higher their snow-white peaks rise in front of us" [3], wrote Bulgakov SN.

Despite the fact that the ethical views of Vladimir Solovyov and Dante Alighieri were diverse, their attention to a human being and deep analysis of earthly and Divine existence unites these thinkers and allows to find landmarks for creation of a holistic philosophical worldview. In this regard, Bulgakov SN asked: "Is it possible both to be a materialist based on your world view, i.e. think of yourself as truly united with nature and a human race, and affirm the originality of the human spirit with its demands and postulates about a supernatural, Divine being that lights up and comprehends a natural life?" [3]. It is Bulgakov who mentions that ethical concepts are universal. Bulgakov claims that Solovyov's positive unitotality is an organism of living ideas. According to Bulgakov SN, researchers will have to step deep back in the history of thought to find a person who, just like Solovyov, can have a similar combination of talents. This world view, described by Bulgakov, is in an embryonic state in the works by Dante Alighieri and reaches its integrity in those by Vladimir Solovyov. "It is the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov that united the Russian thought and determined its direction for a second consecutive century" [4], states, with cold accuracy, Maksimov MV.

Vladimir Solovyov assumes that initially a person possesses three main elements: first, nature, i.e., the present reality; second, the Divine principle as the desired goal and content, which is gradually revealed; third, personality, the subject of life and consciousness. According to the thinker, it is the human personality that perceives the Divine principle and reunites it with nature, transforming it from an accidental existence into a proper being.

According to the philosopher, the term of revelation means that the revealed Divine being is initially hidden, i.e. not revealed as such. The thinker asserts that for a human, God exists and acts, though not in his own definiteness, but in nature: "The unconditional and overall Divine principle embraces nature (but is not embraced by it, as the greater covers the lesser, but not the reverse)" [5]. Vladimir Solovyov considers this kind of representation as the first stage of religious development, where the Divine principle is hidden behind the world of natural phenomena, and the direct object of religious consciousness includes only service beings and forces directly acting in nature and determining the material life and destiny of a man. The thinker says that this stage is natural, it is direct revelation, or polytheism.

In the Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri writes that the Divine principle is hidden in the natural life:

"The more perfect a being is,
the more susceptible to good
and bad treatment it is. Their puny race,
which is far from being perfect, longs for it
And in his thoughts, he strives for the good" [6].

The consonance of Dante's thoughts with Solovyov's ideas means that an infant has natural instincts only; when growing up, he begins to reach out for the good, seeing perfection in God. On the other hand, the idea of goodness as the highest idea is the ultimate ascent for Dante, as for Plato. According to Dante, a person who makes an attempt to speculate, rushes to the essence of the object by means of reason alone avoiding sensations and does not retreat until he reaches the essence of the good using thinking.

According to Solovyov, the second stage of religious development shows the Divine principle in its difference and as opposed to nature in the form of negation of nature, or nothing i.e. the absence of natural existence, and negative freedom from it.

He believes that negative freedom should be deprived of a positive feature and individuality: 'the negative freedom includes the freedom of emptiness, the freedom of the poor' [5]. Therefore, the thinker considers this essentially pessimistic and ascetic stage as negative revelation. The negative feature is mystically shown by Dante as a person losing his appearance:

"And backward through his head withdraws his ears,
even as a snail doth with its horns;
his tongue, which single used to be, and prompt to speech,
divides itself, while in the other case, the split one closes,
and the smoking stops. The soul which had become
a savage beast flees hissing through the trench,
the other spits behind him as he talks.
Then, having turned away from him his just created shoulders,
he to the third said:
"I 'd have Buoso run, as I have, on his belly o'er this path." [6].

