

ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

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**L.P. KARSAVIN'S CONCEPT OF CREATION AND ITS ORIGINS
IN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY OF THE II-XV CENTURIES**

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CONTENTS.

Introduction	3
Chapter 1: The Concept of World Creation in the History of European Theological and Philosophical Thought.....	22
1.1 The Gnostic concept of creation (Gospel of Truth) and the Neoplatonic idea of emanation (Plotinus)	23
1.2 Peculiarities of development and problematic aspects of the biblical concept of the origin of the world in the history of Eastern Christianity	47
1.3 The development of cosmogonic concepts in the history of Western European philosophy	84
Chapter 2: The Question of the Origin of the World in the Philosophy of L.P.Karsavin	111
2.1 The Relationship of the Absolute and the World in the Metaphysics of L.P.Karsavin: Ontological and Anthropological Conclusions.....	111
2.2 Development of the Problem of Evil and Freedom in the Context of L.P.Karsavin's Cosmology	125
2.3 L.P.Karsavin's Cosmology in the Context of Orthodox Dogmatics and Alternative Worldview Traditions	136
Conclusion.....	145
List of references	155

Introduction

Relevance. The question of the origin of the world has been worrying people since ancient times. Initially, mankind was guided by mythological cosmogonies, which were replaced in the Axial Age by philosophical interpretations of cosmogonic themes. Nowadays, the most popular is the natural-scientific conception of the origin of the world, the supporters of which often criticize not only the mythological but also the philosophical interpretation of the origin of the world for the excessive speculative nature of the latter. The philosophical schematization of cosmogony is now perceived by many as an outdated way of cognizing the world around us and its origin. Postmodern discourse has radically questioned the most ancient orientation of philosophy - the search for a single First as the foundation of all things. Doubts in the presence of a single actual Origin of the universe are expressed by representatives of the natural science community. Given these facts, we can conclude that the need for philosophical research on the origin of the world may not be obvious to many of our contemporaries, who are oriented on the results of empirical sciences about the world and life.

However, a careful analysis of mythological, philosophical and natural-scientific cosmogonies does not allow us to agree with these simplifications. Firstly, the achievements of natural sciences, studying finite objects, cannot unequivocally prove the absence of a single infinite Primordial Universe. Secondly, history convincingly shows that the conclusions of natural sciences about the origin of the world can converge with some aspects of religious and philosophical elaborations of the question of the origin of the world. Thirdly, the conclusions of natural sciences about the origin of the world in some respects require philosophical understanding and can never definitively replace the latter. There is a deep and natural desire in man to comprehend himself in the face of the infinite. Philosophy and religious experience exist in human culture for this purpose.

Thus, the philosophical elaboration of the question of the origin of the world is still relevant. Indeed, often philosophy and theology have ignored experimental

evidence about the world and have been excessively speculative. Specific natu-philosophical conclusions about the structure of reality drawn by philosophers of antiquity and the Middle Ages, and to a large extent by New European thinkers as well, are indeed outdated and irrelevant. However, these facts do not mean that philosophical understanding of the world as such is false, nor do they force us to deny the philosophical experience accumulated by mankind as a mistake.

Religious cosmogonies, which have a centuries-long history of existence, should not be discounted in this regard. They deserve attention despite the fact that they contain elements of mythologization and appeal to the spiritual understanding of reality. While maintaining a critical attitude to the ancient heritage, it is necessary to correctly read the symbols contained in sacred texts, using data from the relevant humanities. Not only philosophical cosmogonies can include elements of mythologization; in a certain sense, even scientism is mythologized. For example, the Big Bang theory can fulfill the same function as myth in the minds of contemporaries. A. F. Losev in "Dialectics of Myth" noted that "if we take real science, i.e. science, really created by living people in a certain historical epoch, then such science is decisively always not only accompanied by mythology, but also really feeds on it, drawing its initial intuitions from it"¹. Thus, we can conclude that the history of religious, philosophical and natural scientific approaches to solving the question of the origin of the world remains relevant, corresponds to the natural demands of human consciousness, and all these various approaches are to some extent dependent on each other historically and culturally. Each of them has characteristic problematics and relevant aspects that need to be taken into account in the modern context.

Special attention should be paid to the cosmogonic and cosmological concept of L.P.Karsavin. It contains a significant share of originality in comparison with other conceptions of the origin of the world in Russian religious philosophy. An extremely important fact for historical and philosophical science is the connection between Karsavin's cosmology and the Gnostic-mystical tradition, which manifested

¹ Losev A. F. Dialectics of myth. Moscow: Mysl, 2010. C. 43.

itself in European philosophy on several occasions and constituted an alternative to the prevailing orthodox Christian concept of God's creation of the world from nothing.

Understanding the historical and conceptual connection of L.P.Karsavin's philosophy with this line of philosophical development allows us to understand more deeply the significance of the Russian philosopher in the history of world thought, as well as to answer more accurately the question about the ideological origins of the Russian philosophical tradition of the late XIX - early XX century.

The object of the study is the concepts of the origin of the world in the history of European philosophy from the first centuries of Christianity to the beginning of the twentieth century and the systems of L.P.Karsavin.

The subject of the study is the most profound, elaborated and widespread in the history of philosophy Gnostic-mystical concept of the creation of the world and its generalization and final formulation in the philosophy of L.P.Karsavin.

The **purpose of this study** is to determine the specificity of the Karsavinian concept of the origin of the world and its metaphysical structure in the context of the historical development of the main philosophical approaches to solving the question of the origin of the world.

Objectives:

1. reveal the peculiarities of the Neoplatonic (emanative) and Gnostic concepts of the origin of the world;
2. to show the characteristic features of the creationist concept of the origin of the world in the orthodox Christian tradition;
3. Analyze heterodox versions of cosmology in the history of Eastern Christianity;
4. trace the history of the development of the Gnostic-mystical concept of the origin of the world in the history of late antique, medieval and revivalist philosophy;
5. To outline the essential aspects of L.P.Karsavin's metaphysics with emphasis on his understanding of the process of the origin of the world in the light

of his pantheistic and simultaneously dualistic scheme of the relationship between the Absolute and the cosmos;

6. consider ontological, anthropological and ethical conclusions from L.P.Karsavin's cosmogonic scheme;

7. compare the Karsavinian version of the origin of the world with orthodox Christian dogma.

Literature Review. The literature devoted to the issue we are interested in is quite extensive both in terms of sources and research works. Taking into account the specifics of the present dissertation research, it is logical to divide the entire volume of texts significant for us into two groups: 1) literature reflecting the history of development and conceptual peculiarities of Gnostic-mystical and pantheistic cosmogony in European philosophy; 2) sources and studies revealing other important concepts of the origin of the world for the history of European thought.

The conceptions of creation in Gnostic Christianity are revealed in the article by I.I. Evlampiev², as well as in the generalizing monograph by the same author³. In his works Evlampiev points out that in the history of European philosophy an important place was occupied not only by the orthodox concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, sanctified by the authority of the church, but also by the pantheistic cosmogony, dating back to Gnostic Christianity and possessing a centuries-old history. The researcher emphasizes the Christian origins of the Gnostic-mystical concept of the origin of the world, as well as the advantages of this cosmogonic scheme in comparison with the emanationist and creationist models.

E. N. Syrtsova in her research draws attention to the concept of creation in apocryphal texts⁴.

² Evlampiev I. I. The Gospel of Truth and the Birth of Christian Philosophy // History of Philosophy. 2017. T. 22. № 1. C. 15-26.

³ Evlampiev I.I. Neskazhennoe Christianity and its fate in European history. SPb.: CSO, 2024.

⁴ Syrtsova E. N. Apocryphal concept of creation in the Book of Enoch (II) // Bulletin of Slavic Cultures. 2014. № 2 (32). C. 49-61.

The peculiarities of Gnostic cosmogony are shown in the works of G. Jonas⁵, A. L. Khosroev⁶, M. K. Trofimova⁷, E. V. Afonasin⁸. The doctrine of the origin of the world in the works of Eriugena is revealed in the works of A. I. Brilliantov⁹, V. V. Petrov¹⁰, O. B. Berezovskaya¹¹. The peculiarities of Meister Eckhart's cosmological views that interest us are revealed in the works of M. Yu. Reutin¹². In the context of our study it is worth paying attention to the researcher's publications devoted to the comparison of mysticism of the West and the East¹³. The features of Kabbalistic metaphysics are revealed in the works of G. V. Khlebnikov¹⁴, K. Y. Burmistrov¹⁵ and V. N. Nechipurenko¹⁶.

⁵ Jonas G. *Gnosticism*. SPb.: Lan, 1998. 382 c.

⁶ Khosroev A. L. "Another Evangelization" II. Christian Gnostics of the II-III centuries: their faith and writings. St. Petersburg: Contrast, 2016. 424 c.

⁷ Trofimova M.K. From the history of the key theme of Gnostic texts. *Pistis Sophia // Paleobalkanistics and Antiquity*. M., 1989. C. 169-219.

⁸ Afonasin E. V. *Antique Gnosticism. Fragments and Evidence*. SPb.: Aleteia, Izd-vo Oleg Abyshko, 2002. 368 p.; Afonasin E. V. *Gnosticism of the second century. V. Gnosticism of the Second Century A.D.: Antique Evidence*. Novosibirsk, 1999. 44 p.; Afonasin E. V. *Gnosis in the Mirror of its Critics: Antique Gnosticism in the Context of Platonic Philosophy of Late Antiquity // Historical and Philosophical Yearbook*. 2003. C. 176-211.

⁹ Brilliantov A. I. *Influence of Eastern Theology in the Works of John Scotus Eriugena*. Moscow: Martis, 1998. 445 c.

¹⁰ Petrov V. V. John Scot on "creation from nothing" and the eternity of creation in the Word of God // *Historical and Philosophical Yearbook*. 2006. C. 58-76.