Just like many Russian philosophers, Dante perceived the serpent, which, according to the biblical story, forced Eve and Adam to eat an apple from the tree of knowledge, as personification of negative freedom. The freedom to resist God is the negation of the divine will or negative freedom. Rebirth of a sinner's soul into a serpent is a metaphor that allows us to understand the meaning of the fall. Thus, the symbolically mystical understanding of human existence and punishment for sins serve as eternal truth in The Divine Comedy by Dante. It should be noted that the exaggerated feelings of confrontation between a person trapped in hell "originate neither from cosmic forces nor from ruthless and superhuman battles between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. They are rather expressed through the language of relationships" [7], wrote Kilburn B. Owing to that, matter, flesh, human destiny and perception of reality are interrelated anew. The reader believes that the paintings and images that Dante shows in his brilliant work are real. Analyzing the biblical story about the fall of man, American psychoanalyst Kilburn B shows a semantic shift from the concept of "human mistakes" to the concept of a punishable sin, and considers the figure of the serpent as a manifestation of Satan.

In this regard, we ask which reality is more significant. Is it the reality of earthly life or the reality of a soul's stay in

hell after death? Can we use common sense here? In this regard, it seems relevant to use the concepts of Yung G and Bashlyar G. In his work "The Transcendental function", Yung G noted that the rationality of common sense can be the worst of biases, because we think that we know the result and we call it so [8]. Despite common sense, the reader stays in a new reality of images invented by Dante. It is about "realism of the second level, which is different from the usual understanding of reality and is in conflict with the immediate one" [9]', says Bashlyar G in his New Scientific Spirit. According to Bashlyar, it is the mystical sensation giving an impetus to the ethical process that can be referred to as realism of the second level. By showing the torments of sinners, Dante uses an allegory, trying to depict the source of reflections on the ethical human values. Thus, we can see that Dante's thought has a metaphysical basis.

At the third stage of religious development, the Divine principle is consistently revealed in its own content, i.e. in what it is in itself and for itself. The thinker states that a person combines opposites of all kinds, including the opposite between the unconditional and the conditional and the opposite between the absolute essence and the transitory phenomenon. Therefore, the most important goal for the philosopher is to establish the human status in the general context of true existence. In this regard, Solovyov thinks that the most important thing is to comprehend "the integrity of the twofold divine being" [5]. On the one hand, the Russian philosopher considers the productive unity represented by the united divine creation of the Word (Logos). On the other hand, the unity is produced and implemented. Solovyov says that the second implemented unity is called Sofia. According to the thinker, it is the produced and implemented unity that constitutes the beginning of the humanity or an ideal and ethical human being. Therefore, God can exist eternally as Logos and as an active God, if we assume that real elements that perceive a divine action are eternal, or that the world is subject to a divine action through giving place to the divine unity: "The own or produced unity of this world, which is the center of the world and the circumference of the Deity, is a humanity" [5].

Dante shows that the human soul and God are united and that living beings are dissolved in the Deity. In Dante, the Divine Law, the essence that connects the humanity and God, occupies the place of Divine Sofia:

'...the Divine Law
Binds everything in the world together;
Owing to the Law, the Highest God
is shown in His creation. Sinless creatures
Here see a bright trace of the power of Creator,
To whom His law draws them endlessly" [6].

Dante thinks of human existence based on traditional concepts, and provides the Divine law with a new meaning, which can be considered a prologue to understanding Divine revelation in the concept of Solovyov V, in particular.

According to him, it is at the first stage of Divine revelation where the divine principle is recognized only through the beings and forces of the natural world, when nature itself receives a Divine meaning and is recognized as something unconditional and self-existent. According to the philosopher, this is the general meaning of naturalistic consciousness: a person does not like his reality, seeks for something unconditional, but tries to find it within the natural material existence. Therefore, he is controlled by natural forces and principles, becoming a slave of the "weak and meager elements" of the natural world. A human does not think that he belongs to nature. Thus, the human

is not a natural being only, but something bigger and greater than nature. According to the thinker, natural principles cannot have an unconditional power over the human personality. This power is given to nature by the human: "nature dominates us externally only because and as much as we internally obey it" [5]. In this regard, Nethercott F states that "Solovyov claimed that the life is primary and that the theoretical thought is subordinate to it" [10].