¹¹ Berezovskaya O. B. The Doctrine of God and Return in the Philosophy of John Scotus Eriugena // *Vestnik PSTGU*. 2007. № 18. C. 92-110.

¹² Reutin M. Yu. *Mystical Theology of Meister Eckhart: The Tradition of Plato's "Parmenides" in the Late Middle Ages*. M.: RGGU, 2011. 462 p.; Reutin M. Yu. Semiotics of John Eckhart of Hochheim (a summary of mystical doctrine) // *NOMOTHETIKA: Philosophy. Sociology. Law*. 2010. № 14. C. 18-30; Reutin M. Yu. The image of man in the work of John Eckhart. *Theory of ecstasy // Russia XXI*. 2010. № 3. C. 146-167; Reutin M. Yu. The doctrine of the sign in the work of Meister Eckhart // *Vestnik RGGU*. 2010. № 13 (56). C. 174-185.

¹³ Reutin M. Yu. The problem of correlation of the theology of the West and the East: John Eckhart and Gregory Palamas // *Scientific Vedomosti BelGU*. 2007. № 1. C. 14-23; Reutin, M. Yu. Christian Neoplatonism of the XIV century theory of "Spiritual Perfections" I. Eckhart theory of "energies" // *NOMOTHETIKA: Philosophy. Sociology. Law*. 2011. № 17 (14 (109)). C. 10-28; Reutin M. Yu. Christian Neoplatonism of the XIV century. The doctrines of language and theories of God-knowledge of I. Eckhart and Gr. Palamas // *NOMOTHETIKA: Philosophy. Sociology. Law*. 2011. № 18 (20 (115)). C. 16-30; Reutin M. Yu. Christian Neoplatonism of the XIV century. Anthropology and the doctrine of ecstasy of I. Eckhart and Gregory Palamas. Article 3 // *NOMOTHETIKA: Philosophy. Sociology. Law*. 2012. № 19 (2 (121)). C. 5-16; Reutin M. Yu. John Eckhart - Gregory Palamas: God, emanation, creature // *Voprosy filosofii*. 2010. № 6. C. 124-133.

¹⁴ Khlebnikov G. V. The concept of God in Judaism // *Social and Humanities. Domestic and foreign literature // Philosophy: Abstract journal*. 2021. № 1. C. 115-146; Khlebnikov G. V. Jewish mysticism. Part 2 // *Social and Humanities. Domestic and foreign literature. Philosophy: Abstract Journal*. 2021. № 2. C. 102-132; Khlebnikov G. V. *Mysticism and philosophical mysticism // Vestnik kulturologii*. 2010. № 1. C. 44-62.

¹⁵ Burmistrov K. Yu. "Heavenly Adam" and the Jewish Kabbalah in European religious-philosophical thought of the late XVII - early XVIII centuries // *Philosophical Journal*. 2020. № 13 (2). C. 49-67; Burmistrov K. Yu., Endel M. I. On the Divine Names in Jewish Mysticism // *Vestnik PSTGU*. 2014. № 56 (6). C. 55-71; Burmistrov K. Yu. The doctrine of the infinite in Jewish mysticism // *Philosophical Journal*. 2018. № 11 (3). C. 71-87; Burmistrov K. Yu. "He compressed Himself in Himself": the Kabbalistic doctrine of the "self-distance" of God (tzimtzum) and its interpretations in European culture // *History of Philosophy*. 2009. № 14. C. 3-44.

¹⁶ Nechipurenko V. V. *Philosophical and Kabbalistic synthesis of Abraham Cogen Herrera: the concept of Einsophe in "Puerta del cielo" // Scientific Thought of the Caucasus*. 2006. № 3. C. 48-59.

The facets of Nicholas of Cusa's philosophy that interest us are shown in the publications of I. I. Evlampiev¹⁷, Aneta Khan¹⁸. Maria-Jesus Soto-Bruna in her article reveals Cusan's ideas about the ultimate as a manifestation of absolute identity¹⁹. O. E. Dushin²⁰ and S. V. Kuznetsova²¹ show some aspects of the reception of Nicholas of Cusa in Russian philosophy. The works of S. N. Astapov²² and Y. V. Tyrbakh²³ are also devoted to the influence of the German thinker on the Russian philosophical tradition. A. M. Tolstenko compares the pantheism of Nicholas of Cusa with the metaphysics of B. Spinoza. Spinoza²⁴ and Eriugena²⁵, and N. A. Karasev²⁶ - concepts of Kusan and Eckhart. The history of the concept of the Absolute from Antiquity to Nicholas of Cusa is traced by I. V. Loschitz²⁷. H. Stahl correlates Plato's "One" and the "not-other" in the philosophy of Kusan²⁸. V. Y. Kanaeva²⁹ compares the doctrine of Nicholas of Cusa and the theology of the Areopagite corpus. A. P. Semenyuk examines the concept of the German thinker in the context of the history of apophatic theology³⁰. V. N. Morozov and O. A.

¹⁷ Evlampiev I. I. Correlation of rational and mystical cognition in the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa // The principle of "coincidence of opposites" in the history of European thought: Almanac. SPb.: Nestor-History, 2011. C. 63-85.

¹⁸ Khan A. Coincidence and infinity: coincidentia as the structure of the Universe in Nicholas of Cusa's treatise "On Scholarly Ignorance" // The principle of "coincidence of opposites" in the history of European thought: Almanac. SPb.: Nestor-History, 2011. C. 112-129

¹⁹ Soto-Bruna M. H. The finite as a "manifestation" of absolute identity in De visione Dei // Coincidentia oppositorum: from Nicholas of Cusa to Nicholas Berdyaev. SPb.: Aleteia, 2010. C. 297-316.

²⁰ Dushin O. E. Coincidentia oppositorum and the resolution of contradictions: Nicholas Kuzansky, S. L. Frank, Pavel Florensky // Veche. 2015. № 27-2. C. 74-85.

²¹ Kuznetsova S. V. The concept of a single being in the European and Russian philosophical tradition: Ph. D. in Philosophy. D. philos. n.: 09.00.03. Moscow, 2009. 289 c.

²² Astapov S. N. Reception of the negative dialectics of Nicholas of Cusa in Russian religious philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century // Izvestiya vysshee uchebnykh obrazovaniya. North Caucasus region. Social Sciences. 2009. № 2. C. 5-9.

²³ Tyrbakh Yu. V. The Philosophical Tradition of Unity: Renaissance (M. Ficino, N. Kuzansky) and Russian (V.S. Solovyov, S.L. Frank) Concepts: dissertation.... Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Nizhny Novgorod, 2006. 216 c.

²⁴ Tolstenko A. M. Pantheism of N. Kuzansky and B. Spinoza as a project of universal religion. Spinoza as a project of universal religion // Coincidentia oppositorum: From Nikolai Kuzansky to Nikolai Berdyaev. SPb.: Aleteia, 2010. C. 138-149.

²⁵ Tolstenko A. M. Eriugena and Kuzansky: metaphysical interpretation of the divine // Verbum. 2011. №13. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/eriugena-i-kuzanskiy-metafizicheskoe-istolkovanie-bozhestvennogo> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

²⁶ Karasev N. A. Western mysticism in search of its own way of God-knowledge: Meister Eckhart, Jean Gerson and Nicholas of Kusan // Society: Philosophy, History, Culture. 2016. № 10. C. 30-33.

²⁷ Loschits I. V. History of the concept of infinity from Antiquity to Nicholas of Cusa // Voprosy filosofii. 2014. № 12. C. 130-138.

²⁸ Stahl H. Is Plato's "One" the root of Nicholas of Cusa's "De li non aliud"? Alexei Losev's article on the treatise "De li non aliud" // Voprosy filosofii. 2008. № 6. C. 106-121.

²⁹ Kanaeva V. Yu. Possibility of God-knowledge in Areopagite and Nicholas of Cusa // Bulletin of Nizhny Novgorod University named after N. I. Lobachevsky. 2009. № 4. C. 184-188.

³⁰ Semenyuk A. P. Two Types of Apophaticism // Ideas and Ideals. 2014. № 2 (22). C. 34-40.

Titarenko investigate the doctrine of evil in the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa³¹. Among the many publications on Nicholas of Cusa and his metaphysics we should also point out the works of A. F. Losev³², K. Alfswog³³, O. N. Nogovitsyn³⁴, V. V. Suvorov³⁵, O. N. Opletaeva³⁶, F. F. Mukhamedzyanov³⁷, A. V. Nechiporenko³⁸, Y. E. Smagin³⁹, D. V. Vorobyev and A. L. Spiridonov⁴⁰, O. A. Kopylova⁴¹, L. V. Tsypina⁴², G. E. Alyaev⁴³, Y. V. Bespechansky⁴⁴.

The continuity between L.P.Karsavin and Nicholas of Kuzan is explored in the articles by Yu. B. Melikh⁴⁵, I.I. Evlampiev⁴⁶, A.V. Malinov⁴⁷, G. Mazeikis⁴⁸,

³¹ Morozov V.N., Titarenko O. A. // *Abyssus abyssum invocat: the dialectical nature of evil in Nicholas of Cusa and Jacob Böhme* // *Verbum*. 2011. № 13. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/abyssus-abyssum-invocat-dialekticheskaya-priroda-zla-u-nikolaya-kuzanskogo-i-yakoba-byome> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

³² Losev A. F. F. On the treatise of Nicholas of Cusa "On the Nonin" // *Voprosy filosofii*. 2021. № 9. C. 150-164.

³³ Alfswog K. Explicatio and complicatio dei in Cusan's understanding of the relationship between God and the world. // *Verbum*. 2011. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/explicatio-i-complicatio-dei-v-ponimani-kuzanskim-otnosheniya-mezhdu-bogom-i-mirom> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

³⁴ Nogovitsyn O. N. The concept of coincidentia oppositorum and the criticism of Aristotle's principle of contradiction in the late treatise of Nicholas of Cusa "On unum" // *EINAI: Problems of Philosophy and Theology*. URL: <https://eina.ru/2012-01-Nogovitsyn.html> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

³⁵ Suvorova V. V. Rationalist project of Nicholas of Cusa: the concept of mind in the treatise "The Simpleton about Mind" // *Siberian Philosophical Journal*. 2018. T.16. № 3. C. 204-218.

³⁶ Opletaeva O. N. The problem of "scholarly ignorance" and apophatic tradition in the history of philosophy: from Socrates to Nicholas of Cusa: Ph. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Krasnodar, 2008. 173 c.

³⁷ Mukhamedzyanov F. F. The concept of rationality in Nicholas of Cusa // *Vestnik RGGU*. 2011. № 15 (77). C. 172-182. Mukhamedzyanov F. F. Faith and reason in the philosophy of Johann Eckhart and Nicholas of Kuzan: autoref. diss. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Moscow, 2011. 29 c.

³⁸ Nechiporenko A. V. Ontology, epistemology and dialectics of Nicholas of Cusa: diss. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Novosibirsk, 2010. 167 c.

³⁹ Smagin Yu. E. Representation of the world and man in the philosophy of N. Kuzansky // *Vestnik LSU*. 2009. № 2 (3). C. 8-17.

⁴⁰ Vorobyev D. V., Spiridonov A. L. On the "possibility-being" of Nicholas of Kuzan as a doctrine of being and non-being // *Humanities Research*. 2019. № 1 (89). URL: <https://human.snauka.ru/2019/01/25492> (date of address: 19.07.2023).

⁴¹ Kopylova O. A. The concept of "indistinction" in the philosophy of N. Kuzansky and I. Eckhart // *ACTA ERUDITORUM*. 2010. № 8. C. 156-158.

⁴² Tsypina L. V. Neoplatonic source of the doctrine of Nicholas of Cusa about the hidden God // *Vestnik LSU*. 2009. № 3-2. C. 35-44.

⁴³ Alyaev G. E. Theological and cosmological ideas of Nicholas of Cusa in the historical and philosophical context // *Philosophy and Cosmology*. 2013. № 1 (11). C. 221-236.

⁴⁴ Bespechansky Y. V. The problem of description of the absolute in phenomenological philosophy: diss. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. St. Petersburg, 2013. 212 c.

⁴⁵ Melikh Yu. B. J. Maritain and L. P. Karsavin: an exodus to F. Aquinas and N. Kuzansky // *Bulletin of Murmansk State Technical University*. 2010. № 13 (2). C. 273-277.

⁴⁶ Evlampiev I. I. Two poles of perception of Nicholas of Cusa in Russian philosophy (S. Frank and L. Karsavin) // *Voprosy filosofii*. 2010. № 5. C. 125 - 138.

⁴⁷ Malinov A. V. The concept of unity in Nikolai Kuzansky and Leo Karsavin // *Verbum*. 2011. № 13. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/ponyatie-edinstva-u-nikolaya-kuzanskogo-i-lva-karsavina> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

⁴⁸ Gintautas M. L. P. Karsavin: from unitas contracta of Nicholas of Cusa to eroici furori of Giordano Bruno // *Verbum*. 2019. № 21. C. 9-27.

I.V. Grebeshev⁴⁹, N.Y. Malgina⁵⁰. The idea of universality in the Karsavinian interpretation is analyzed in the studies of I. I. Evlampiev⁵¹, W. Werner and M. Huda-Granat⁵², N. Y. Malgina⁵³, Y. B. Melikh and S. S. Horuzhego⁵⁴, N. Shelkova⁵⁵, S. G. Gutova⁵⁶, M. Savelyeva⁵⁷. A. P. Glazkov in his article analyzes the significance of the idea of God-manhood as a resolution of the ontological differentiation of God and the world⁵⁸.

A significant number of publications about L.P.Karsavin are devoted to his ideas about personality. They are analyzed in the works of I. I. Evlampiev⁵⁹, Y. B. Melikh⁶⁰, K. R. Sadykova⁶¹, V. V. Shmakov⁶², V. Povilaitis⁶³, A. A. Medov⁶⁴, V.

⁴⁹ Grebeshev I. V. Personalistic motifs in the historiosophy of L. P. Karsavin // Vestnik RGGGU. 2009. № 12. С. 286-290.

⁵⁰ Malgina N. Yu. On the specifics of the historical and philosophical position of L. P. Karsavin // Bulletin of NSU. 2013. Т. 11. № 3. С. 145-150

⁵¹ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in the XIX-XX centuries: Russian philosophy in search of the Absolute. Part 2. SPb.: Aleteia, 2000. 416 c.

⁵² Werner W., Huda-granat M. The Idea of Unity of Lev Platonovich Karsavin between historical and superhistorical thinking // History and Modernity. 2012. № 1. С. 3-14.

⁵³ Malgina N. Yu. Personality and History in the Metaphysics of Unity of L.P. Karsavin: diss. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Moscow, 2014. 145 c.

⁵⁴ Lev Platonovich Karsavin / Ed. C. S. Horuzhiy. M.: ROSSPEN, 2012. 527 c.

⁵⁵ Silkova N. B. Is All-Unity or All-Unity of L. P. Karsavin? (Phenomenology of All-Unity in Philosophy, Religion and Sacred Art) // Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy. 2019. № 1 (5). С. 141-152.

⁵⁶ Gutova S. G. Personality and the World in the Philosophy of Unity of L. P. Karsavin // Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University. 2015. № 19 (374). С. 152-156.

⁵⁷ Savelyeva M. Yu. Irrationalist dialectics of L. P. Karsavin // Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy. 2019. № 1 (5). С. 40-52.

⁵⁸ Glazkov A. P. The idea of God-Manhood as a resolution of the antinomy of ontological differentiation of God and the world in the eschatological historiosophy of All-Unity // Caspian Region: Politics, Economics, Culture. 2015. № 4 (45). С. 223-226.

⁵⁹ Evlampiev I.I. L. Karsavin's Metaphysics of Personality and the Final Overcoming of the "Atomistic" Model of Man // Prospects of Metaphysics. Classical and non-classical metaphysics at the turn of the century. URL: <http://anthropology.ru/ru/text/evlampiev-ii/metafizika-lichnosti-lkarsavina-i-okonchatelnoe-preodolenie-atomisticheskoy-modeli>; Evlampiev I. I., Matveeva I. Yu. Religious doctrine of L. N. Tolstoy and the concept of personality of L. P. Karsavin // Soloviev Studies. 2019. № 3 (63). С. 150-161.

⁶⁰ Melikh Yu. B. Personalism of L. P. Karsavin and European Philosophy. Moscow: Progress-Tradition, 2003. 272 p.; Melikh, Yu. B. Personalist content of L. P. Karsavin's philosophy: autoref. diss. D. in Philosophy: 09.00.03. Moscow, 2001. 33 p.; Melikh Yu. B. Existence of Personality and Personality of Unity: to the Question of the Controversy of Personalism in L. P. Karsavin and N. A. Berdyaev // Voprosy filosofii. 2008. № 8. С. 145-157.

⁶¹ Sadykova K. R. The concept of "personality" in the concept of theosis of L. P. Karsavin. P. Karsavin // Soloviev Studies. 2015. № 2 (46). С. 101-112.

⁶² Shmakov V. V. The problem of the relationship between the Church and the individual in the philosophy of L. P. Karsavin and S. L. Frank. L. Frank // Vestnik RCHGA. 2018. № 19 (2). С. 233-238.

⁶³ Povilaitis V. I. The doctrine of L. P. Karsavin about "symphonic personality" as a subject of historical process: diss.... Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Kaliningrad, 1998. 124 c.

⁶⁴ Medova A. A. Body of symphonic personality in the teachings of L. P. Karsavin // Moral values and the future of mankind. XVIII Krasnoyarsk Regional Christmas Educational Readings: Interregional scientific and practical conference. Krasnoyarsk: East Siberia, 2018. С. 155-162.

E. Baranov⁶⁵ , D. Rubin⁶⁶ , D. V. Kuznetsova⁶⁷ , N. A. Chupakhin⁶⁸ , Y. V. Kolesnichenko⁶⁹ .

Works by T. N. Rezvykh⁷⁰ and A. A. Kamenskikh⁷¹ is devoted to analyzing the problem of time in the work of L.P.Karsavin. I. V. Demin in his monograph reveals the significance of Lev Karsavin's historiosophic ideas in the postmetaphysical context, and also draws parallels between Karsavin's metaphysics of universality and Heidegger's existential analytics⁷² . "Postmetaphysical metaphysics" of L.P. Karsavin is revealed in the article by V.T. Faritov⁷³ . The work of I.I. Evlampiev and V. Kupriyanov is devoted to analyzing the concept of true death in the work of L.P.Karsavin⁷⁴ . The same problematic is addressed in her article by S. Skorokhodova⁷⁵ .

I.I. Evlampiev points to the Gnostic origins of L.P. Karsavin's metaphysics⁷⁶ , shows the place of the Russian philosopher in the tradition of mystical pantheism⁷⁷ , correlates his teachings with the Kabbalistic tradition⁷⁸ . E. V. Rodin speaks about

⁶⁵ Baranov V. E. Philosophy of Personality L. P. Karsavin // Izvestiya RGPU named after A. I. Herzen. 2008. № 56. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/filosofiya-lichnosti-l-p-karsavina> (date of address: 28.08.2023).

⁶⁶ Rubin D. Lev Karsavin. Personality as the Fullness of Being and Orthodox Thought // Pages: Theology, Culture and Education 2011. T. 15. C. 44-54

⁶⁷ Kuznetsova S. V. The concept of social personality in the metaphysics of L. P. Karsavin // Teachers XXI century. 2015. № 2 (3). C. 269-276.