Vladimir Solovyov states that each being in nature can be one of many, particular only, and the totality and absoluteness of this being are expressed only through the desire to be an ethical being. The thinker believes that it is the human shape that allows to be an ideal "Everything", since a human can contain everything in his consciousness. Thus, Solovyov believes that the unity that eternally exists in the Divine principle and that was transformed into pure potency in natural existence, is an example of ideal restoration in humanity. Therefore, the philosopher points out that every being in nature is conditional and transitory. This being can be eternal and unconditional only in God, its absolute beginning.

In this regard, Dante calls to overcome earthly existence, which he defines as pathetic. This is similar to conditional and transitory existence of man according to Solovyov. And strive for goodness and the "light of knowledge" can be interpreted as the strive for unconditional existence. In his work, Dante shows a fusion of passions of the heart and thought represented as a combination of the subjective and the metaphysical:

'Not for this purpose were we born,
To lead a miserable existence,
But to strive for truth until the end
Towards good and light of knowledge!' [6].

According to Dante, as long as we have a body, we are dead, because fundamentally we exist because of the soul, and the soul rests in the body as in the grave, which means it is mortified. The death of the body is life, as the soul is freed. The body is the root of all evil, the source of unhealthy passions, hostility, disagreement, ignorance and just plain madness. The thinker reflects on the metaphysical distinction between the soul (an intelligible essence) and the body (a sensual being). The human body commits sins, and a person must be punished for that. The question is whether a human can ever be free from his sinful nature and become an ethical being. Konrad Lorenz could answer the question in his book *The Eight Deadly Sins of Civilized Humanity*. Lorenz writes that everything that is good and useful both for humanity and for an individual has almost been forgotten under the pressure of competition between people. Thus, "the vast majority of people living today think that only something that helps them surpass their fellows in ruthless competition is of value. They think that any means suitable for this purpose is an independent value" [11]. So, in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, the sinful essence was considered as a value and thereby the idea of overcoming the sinfulness of human nature was created.

According to Solovyov, the life of nature is based on struggle, exclusive self-affirmation of every being, internal and external denial of all other beings. Therefore, the law of nature is a struggle for existence, and more perfectly a being is organized and the higher it is, the more intensely this law is applied. Solovyov V believes that nature as a set of natural processes is a constant movement, a constant transition from one form to another one, and a constant achievement. It means that processes and states of natural existence can be

a reason for imagination until they are implemented. According to Solovyov, implementation of a natural drive or instinct is a necessary content, something satisfying and representing a certain thing until this implementation has taken place and until the corresponding result has been achieved.

Thus, a natural life, which is a goal, can turn out to be evil, deception, and an illusion, since all the content that a person connects with specific natural objects and phenomena and all images belong to the person are products of his imagination. There is a question whether humanity can have clear guidelines or standards according to which it can avoid illusions and follow the path of perfection and realization of the idea of the good. In this regard, law and legislation have an indirect meaning only. Mezhyayev BV drew attention to Solovyov's idea that the task of law is not "to create the Kingdom of God on earth, but to ensure that the world does not turn into hell prematurely" [12]. This means that a person is not provided from the external environment with something that he lacks, that could satisfy his needs and complement his existence. Man supplies nature with what the nature lacks and with something that is inherent to a human, that is, an ethical principle. "Stripped of the rich attire that is given to nature by the will and imagination of a human, it is only a blind, external, and alien force, a force of evil and deception" [5].

Vladimir Solovyov believes that submission to a higher and blind force is the root source of suffering for a man; but being aware that nature is evil, deception and suffering is thereby awareness of superiority of the human over nature. "If I recognize that nature is evil, it is only because I have the power of good, in relation to which nature is evil, if I recognize that nature is a deception and a ghost, it is only because I have the power of truth, compared to which nature is a deception. And finally, it is possible to suffer from nature. It is not about particular or accidental suffering, but about the general severity of natural existence. It is possible only because there is a desire for and ability to get that bliss or fullness of existence that nature cannot give" [5].