⁶⁸ Chupakhina N. A. The concept of personality in the philosophy of universalism in L. P. Karsavin and V. N. Lossky // Journal of St. Petersburg Philosophical Society. 2013. T. 14. C. 102-108.

⁶⁹ Kolesnichenko Y. V. The concept of "Symphonic Personality" in the philosophy of L. P. Karsavin // Terra Linguistica. 2017. № 8 (2). C. 83-88.

⁷⁰ Rezvykh T. N. The problem of time in L. P. Karsavin // Vestnik PSTGU. 2013. № 46 (2). C. 70-87.

⁷¹ Kamenskikh A. A. Logico-temporal schematism of late Neoplatonists and Lev Karsavin // Logico-philosophical Studies. 2018. T. 16. № 1-2. C. 19-20.

⁷² Demin I. V. V. Distinguishing primary and secondary historicity in the metaphysics of L. Karsavin and in the existential analytics of M. Heidegger // Bulletin of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University. 2016. № 1. C. 83-90.

⁷³ Faritov V. T. Postmetaphysical metaphysics of L. P. Karsavin // Bulletin of Samara State Technical University. 2022. № 4 (10). C. 11-22.

⁷⁴ Evlampiev I. I., Kupriyanov V. A. The concept of true death of L. P. Karsavin and the "synthetic" image of Jesus Christ in the work of F. M. Dostoevsky // Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy. 2019. № 1 (5). C. 20-39.

⁷⁵ Skorokhodova S. I. To the question of life, death and immortality in the work of L. P. Karsavin and John (Maximovich) of Shanghai // Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy. 2018. № 3. C. 177-190.

⁷⁶ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian Metaphysics in the XIX-XX Centuries: Russian Philosophy in Search of the Absolute. Ch. 2. St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2000. 416 c.

⁷⁷ Evlampiev I. I. L. P. Karsavin and the tradition of mystical pantheism in European philosophy. Soloviev Studies. 2019. № 2 (62). C. 178-192.

⁷⁸ Evlampiev I. I. Philosophy of L. P. Karsavin and the mystical doctrine of Kabbalah // ΣΧΟΛΗ. Philosophical Antiquarianism and the Classical Tradition. 2022. № 16 (2). C. 634-643.

the Gnostic ethos in the context of L.P.Karsavin's moral metaphysics in his article⁷⁹

A. V. Shehorina analyzes the concept of "religiosity" in the works of L.P.Karsavin⁸⁰. N. S. Zhirtueva's study reveals some aspects of the Karsavinian doctrine in the context of interest in the phenomenon of mysticism in Russian religious philosophy⁸¹. M. S. Gorodneva compares the Karsavinian doctrine with traditional Christian metaphysics⁸². S. Horuzhiy considers Karsavinian philosophy in the context of the Patristic tradition⁸³. The Eastern Christian roots of the interpretation of the concept of personality in the philosophy of L.P.Karsavin are shown in the article by N. V. Tsepeleva⁸⁴.

The problematics of the concept of creation from nothing is revealed in the works of E.N. Syrtsova, I.N. Kruglova, S. Konacheva, hierom. Syrtsova⁸⁵, I. N. Kruglova⁸⁶, S. Konacheva⁸⁷, hierom. Cyril (Zinkovsky)⁸⁸. The interaction of the creationist and emanative models in the history of Christian theology is discussed in

⁷⁹ Rodin E. V. Gnostic ethos and moral metaphysics of L.P. Karsavin: diss. candidate of philos. n.: 09.00.05. Tula. 2006. 155 c.

⁸⁰ Shekhorina A. V. The concept of "religiosity" in the works of L. P. Karsavin // Vestnik PSTGU. 2021. № 102. C. 66-76.

⁸¹ Zhirtueva N. S. Phenomenon of mysticism in Russian religious philosophy // Paradigms of history and social development. 2021. № 21-22. C. 79-83.

⁸² Gorodneva M. S. Intuition of the mind about the spiritual experience of the heart in the philosophy of L.P. Karsavin // Postgraduate Bulletin. 2015. T. 15. № 3-4. C. 72-77

⁸³ Horuzhiy S. S. The Camp Cycle as a Philosophical Testament of L. P. Karsavin // Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy. 2018. № 2. C. 29-40.

⁸⁴ Tsepeleva N. V. Philosophy of Personality L. P. Karsavin and Christianity // Logos et Praxis. 2014. № 6. C. 6-11.

⁸⁵ Syrtsova E.N. Ex nihilo or ex semetipso: The problem of creation in Origen, Hermogenes and Tertullian from the point of view of the logic of Areopagitus // ESSE: Philosophical and Theological Studies. 2016. T. 1. № 1. C. 271-288.

⁸⁶ Kruglova I. N. Creation ex nihilo in the space of philosophical discourse // Bulletin of Tomsk State University. 2017. № 39. C. 120-132.

⁸⁷ Konacheva S. From Creatio ex nihilo to Creatio ex profundus: Rethinking the Doctrine of Creation in Postmetaphysical Theology // State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad. 2021. № 39 (2). C. 38-60.

⁸⁸ Cyril (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. Ontology of Matter and Body in St. Athanasius the Great // Metaparadigm. 2014. № 5. C. 42-72; Cyril (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. The doctrine of matter in the sacramental-anthropological aspect in the works of theologians of the Alexandrian school, the Great Cappadocians and St. Maximus the Confessor // Dissertation. Doctor of Theology. St. Petersburg, 2014. 614 p.; Cyril (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. Novelty of the concept of "meonicity" of matter in the speculation of St. Basil the Great // Academic Notes of Orel State University. 2014. № 5. C. 114-120; Kirill (Zinkovsky), hieromon. Representations of matter and the human body in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa // Man. 2014. № 6. C. 135-147; Kirill (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. Ontological Status of Matter and Flesh in the Creations of St. Basil the Great // Vestnik of Orel State University. 2014. № 2 (37). C. 121-125; Kirill (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. Representations of Matter and the Human Body in the Works of Athenagoras // ΕΞΟΑΗ. Philosophical Antiquarianism and the Classical Tradition. 2013. T. 7. Vyp. 2. C. 272-290; Cyril (Zinkovsky), Hieromon. The Doctrine of Clement of Alexandria on Matter, the Body of Christ and the Body of Man // Proceedings of the Perervin Orthodox Theological Seminary. 2013. № 8. C. 82-117.

the article by A. R. Fokin⁸⁹. Cosmological problems in the corpus of the Areopagitica are specifically analyzed in the works of S. V. Shkuro⁹⁰ and P. A. Moiseev⁹¹. Publications by D. V. Biryukov's publications are devoted to the ways of comprehending the ways of understanding the communion of the world and man with God in the interpretation of Eastern Christian thinkers⁹².

The cosmogonic aspects of interest to us in the Platonic tradition are analyzed in the works of D. Dillon⁹³, S. V. Mesyac⁹⁴, T. Y. Borodai⁹⁵, I. V. Berestov⁹⁶, L. Y. Lukomsky⁹⁷, N. Volkova⁹⁸, V. E. Khvoshcheva⁹⁹.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the works that consider the problem of nothingness in the philosophical-cosmological context: V. V. Semyonov¹⁰⁰, A. V. Bogomolov¹⁰¹, K. S. Smirnov¹⁰², D. V. Vorobyev¹⁰³, V. V. Nechunaev¹⁰⁴.

⁸⁹ Fokin A.R. The principle of self-propagation of the Good: from Plato to Bonaventure // Philosophical Journal. 2018. T. 11. № 3. C. 88-105.

⁹⁰ Shkuro S.V. Emanation as the basis of creation in Dionysius the Areopagite // Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, culturology and art history. Issues of theory and practice. 2014. № 2 (40). C. 214-216.

⁹¹ Moiseev P. A. The Concept of the Absolute in Dionysius the Areopagite: diss. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Novosibirsk, 2006. 163 c.

⁹² Biryukov D. S. Communion and Universals in Eastern Christian Thought: Some Themes and Lines. SPb.: RCHGA, 2016. 230 c.

⁹³ Dillon J. The Middle Platonists. 80 BC. - 220 AD. SPb.: Izd-vo Oleg Abyshko, Aleteia, 2002. 448 p.; Dillon J. Monistic and dualistic tendencies in Platonism before Plotinus // Scholē. 2008. №1. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/monisticheskaya-i-dualisticheskaya-tendentsii-v-platonizme-do-plotina> (date of address: 29.08.2023).

⁹⁴ Month S. V. Transformation of the ancient understanding of the Absolute in the Christian theology of the IV century // Cosmos and Soul. Doctrines of the Universe and Man in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Studies and Translations). Moscow: Progress-Tradition, 2005. C. 823-858.

⁹⁵ Borodai T.Y. The birth of a philosophical concept. God and Matter in Plato's Dialogues. Moscow: Izd. Savin S.A., 2008. 284 c.

⁹⁶ Berestov I. V. The problem of freedom in Plotinus: diss. ... Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Novosibirsk, 2004. 171 p.; Berestov I. V. Is emanation necessary? // Plotinus: the Way to Reality. SPb.: Oleg Abyshko Publishing House, 2005. C. 289-318.

⁹⁷ Lukomsky L. Yu. Apophatica and the doctrine of emanation of Plotinus // AKADEMEIA: Materials and Studies on the History of Platonism. 2000. Vol. 2. C. 160-179.

⁹⁸ Volkova N. Plotinus on the infinite power of the One in the context of emanation // Philosophical Anthropology. 2016. № 2 (2). C. 264-283.

⁹⁹ Khvoshchev V. E. Ideas of activity and self-movement in the doctrine of emanation of Proclus Diadochus // Bulletin of South Ural State University. 2007. № 24 (96). C. 92-94.