Vladimir Solovyov makes a conclusion that the human will, directed at nature, binds a person to it and leads to evil, deception and suffering. Thus, liberation of the will from power and domination of nature is liberation of one's own natural will or renunciation of it. The poetic genius of Dante displayed harmony with this idea:

'when the soul is filled with delight or melancholy,
all other thoughts
can be far away, and nothing disturbs it;
our soul cannot split,
and the person who
believes that a mortal has two souls is mistaken...
A soul has two abilities: attention
and self-concentration, one
is in bonds while the other
is free' [6].

It means that nature can be completed and obtain an ultimate meaning only in a personal, supernatural dimension. The relative and partial existence of nature is manifested through a rational being. That is why Dante denies the impersonal nature of the soul (its duality) as a final reality. He claims that a soul freely strives for ethical values and God. Thus, it can be concluded that according to Dante, the existence and immortality of the soul are meaningful only if the soul is thought about as a "superempirical being" inhabiting an intelligible space.

According to Solovyov, a human will always strive for natural existence, he claims to be a natural being, whereas renunciation of this will is the same as renunciation of natural existence. But as nature was originally defined as "Everything", as a person in the given state of consciousness sees nothing outside the nature, then denial of natural existence means denial of all existence. Therefore, Solovyov declares that the desire to get rid of nature is a desire for self-destruction. The philosopher hypothetically asserts that if nature is Everything, then Everything that is not nature is nothing. Thus, the thinker believes that if nature is recognized as evil, deception and suffering, it is deprived of the unconditional principle. It is the unconditional principle, which is not perceived as nature by human consciousness, can only be negatively defined as the absence of all existence, and as nothing.

Vladimir Solovyov believes that, on the one hand, the religious attitude towards nature, subordination of human life and consciousness to it and its deification led to religious denial of nature and all existence, as well as to religious nihilism; on the other hand, philosophical deification of nature in modern consciousness and philosophical naturalism led to philosophical denial of all existence i.e. to philosophical nihilism. The philosopher thinks that if a person wants to understand and implement this unconditional principle within his own reality, he should separate and oppose it to the elements of the world. To understand what the unconditional principle is, one must first reject that it is not. Then, according to Solovyov, this unconditional rejection of all ultimate signs will already mean a negative definition of the unconditional beginning. The negative definition is the first step towards its positive cognition.

Dante redefines human existence based on a deeply inner and metaphysical experience:

'...your thoughts are influenced
by earthly concepts;
you can see darkness
where bright streams of light are pouring.
The riches are inexhaustible:
the more you can divide them,
the more extensive they become.
Its love and mercy
shine upon everything around us
like the sun' [6].

According to Dante, existence of earthly reality is based on radical antagonism. And metaphysical existence is based on ecstasy, the form of a pure object: "We master sophisticated forms of radicalization of hidden qualities and fight obscenity¹ with its own weapon. We oppose something that is more truthful than the truth to something that is more misleading than the lie. We will not oppose something beautiful to something ugly, we'll search for something even uglier than ugliness: it is monstrous. We will not oppose the obvious to a mystery, we will look for something even more mysterious than a mystery: it is incomprehensible [13], writes Baudrillard. Baudrillard called the movement of cognition, that originated in the metaphysical existence of "ecstasy," a fatal strategy for the European social thought. However, Dante's philosophy is a possible exception in this case. It is so because such a movement of thought is more typical of Russian philosophy, and of Solovyov V, in particular.

¹ Obscenity — in Baudrillard's texts this word means not only «indecent», but he also plays with the word «scene» in this term, that is, the absence of a stage and spectators.