¹⁰⁰ Semyonov V. V. Archetypicality of consciousness in Neoplatonism and Patristics: dissertation Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.13. St. Petersburg, 2005. 145 c.

¹⁰¹ Bogomolov A. V. Dialectical solution of the problem of non-existence in the history of ancient Greek philosophy: pre-Socratic and classical stage: diss. ... Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Nizhny Novgorod, 2014. 161 c.

¹⁰² Smirnov K. S. The concept of "nothing" in philosophical ontology and modernity: diss. ... Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.01. Volgograd, 1999. 114 c.

¹⁰³ Vorobyov D. V. The role of nothingness in the reality of mental constructions: diss. D. philos. n.: 09.00.01. Nizhny Novgorod, 2010. 359 c.

¹⁰⁴ Nechunaev V. V. The category of nothingness and the meaning of negativity in Meister Eckhart's Apophatica: dissertation. Candidate of Philosophy: 09.00.03. Novosibirsk, 2005. 148 c.

Source base of the study.

The sources of the first group include Gnostic texts, in particular, those belonging to the tradition of Gnostic Christianity (the Gospel of Truth), works of Eriugena, Kabbalistic texts, works of Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Kuzan, L.P.Karsavin. Accordingly, the same group of literature of interest to us will include studies devoted to the cosmological ideas of these ideological movements and philosophers.

The second group of sources and studies deals with the problems of the Church's concept of creation from nothing and the emanative model (including their conceptual interaction in the history of Christian thought). We trace the development of the orthodox ecclesiastical understanding of the creation of the world in such sources as the Shepherd of Hermas, the works of Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tatian, Aristides, Justin the Philosopher, Athenagoras the Athenian, Tertullian, Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Augustine Aurelius, John Philoponus, Maximus the Confessor, John Damascene, Nicholas of Mephon, Thomas Aquinas, Gregory Palamas, etc., and others. Special attention should be paid to the problematic aspects of understanding creation in the works of Philo of Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the Areopagitica.

Research Methodology.

In this paper we used the historical-genetic method in order to discover the ideological origins of Karsavin's metaphysics of creation and to understand the place that L.P.Karsavin occupies in the history of European philosophy. The complex analysis allowed us to present the history of the development of concepts of the origin of the world as an interaction of different models (biblical creationist, emanative and those presented in the Gnostic-mystical tradition). Using a systematic approach, we managed to structure the problematics of the main concepts of the origin of the world in the history of European philosophy and analyze Karsavinian cosmology in the light of the discovered problematic aspects. With the help of the comparative method we have revealed some advantages of the Gnostic-mystical

tradition of understanding the origin of the world presented in the philosophy of L.P.Karsavin. The method of synthesis allowed us to generalize the judgments available in Russian historical-philosophical science about the ideological origins and correspondences of Karsavinian cosmology to the existing worldview traditions.

Novelty of the study.

The novelty of the study we have undertaken is as follows:

1. The question of the place of L.P.Karsavin's cosmogonic scheme in the history of European philosophy is thoroughly considered and its belonging to the Gnostic-mystical tradition is proved;
2. The main concepts of the origin of the world, characteristic of the history of European philosophy, are described in detail and systematically;
3. The Gnostic-mystical concept of the origin of the world is analyzed in detail and its general scheme is revealed, it is shown that its main point is the presence of a certain "defect" in the essence of the Absolute, the manifestation of which generates the sphere of relative (nothingness), entering it the Absolute is transformed into the form of the finite world;
4. In the course of analyzing the orthodox concept of God's creation of the world out of nothing, it is shown that this concept faces insoluble contradictions that do not allow it to be consistent and logical in the philosophical sense;
5. It is shown that in his doctrine of the origin of the world from the Absolute L.P.Karsavin gave an accurate generalization of the most fruitful line of understanding of the creation of the world in the philosophy of the II-XV centuries, he systematized and combined the ideas of the brightest representatives of the philosophy of Gnostic Christianity (Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa), as well as the ideas of the late form of Jewish Gnosticism - the Kabbalistic doctrine.

Provisions for defense:

1. The first philosophically consistent concepts of creation (the emergence of the world from the Absolute) were created within the Gnostic and

Neoplatonic traditions. The first example of such a concept is given by the Gospel of Truth (first half of the second century), created in the school of Valentinus; in the third century the classical Neoplatonic concept of emanation emerged. The concept set forth in the Gospel of Truth differs sharply from the well-known Gnostic creation myth contained in the Apocrypha of John; there is no Sophia or Demiurge, the main characters of the Gnostic myth. Creation is composed of two stages: in the first, a set of intelligent divine beings spontaneously emerge from the apophatic Absolute, who are imperfect because they do not possess knowledge of God the Absolute. At the second stage, out of the fright and fear of the said beings, generated by ignorance of God-Absolute, matter is formed and the imperfect earthly world with its inhabitants appears. The cause of the world's imperfection is the beginning of nothingness, which was contained in the depth of God's essence and received reality in the act of creation.

2. The concept of the origin of the world on the model of emanation, which emerged in Neoplatonism in the 3rd century, was actively used by subsequent Christian thinkers (first of all, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, 6th century), but it had a significant disadvantage, because it could not, with consistent philosophical implementation, explain the difference between the lower forms of being and the Absolute. In essence, this concept led to the recognition of everything that came out of the Absolute as possessing the same fullness of divine perfection as the Absolute itself. Accordingly, the problem of evil was difficult to solve. In the history of Christian theology, the effective use of the model of emanation has always been accompanied by the implicit use of elements of dualism, i.e., most often elements of the Gnostic model, which helps to draw the boundary between the Absolute and the lower spheres of being.

3. The assertion of church historians and theologians that the Bible already directly contains the orthodox concept of God's creation of the world from nothing in its later theological and philosophical processing does not correspond to reality; the Old Testament model of creation is mythological, not philosophical, in which God creates the world from some "abyss", which is naturally understood as

coexisting next to it matter. A more or less rigorous philosophical concept of creation from nothing in the orthodox tradition appears not earlier than the third century and under the influence of the already fully developed Gnostic concept of creation; the subsequent use of the Neoplatonian model of emanation by Church thinkers was also always accompanied by the adoption of elements of the Gnostic concept. A strictly orthodox, dogmatic conception of God's creation of the world out of nothing has never emerged in history, and it is impossible, since any attempt to clarify the status of the nothingness out of which God creates the world takes the thinker beyond the bounds of dogmatics. Besides, it is philosophically contradictory to attribute to God the Creator a personal beginning, will and freedom (on the model of corresponding human qualities), which leads to the recognition of God as a limited being (orthodox thinkers correctly criticized the anthropomorphism of pagan concepts, but they themselves fell into it when describing the Absolute cataphatically).

4. The only consistent, coherent and profound concept of the origin of the world from the Absolute, developed in the history of European theology and European philosophy, is the Gnostic model, first explicitly expressed in the Gospel of Truth and further developed in different versions by Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa. In its most general expression it is as follows: the very essence of the apophatic, incomprehensible and non-existent God-Absolute contains some "defect" which is objectified in the act of creation and becomes that beginning of nothingness which opposes God and out of which God creates the world; the very act of creation consists in God's "repetition" of himself in a being-like, imperfect form in the sphere of nothingness (the act of God's "entering" into the sphere of nothingness); at the first stage in this act the divine integral Man appears, who, because of the weakness of his will, rushes not to God, but from God, to nothingness, and this leads him to decomposition into a multitude of imperfect, mortal individuals, subordinate to the world being, rather than ruling over it.

5. I. P. Karsavin, like the overwhelming majority of Russian thinkers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, considered false the tendency to

separate philosophy from religion and to exclude all traditional religious problems from its sphere. He was sure that these problems, including the problem of God's creation of the world (the emergence of the world from the Absolute), contained very important philosophical truths, significant for the twentieth century no less than for antiquity. Knowing well the history of Christian theology and Christian philosophy, he was the first to formulate the idea that only the Gnostic model of creation (the emergence of the world from the Absolute) is philosophically correct and fruitful. In his major philosophical works, he described this model in a general form and gave it an original development, using ideas developed by the philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (primarily the phenomenology of E. Husserl and the intuitionism of A. Bergson).

6. Karsavin gave the Gnostic model of creation a number of new original features. First of all, it is connected with the dynamic understanding of the Absolute-Unity, according to which the Unity instantly splits into an infinite number of elements and is instantly reunited again in its original state. In this case, the act of God's entering into nothingness, which is the essence of the act of creation, means the "slowing down" and separation of these processes from each other; as a result, the process of the division of the Unity "stops" in some of its phases, which means the emergence of the created world. Since the separation has not been completed, it is not replaced by a return to absolute unity: the Unity from absolute and perfect becomes relative and imperfect. In essence, it turns out that God "died" as a result of entering into nothingness and from it the imperfect earthly world emerged. The space of the world acts as a fixed form of separation of the elements of the unity, while time is a form of the unity that lasts and is not completed in any way. Human persons represent the most fully preserved, albeit imperfect, unity, so it depends on them alone whether God will be "restored" in the world. For this, each person must overcome his or her separateness and independence and through sacrificial death, repeating Christ's sacrifice, be united with all men and with the world.

7. Karsavin's philosophical system is the most original and profound version of Gnostic metaphysics in the twentieth century, taking into

account all the main principles and ideas of the Gnostic systems of the past. Karsavin expresses in an extremely radical form the main principle of Gnostic Christianity - the absolute importance of the human person, on whose efforts depends the fate of God, who has fallen into "captivity" to the lower forces of existence, which have emerged from his own essence.

The main research findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Gnostic Cosmogony: A Fruitful Alternative: A comparative analysis of world creation models developed within Christian theology and European philosophy from the 2nd to 15th centuries reveals that the most conceptually fruitful approaches emerged from the Gnostic Christian tradition. While Neoplatonic and orthodox models faced significant inconsistencies and limitations, Gnostic interpretations offered a more robust and internally consistent framework for understanding the origin of the universe¹⁰⁵. Consequently, the mystical-gnostic interpretation of cosmogony holds a crucial place within the typology of foundational European thought concerning the universe's emergence, demonstrating a high degree of explanatory power¹⁰⁶.

2. The "Defect" of the Absolute: Examination of various iterations of Gnostic creation models, including those articulated by Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, Nicholas of Cusa, and others, identifies a shared foundational principle. This principle posits an inherently apophatic Absolute, harboring within its essence an incomprehensible "defect." The objectification of this "defect" initiates the realm of limited being, within which the emergence of the earthly world, endowed with freedom and relative independence from God, becomes possible¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵Nadeina, D. A. (2023). The mystical-gnostic tradition in the context of cosmogonic problems in European philosophy. In *Scientific Forum: Jurisprudence, History, Sociology, Political Science and Philosophy. Proceedings of the LXXXI International Scientific and Practical Conference* (Issue 10 (81), pp. 5-9). Moscow: MTSNO Publishing.

¹⁰⁶Nadeina, D. A. (2023). The mystical-gnostic tradition in the context of the main classifications of philosophical cosmogonies. In *Russian Science in the Modern World. Proceedings of the LVII International Scientific and Practical Conference* (pp. 172-174). Moscow: Scientific and Publishing Center "Relevance.RF".

¹⁰⁷Nadeina, D. A. (2024). God, creation, and nothingness: Typology and problems of the main concepts of the origin of the world in the history of European philosophy. *Scientific Opinion, 2024*(1-2), 57-67.

3. Karsavin's Reappropriation of Theological Legacy: This research demonstrates that Lev P. Karsavin, in his philosophical project, consciously sought to revitalize the legacy of 2nd to 15th century Christian theology, illuminating the significance of its key ideas for contemporary philosophical discourse. To achieve this, he undertook an original transformation of crucial theological concepts, particularly those concerning creation and humanity's status as *imago Dei*, situating them within the intellectual context of early 20th-century philosophy. (The author's personal contribution to the aforementioned findings constitutes 50%.)¹⁰⁸

4. Karsavin's Gnostic-Inspired Metaphysics: This study highlights the concept of creation, specifically its interpretation within the Gnostic Christian tradition, as the metaphysical cornerstone of Karsavin's philosophy. However, Karsavin introduces novel elements to this inherited framework:

- **Dynamic Absolute:** He emphasizes the dynamic nature of the Absolute, moving beyond static conceptions.
- **Imperfection as Enrichment:** He elevates the principle of imperfect realization of the Absolute in the lower realms of being. In this framework, imperfect forms within earthly existence contribute to the richness of the Absolute itself.
- **Anthropological Significance:** Karsavin stresses the anthropological implications of creation. Humanity, while imperfect, assumes a pivotal role as the most comprehensive and suitable manifestation of the Absolute within the sphere of nothingness, the domain of created being.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸Nadeina, D. A., & Evlampiev, I. I. (2024). The problem of the origin and essence of nothingness in the Christian concept of the creation of the world by God. **History of Philosophy*, 29*(1), 17-28.

¹⁰⁹Nadeina, D. A. (2023). The concept of creation in L. P. Karsavin's philosophy in the context of philosophical traditions explaining the origin of the world. **Scientific Opinion*, 2023*(9), 66-71.

5. Reframing "True Orthodoxy": Although Karsavin characterized the model of Christianity he articulated as "true Orthodoxy," this research demonstrates that his philosophical system, in actuality, presents a precise and highly original elaboration and generalization of Gnostic Christian metaphysics. This metaphysical framework finds its most complete historical expressions in the systems of Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, and Nicholas of Cusa. (The author's personal contribution to the aforementioned findings constitutes 90%.)¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Nadeina, D. A., & Mezentsev, I. V. (2024). On the issue of the relationship between L.P. Karsavin's cosmology and the Orthodox tradition. *Humanitarian Research in Eastern Siberia and the Far East, 2024*(1), 107-117.

Chapter 1: The Concept of World Creation in the History of European Theological and Philosophical Thought

In this chapter we will trace the ideological origins of the Karsavinian concept of creation in the history of European philosophy, paying attention to the most representative examples of the understanding of creationism: "The concept of the good as a universal original, which is not only the source of all good and the goal of the striving of all beings, but also endows all beings with being, is an integral part of the history of European philosophy. It is found already in classical antiquity, runs through the whole of late antiquity, patristics and medieval scholasticism, and continues right up to German idealism and Russian religious philosophy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries"¹¹¹ .

This historical and philosophical analysis will allow us to understand the degree of originality of L.P.Karsavin's interpretation of the phenomenon of creation. Our study aims to answer the question of which historical line in the understanding of creation corresponds to a greater extent to Karsavin's thought, and with it to Russian extra-confessional religious philosophy, which in various ways developed the concept of universality and the idea of the transformation of the Absolute into the form of the finite world.

¹¹¹ Fokin A.R. Principle of self-distribution of good: from Plato to Bonaventure // Philosophical Journal. 2018. T. 11. № 3. C. 88.

1.1 The Gnostic concept of creation (Gospel of Truth) and the Neoplatonic idea of emanation (Plotinus)

In the present paragraph, we are to examine the philosophical prerequisites for the emergence of ancient emanationism, characterize the accompanying problematics, compare the Neoplatonic version of emanation with the cosmogony of Gnosticism and Gnostic Christianity, and make conceptual and terminological clarifications regarding the notion of "emanation" in early philosophical developments. This will allow us to better understand the development of cosmogonic conceptions in the subsequent epochs of European thought. The choice of these very directions as the first objects of study is due to the fact that it is in them that developed concepts of creation appeared most early: in fact, as early as the 2nd century in the line of Gnostic speculation (Valentinus, Basilides, the Gospel of Truth) and in the 3rd century in Neoplatonism. To unify the approach to explaining creation in these strands is to use the term "emanation" understood in an expansive sense. The relevance of considering this model of creation can be confirmed by the following observation of a contemporary researcher: "...a meaningful analysis of the doctrine of emanation has never been made, and it has remained a kind of ideologeme, an 'enemy image' in Christianity, a temptation for the enlightened and a mystery for the initiated."¹¹² .

The concept of "emanation" (in Late Latin "emanatio" means "spreading", "outflow" (from "ex" - "from" + "mano" - "flowing")); the analogs of interest to us in ancient Greek - "ἀπόρροια", "προβολή", "προόδος") received serious philosophical elaboration in Neoplatonism, which used it to denote the transition from the highest and most perfect stage of existence, from the Absolute One, to the lowest and least perfect levels of being. In Emanatism, "the original possesses in itself such a superfullness of being that provokes it to spread goodness and being

¹¹² Svetlov R. V., Lukomsky L. Yu. Damascus Diadochus as a representative of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism // Damascus Diadochus. On the First Beginnings. SPb.: RCHGI, 2000. C. 798.

outwardly - beyond the original itself, which leads to the generation of the entire world hierarchy of beings derived from goodness and bearing its imprint"¹¹³ .

The concept of emanation is associated with such phenomena as fragmentation, dispersion, descent, and "degradation" of the existence of the Primordial Being; it logically opposes the upward tendency to perfection on the way of finding unity and simplicity. This ascending tendency, as a rule, complements in the model of emanation the basic and primary tendency of descending, in it the "degraded" world being returns to its source and acquires completeness and perfection. On the other hand, emanationism is traditionally opposed to systems of theistic "creationism," according to which the absolutely transcendent personality of God the Creator creates the world by a special act of his will outside of his essence (creation of the world "out of nothing"). The term "emanation" is usually used in the context of pantheistic¹¹⁴ ideas about the origin of the world from the First Cause (which in pantheism can also be thought of as transcendent). Emanation is also often distinguished in monistic (Neoplatonism) and dualistic (Pythagoreanism, Gnosticism) systems¹¹⁵ .

Speaking about the origins of the concept of emanation in the history of European philosophy, it is worth paying attention to the judgment of A.F. Losev, who believed that "the materialistic doctrine of emanation belongs in one way or another to almost all ancient natural philosophy"¹¹⁶ . The Russian thinker gives examples of the *"naturphilosophical concept of emanation"*, when in Heraclitus universal becoming is thought as a result of the transformation of cosmic fire, in Empedocles - as an action of Love and Enmity, and in atomism sensual perception is explained by getting into the corresponding organs of the "effluents" from the

¹¹³ Fokin A.R. Principle of self-distribution of good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 89.

¹¹⁴ For the purposes of this paper, we move away from the common conception of pantheism as a simple "all-God," a primitive identification of God and the world, or a simple "dissolution" of the world into God. We are guided by the understanding expressed by Schelling: "all singular things taken in their totality cannot, as is usually assumed, constitute God, for there is no connection by means of which that which is derivative in nature can pass into that which is original in nature, just as the singular points of a circle, taken in their totality, cannot constitute the circle, since it as a whole necessarily precedes them in its conception" (Schelling F.W.J.. Philosophical Studies on the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Subjects // Schelling F.W.J.. Essays: in 2 vol. T. 2. M., 1989. C. 92).

¹¹⁵ Shichalin Yu. A. Emanation // New Philosophical Encyclopedia. T. 4. M.: Nauka, 2010. C. 434.

¹¹⁶ Losev A. F. History of ancient aesthetics. T. 8. Results of millennial development. Book 2. M.: AST; [Kharkiv] Folio, 2000. C. 271.

surfaces of bodies "images" ("εἰδωλα"), which have the form of the object that is perceived. For the Stoics, the fiery first principle emanated into the hierarchy of being. Thus, emanationism in one form or another and with varying degrees of philosophical articulation is inherent in the whole of ancient cosmology, not just the exclusively Platonic lineage, in which we see an idealistic interpretation of the emanation of the First Principle into the material world.