Solovyov is sure that reality of the unconditional principle that exists in itself does not depend on us. The reality of God can neither be deduced from pure reason, nor can it be logically proved. According to the thinker, the necessity of an unconditional beginning for the highest interests of man, will and moral activity, reason and true knowledge, and for feeling and creativity, makes the actual existence of the Divine principle possible. The philosopher believes that unconditional confidence in the existence of the entire external world in general can be obtained through faith only. Thus, we see that Solovyov draws attention to the fact that "... if our entire experience and knowledge are our own states and nothing else, then any statement of external existence corresponding to these states is, from a logical point of view, a more or less probable conclusion only; and if, nevertheless, we are unconditionally and directly convinced that external beings (other people, animals, etc.) exist, then this belief is not logical (since it cannot be logically proved) and is, therefore, nothing more than faith" [5].

In this regard, the philosopher examines the essence of external existence. According to Solovyov, although the law of causality makes us recognize external existence as the reason for our sensations and representations, and since this law of causality is a form of our own mind, then application of this law to external reality can be conditional only. Consequently, the law of causality cannot unconditionally convince us in the existence of an external reality. All the proofs of this existence, reduced to the law of causality, are, according to the thinker, thoughts of probability, and not evidence of reliability. Only faith is evidence of authenticity, that is why the thinker mentions external and internal reality: "We cannot know that something exists outside and independently of us, because everything we know (is real), that is, everything we experience exists in us, but not outside (our sensations and our thoughts); what is not in us, but in itself, is therefore beyond our experience and, consequently, beyond our actual knowledge, and can thus be confirmed only by an act of the spirit that goes beyond our reality and is called faith." [5].

On the other hand, the thinker believes that if the existence of external reality is confirmed by faith, then the content of this reality and its essence (essentia) can be transferred through experience. Therefore, Solovyov is confident that the data obtained during the experience tell us about a truly existing reality and thus form the basis of objective knowledge. In this regard, the philosopher makes a conclusion that if we want to get complete objective knowledge, it is necessary to connect parts of individual information about the existing reality together, and integrate the experience into a system. Solovyov believes that this can be achieved with rational thinking that gives empirical material a scientific shape. Vladimir Solovyov asserts that all the provisions related to the external world can be totally and on the same grounds applicable to the Divine principle. Moreover, the existence of the Divine principle can be confirmed by an act of faith only.

Dante is infinitely devoted to the values that symbolize the image of God the Father. The thinker creates an idea of a decent human existence.

'Oh our Father, living in heaven!
Not because you dwell there,
but because you are filled with omnipotent
Love for mortal beings,
may they humbly and lovingly glorify
your Holy Name,
all those to whom you grant existence' [6].

According to Solovyov, our mind perceives the existence of the external world, as well as the existence of the Divine principle, only be as probabilities or conditional truths, that can be unconditionally confirmed by faith only. On the other hand, the content of the Divine principle, as well as the content of the external nature, can be transferred through experience. Vladimir Solovyov believes that experience provides only psychic facts and facts of consciousness. both in the case of objective reality and Divine principle. The objective significance of these facts is determined with a help of a creative act of faith. With this faith, internal religious experience is recognized as the actions of the cognizing Divine principle, which is the actual object of our consciousness. Thus, the thinker concludes that philosophy of religion taken as a coherent system and synthesis of religious truths can supply the cognizing subject with adequate knowledge of the Divine principle as something unconditional or comprehensive.

According to Solovyov V, the integrity of religious experience and religious thinking forms the content of religious consciousness. From the objective part, this content is a revelation of the Divine principle as a real object of religious consciousness. The thinker believes that the human spirit in general, and, consequently, religious consciousness is not a complete, ready-made fact. Instead, it represents something emerging, taking place and improving, something continuous. Consequently, according to Solovyov, revelation of the Divine principle in this consciousness is gradual.

According to the philosopher, the Divine principle is a real object of religious consciousness, influencing this consciousness and revealing its content in it. In this regard, religious development is a positive and objective process, it is a real interaction between God and a man or a God-human process.