It is necessary to pay special attention to Plato's cosmogonic ideas not only because Plato's philosophy directly influenced the content of the Neoplatonic concept of emanation, but also because repeatedly in the history of European philosophy the orientation on Plato was associated with the development of mystical and pantheistic currents. In Plato we meet for the first time the idea of the Good, which is conceived as a universal original, residing on the other side of existence and acting at the same time as a metaphysical source of existence of all things and phenomena, as well as the goal of their striving. The good as the highest idea gives rise not only to the sensual, but also to the intelligible world. Plato in the dialogue "The State" in a semi-mythical style, using the image of the Sun, sets forth the principle of emanation of all things from the supersubstantial One or the Good, which gives everything not only being, but also the ability to be known: "...cognizable things can be known only thanks to the good; it gives them both being and existence, although the good itself is not existence, it is beyond existence, exceeding it in dignity and power"¹¹⁷. J. M. Rist says that "Plato's comparison of the Good with the Sun and his image of the Good as the light of the intelligent world of ideas (forms) are the basic sources for the theory of emanation"¹¹⁸.

Relying on the study of Dods, who drew parallels between the first and second hypotheses of Plato's dialogue "Parmenides" and Plotinus' treatises, I.V. Berestov argues that it was "Plato who laid the foundation for the doctrine that the One in some respect cannot be called 'being', or for the 'special' existence, so to speak, the 'superexistence' of the original in Plotinus"¹¹⁹. And if the construction of

¹¹⁷ Plato. The State // Complete Works. M.: Alpha-book, 2016. C. 886.

¹¹⁸ Rist J. M. Plotinus: The Path to Reality. St. Petersburg: Oleg Abyshko Publishing House, 2005. C. 83.

¹¹⁹ Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. SPb.: Izd-vo SPbSU, 2007. C. 58.

"Parmenides" can be interpreted as an exercise in dialectics, then in the "Post-Law" Plato, according to Berestov, definitely considers the One to be the beginning of all existing things.

At the same time, in the dialog *Timaeus*, Plato describes a concept that is somewhat different from the scheme present in the other dialogues. In the *Timaeus*, the philosopher speaks of the Demiurge as the highest Good, who is the creator and first cause of all that exists. The motive for creation here is goodness and even "free desire" (ἐβουλήθη) to make the world good and the best, likening the cosmos to itself (although in Neoplatonist emanationism the self-existence of the One is thought of as a consequence of a natural "unconscious" process). What is important for us is the fact that Platonic texts could receive both emanative and demiurgic interpretations, which were in harmony with pantheistic mysticism and Christian orthodoxy, respectively, in the history of European philosophy, competing with each other.

The following fragment from Plato's "Laws" is also important for our purposes: "And in what condition does the origin of all things take place? It is clear that it happens when the original, having taken an increment, passes to the second stage, and from it - to the nearest next stage; having reached this third stage, it becomes perceptible to those who are able to feel. So, by such transitions and movements, everything comes into being; it is already true being insofar as it is stable; when it passes into another state, it perishes completely."¹²⁰ . When reading this text, various doubts and questions arise (for example, do these increments from the primordial "automatically" occur?), the presence of which, according to I.V. Berestov, does not allow us to speak of Plato in an unambiguous sense as an emanationist¹²¹ .

As is known, Aristotle did not agree with Plato's concept of the One, understanding emanation as energy opposite to potency. Aristotelian *Um-Pervodvigator* moves the cosmos energetically. At the same time, there is reason to

¹²⁰ Plato. *Laws* // Complete Works Collection. M.: Alpha-book, 2016. C. 1208.

¹²¹ Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 65.

speak of Aristotle's influence on the Plotinian concept of the primordial. For the Stagyrte, God is action (which was not emphasized in Plato), and this is extremely important for Plotinus: "Without the Aristotelian recognition of 'action' as 'primary' in relation to the 'possibility of action', the Plotinian concept of the primordial as 'limitless action' or 'action without any undergoing' cannot be constructed"¹²².

Looking ahead, it should be said that the concepts of "emanation" and "energy" within the concept of creation would later be essentially opposed to each other as "markers" of pantheistic and theistic creationism (which is already embedded in the different etymology of these terms: in contrast to emanation as effusion, the word "energy", according to one etymology, comes from "ἐν" - "in" + "ἐργον" - "work"). The difference between Plato and Aristotle would manifest itself many centuries later in the confrontation between medieval mysticism and medieval Western European scholasticism (including official church dogma in the East) at the level of doctrinal emphases. The reasons why orthodoxy made extensive use of Aristotle in the exposition of its doctrinal points are fairly obvious. "Plato, together with philosophy as such, offered his mysticism, different from Christian mysticism, his symbols, his mythology. The Aristotelian technique of thought is more neutral towards religion than Platonic ecstasy"¹²³. A. F. Losev pointed out that the "friendship" of orthodoxy with Plato carried dangers: "The world religions that emerged after Plato tried to pull him to their side, justifying their doctrine with his help and often succeeding in this. But this justifier of doctrines often turned out to be their insidious enemy as well. After all, Platonism is still a pagan doctrine at its core. There came moments in history when Platonism suddenly rose up as a formidable force against the monotheistic doctrine, and under its blows began to stagger and fall those very theological systems, the most faithful ally of which previously seemed Plato"¹²⁴.

¹²² Ibid. C. 61.

¹²³ Averintsev S.S. Christian Aristotelianism as an Internal Form of Western Tradition and the Problems of Modern Russia // Rhetoric and the Origins of European Literary Tradition. M.: Languages of Russian Culture, 1996. C. 322.

¹²⁴ Losev A. F. Life and creative path of Plato // Plato. Complete Collected Works: in 4 volumes. T. 1. M.: Mysl, 1990. C. 3.

However, on a purely terminological level, the concepts of "emanation" and "energy" may converge and even be interchangeable. Thus, for example, Gregory Palamas argued that only divine energy, not the essence of God, can be contemplated, interpreting Gregory the Theologian's judgment about "efflux" in an energetic-demiurgic way, excluding the possibility of the efflux of the very essence of the Original: "God is called light not by nature, but by glory, and grace, and luminosity - and Gregory the Theologian called the light angels His *efflux* <...> and communion, which about the divine essence he would never say, since he knows that it is unattached and unexistent..."¹²⁵ (italics mine - *D. N.*). At the same time, we must not forget that, for example, Plotinus explains the emanation from the Original through the separation of two types of energy (the emanation appears as the "external energy" of the One). Also Gregory Palamas puts emanative and energetic terminology in one row: "So, it is clearer than clear that the whole book "On the Divine Names" is a hymn singing these *performances* and energies of God"¹²⁶ (italics mine - *D. N.*). The above facts prove the importance of a contextual reading of these terms, as well as the distinction between "essence emanation" and "energy emanation".

A precise and clear understanding of the concept of emanation is absolutely essential for a correct evaluation of the essence of Neoplatonism and its concept of the origin of the world¹²⁷. Plotinus emphasizes that unity exists not only in the partaking of it, but also in a certain sense "in itself." A unity consisting of plurality according to the principle of formal unification of particulars remains essentially plural. The highest type of unity is unity as absolute oneness, which is the inexpressible basis of the entire cosmos. The highest first principle, the Good, has no essence and no place that would allow us to point to it as a certain "it". The Good is in a sense "unspecifiable," appearing everywhere and nowhere. It is important for us to emphasize that "unlike the Aristotelian Mind, which 'thinks itself', the action

¹²⁵ Palama G. *Antirretiki v Akindin*. Krasnodar: Text, 2010. C. 283.

¹²⁶ Palama G. *On Divine Union and Separation* // Palama G. *Treatises*. Krasnodar: Text, 2007. C. 32.

¹²⁷ Researchers have noted Stoic influences on the Neoplatonic concept of emanation, and also see the beginning of Plotinus' doctrine of emanation in Plato's understanding of Eros.

of the Plotinian primordial (called also 'superthought') cannot be 'directed to itself', since for it this 'it' does not exist."¹²⁸ . The difference between the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian models would later be reflected in the mystical and scholastic lines of interpretation of the divine beginning, as well as in the debates surrounding the question of the purpose for which the world was created - for the creatures to partake of the goodness of being, which is not poured into the world from the First, or for the endless praise of God and the fulfillment of his will.

The action of the First is directed to the other, which can be characterized as the "manifestation" and "propagation" of the Good. The Good is absolutely free, independent, without evil and without undergoing. The Good does not spread evil: it spreads goodness and, one could say, spreads freedom, acting as a "liberator". I.V. Berestov notes that, according to Plotinus, the other in relation to the Original freely believes itself to be different from it. The researcher notes a difficulty in this initial principle: "The assumption of the 'other' as existing not only because of the One, but also because of itself, means that the other is in some respect 'self-sufficient'. Does this not mean that the 'other' 'limits' the One, deprives it of its absolute unity and absolute freedom?"¹²⁹ . The good in a certain sense needs the other in order to propagate the good. At the same time, the Original is completely free and independent, since it creates itself as the Good.

The act of emanative creation is a characteristic property of being in Neoplatonism. According to the generally accepted explanation, the Platonic model of emanation suggests that it is an "involuntary" (uncontrolled, unconscious) process for the original, when by necessity from an excess of goodness and creative potency it naturally resolves itself into the lower strata of being. However, all these definitions of emanation raise questions and disagreements among researchers. L. Y. Lukomsky argues that Plotinus did not hold the view described: "The attribution of such a doctrine to Plotinus from the moment of the very first acquaintance with him causes some rejection. First, where did a doctrine belonging to a Greek

¹²⁸ Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 65.