Vladimir Solovyov is convinced that the highest form of Divine revelation should possess the greatest freedom from any exclusivity and one-sidedness, represent the greatest generality; it should also possess the greatest wealth of positive content and represent the greatest completeness and "integrity" (concreteness). According to the thinker, both of these conditions are combined in the concept of positive generality (universality), which is opposed to negative, formally logical universality, which consists in the absence of certain properties and features.

Based on this, according to Solovyov, the goal of universal religion is to maximize positive content as "the religious form is higher when it is richer, more vivid and more specific. A perfect religion is not contained in everything equally (the indifferent basis of religion), it contains and possesses everything (a complete religious synthesis)" [5]. According to the philosopher, a perfect religion should be free from all kinds of limitations and exclusivity, "but not because it lacks any positive features and individuality because such negative freedom is the freedom of emptiness, the freedom of the poor, but because it contains all the features and, therefore, is not exclusively bound to any of them, possesses all of them and is, consequently, free from all of them" [5].

Vladimir Solovyov strives to show that a positive religious synthesis, a true philosophy of religion, should embrace the entire content of religious development, without excluding any positive element, and the unity of religion should be sought in completeness, not in indifference. According to the thinker, religion is the reunion of a man and the world with an unconditional and integral beginning. Therefore, the thinker points out that "this whole or all-encompassing principle does not exclude anything, and therefore true reunification with it is possible, as true religion

cannot exclude, suppress, or forcibly subjugate any element, any living force in a man and human world.” [5].

According to Solovyov V, the reunion of individual beings, particular principles and forces with an unconditional beginning must be free. It means that individual beings and particular principles must voluntarily come to a reunion and unconditional agreement, they must refuse from their exclusivity, self-affirmation or egoism. And as the essence of the unconditional principle does not allow exclusivity and violence, the reunion of private aspects of life and individual forces with the whole principle and among themselves should be, as Solovyov sees it, unconditionally free.

Dante's idea of the world is constructed speculatively. It is determined not by the desire to follow any theory, but by the ability to form images which are followed by the metaphysical reality. The poet wanted to build a picture of human existence based on the highest Divine ethical values. In this regard, Dante noted as follows:

‘Partly, all earthly actions
are dependent on heaven, its light
Sent to earth
to distinguish good from evil.
Freedom of will is also given to you,
and if you resort to it at the beginning —
it will overcome all influences.
Unbound in your freedom,
subject only to your best nature’ [6].

Dante decided to show the inexhaustible potential that lies in the human soul and which can serve as the basis for developing new ethics. Such self-awareness and a person's sense of self-importance is no longer medieval. This indicates

that Dante has already crossed the line that separates medieval values from Renaissance humanism.

A person must deeply comprehend his essence, determine the scope of his personality and choose between the perishable momentary earthly needs and the highest values of being. We can completely agree with Serbinenko V, who noted the following: “... Russian motives include understanding the value of a philosophical thought, which under no circumstances can be reduced to an “opinion”, “idle talk” and ideological simulacra pretending to be conceptual” [14].

According to Solovyov, the way to salvation, true equality, true freedom and brotherhood, lies through self-denial. According to the Russian philosopher, it is self-denial that allows a free reunion with the Divine principle. The words of Solovyov V. can truly serve as the apotheosis of the difficult creative way covered by these two such different thinkers: “For self-denial, preliminary self-affirmation is necessary: to refuse from one's exclusive will, one must first have it; to allow free union of private principles and forces with the unconditional principle, separation is initially required, they must strive for exceptional dominance and unconditional importance. Because only real experience, experienced contradiction, and fundamental inconsistency of this self-affirmation can lead to a free renunciation and conscious and free demand for reunification with the unconditional beginning” [5].

Thus, it can be concluded that both Dante Alighieri and Vladimir Solovyov went through a very difficult path trying to establish genuine ethical values in different historical epochs. These thinkers have similar substantiation of the metaphysical foundations of faith. While Vladimir Solovyov justified ethical values on the basis of the Orthodox tradition, Dante tried to transform medieval European ethics by glorifying humanism and putting a man above his sinful nature.

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