¹²⁹ Ibid. C. 105.

philosopher get a Latin name? Secondly, where did this very force of necessity come from, which compelled (?) the transcendent, which in general should not be subject to any laws of being and which should be not only one, but also the only one? Are we not dealing here with a kind of dualistic, Manichaeic doctrine, which by some tragic mistake was attributed to the mainly monistic Plotinus? Is not such a doctrine more suitable to some of the authors who wrote in Latin, for example, very prone to dualism Eriugena?"¹³⁰ Lukomsky emphasizes that for Plotinus the process of creation is timeless and mystical, and the One is not compelled either by the force of nature or by the universal law of necessity to this act: "In its nature, if I may put it this way, there seems to be a creation of essence, which nevertheless does not remain in the One, but becomes other to it. Such a creation is completely free, since the one is completely in control of it and is not limited by anything, neither by chance nor by reason..... Thus, according to Plotinus, there is nothing forced in the emergence of the consequent after the first, and thus, when evaluating Plotinus' philosophy, there can be no question of any emanation as a process caused by the force of necessity"¹³¹. The researcher further suggests that when the authors write that in Plotinus the One accomplishes the generation of being out of necessity, compelled to do so by its overflow, they are seeking to contrast the Plotinian concept with the biblical concept of God's freely-conscious creation of the world and the New European understanding of consciously-free action. Indeed, in Plotinus we find no judgment of the One as an intelligently creating personal being.

The idea of the natural and predetermined nature of the emergent lower forms of being is also questioned. As a contemporary researcher writes, "planning and choice are excluded by Plotinus even at a much lower level when he proceeds to analyze the process of the Soul's formation and control of the material cosmos. There is a simple 'giving outward' that leaves the Source unchanged and unmodified"¹³². However, there is a view according to which the One is still willing in a sense of its

¹³⁰ Lukomsky L.Y. Apophatica and the "doctrine of emanation" in Plotinus // *Akademia. Materials and Studies on the History of Platonism*. Interuniversity collection. Vyp. 2. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of St. Petersburg University, 2000. C. 170

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 153.

own: "The One in itself has no direct relation to the second hypostasis < Mind>. It is occupied exclusively with itself. But the result of its desire for itself is the generation of the second hypostasis, for it itself desires to be the beginning that generates it."¹³³ . Note that a similar problematic exists in the interpretation of how Plotinus understands the fall of the soul: either the soul falls freely or by necessity. The texts of the ancient philosopher provide grounds for both one and the other view, as well as for denying both versions (perhaps Plotinus believes that freedom and necessity coincide in the nature of the Good). Also, the "freedom" of creation can be understood as the One-Good's lack of reliance on any archetypal essence in generating things and the cosmos¹³⁴ . The One creates neither for itself nor in accordance with anything that is.

Despite all these questions and doubts, the theory of emanation represents the main core of Plotinus' philosophical system. Neoplatonism emphasized that the higher does not change in essence as it flows into the lower, and that the lower contains within itself a movement back to the original source of being (the Mind and ultimately the One), since the soul has a longing to overcome its separation from its speculative "home". The proliferation of the original is less ideal in comparison with the source itself, in connection with which evil arises in the world as an impoverishment of the good. The last stage of the emanation of the One, when its good power is exhausted, is the descent of private souls and matter.

At this stage of our analysis, we must agree with the view that "the discussion of 'emanationism' in Plotinus' doctrine of the First is very old and very broad. <...>Different authors understand Plotinus's "emanation" in different ways, but in many interpretations the "emanation" of the Original is found to be incompatible with his "absolute freedom," albeit for different reasons. Recently, many have wanted to abandon the use of this term in relation to Plotinus, but even so, 'emanationalism' remains in some places without being named."¹³⁵ .

¹³³ Rist J. M. Plotinus: the road to reality. C. 98.

¹³⁴ See: Lukomsky L. B. Apophatica and the "doctrine of emanation" in Plotinus. C. 163.

¹³⁵ Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 289.

In describing the phenomenon of emanation, Plotinus uses various metaphors (the source of rivers, the root of a plant, a shining lamp, fire, the center of a circle with radii). Researchers have drawn attention to the problem that lurks in the metaphorical descriptions of emanation¹³⁶. Emanation, by analogy with light, denotes the transition from the first hypothesis of Parmenides to the second, i.e. from the one-self to the one being. Here the already mentioned antinomy arises. On the one hand, the supersubstantial One is independent of all its effects, but, on the other hand, it is the cause of all existing things, the thing with which all existing things are connected. A.F. Losev formulates this problem with all its acuteness: "The highest stage and the last completion of all being is the One. It is the encompassing of all existing things in one indivisible point, which so completely and comprehensively encompasses all things that nothing else remains besides it, so that there is nothing from which it would differ in any way. This means that it cannot be anything at all, that is, it is not characterized by any quality, any quantity, it escapes all thinking and cognition, it is above all being and essence, it is not any concept or category, and it is above all name and title"¹³⁷. The opinion of Losev is shared by a great many researchers who no less acutely point out this problem: "If everything generated by the One turns out to be absolutely identical to it, then there is no process of efflux, there is, therefore, no change and difference between the generated and the generating. But in such a case the meaning of emanation is lost. If the One generated by the One turns out (at least in some part) not to be the One itself, that is, different from it, then it follows that the One generates its own otherness, non-Unity. But in such a case the indivisible, non-divisible, structureless, point-like One is dismembered in itself, generating initially within itself its other, its other-forming"¹³⁸. In Plotinus' system, the One, indeed, appears as both "everything" and "nothing" at the same time: "The One is 'everything' and 'nothing': the beginning of everything is

¹³⁶ Volkova N. Plotinus on the infinite power of the One in the context of emanation // *Philosophical Anthropology*. 2016. № 2 (2). C. 264-283.

¹³⁷ Losev A. F. *History of ancient aesthetics*. T. 6. Moscow: AST; Folio, 2000. C. 222.

¹³⁸ Rybakov N. S. About the main categories of Neoplatonism // *Vestnik of Pskov State University*. Series: Social and Humanities. 2011. № 15. C. 6.

not 'everything', so it is 'everything' in some other way..."¹³⁹. Still, for existing things, the One is primarily the cause of everything, but not everything. Armstrong believed that in some places the Plotinian texts speak not of emanation but of the omnipresence of the One (for which the metaphor of luminescence can also be used)¹⁴⁰. And finally, as a counter to this logic, there is a tendency to attribute creationism to Plotinus, as L. F. Gerson does¹⁴¹.

According to N. Volkova, Plotinus theoretically solves the above problem with the understanding of the First through the definition of the nature of the One as the power or ability of everything¹⁴². However, for other researchers this path leads to the same antinomies. According to Armstrong, Plotinus' claim that the One is "Δύναμις τῶν πάντων"¹⁴³ ("the possibility/power of all things") makes the original imperfect without its corollaries. For the ancient thinker, however, the One is independent of its corollaries. The term "δύναμις" already in Aristotle can denote both the ability to change and the actual change, and, Plotinus speaks of the "δύναμις" of the Original in the second sense. This ability is the "external energy" of the One, whereas the One itself, in its "inner life," is not energy¹⁴⁴. The contents of "activity in itself" and "activity outward" in the First are not identical, and this again raises an almost insoluble problem: "We must realize that no distinctions beyond the purely abstract can be brought into the One. It must be assumed that the action by means of which the One is what it is is identical and virtually indistinguishable from the action by means of which the One does what it does"¹⁴⁵. On this point, too, Berestov emphasizes that for Plotinus the existence of the Original is an action identical with the acting¹⁴⁶. On the other hand, the same Berestov notes that the Good in Plotinus' philosophy "functions" in several modes: "As absolutely

¹³⁹ Plotinus. Treatises 1-11 / Per. Yu.A. Shichalin. Moscow: Greek-Latin Study of Y.A. Shichalin, 2007. C. 341.

¹⁴⁰ Volkova N. Plotinus on the infinite power of the One in the context of emanation. C. 266.

¹⁴¹ Berestov I. B. Plotinus' "Primordial" as "Good" and "Action" // Materials and Studies on the History of Platonism. Vol. 5. SPb.: Izd-vo SPbSU, 2003. C. 289.

¹⁴² Volkova N. Plotinus on the infinite power of the One in the context of emanation. C. 267.

¹⁴³ See: Armstrong A.N. "Emanation" in Plotinus // Mind, New Series. 1937. Vol. 46. No. 181. P. 62.

¹⁴⁴ Lukomsky, on the contrary, considers that "the One-Good is pure energy that has no relation to essence, and the energy is creative" (Lukomsky L.Y. Apophatica and "doctrine of emanation" in Plotinus P. 179).

¹⁴⁵ Rist J. M. Plotinus: the road to reality. C. 86.

¹⁴⁶ See: Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 331.

free, it is not limited by anything, and in this sense it is the 'One'. As granting freedom, the Primordial 'impels' being to 'ascend' and is 'present everywhere'"¹⁴⁷ . When Plotinus speaks of the Primordial as the possibility of all things, he is asserting that the Primordial does not create an obstacle for something different from it to come into being.

Still, we cannot escape the conclusion that in Neoplatonism the higher ontological level emanates into the lower with necessity, i.e. emanation is an essential property of the higher beginning: "And in general, all that which has already attained perfection is emanating; and that which is always perfect is always emanating, and emanating eternal, but worse than itself"¹⁴⁸ . The power emanating from the One is recognized by Plotinus as limitless, inclusive and indivisible. The One does not strive for anything because of its perfection, giving birth to the lowest stage - Mind - completely "unnoticed" by itself. As a result, Plotinus sees the universe as a system of mirrors, "reflecting in varying degrees the perfections of the highest Good, but never being able to reflect it in its entirety"¹⁴⁹ . It is important to emphasize that the Good cannot but share freedom, but the necessary ontological "payment" for this freedom for its possessors is freedom from the First, i.e. from the fullness of the Good: "The First is that from which the other in relation to it freely "falls away", thereby losing part of its freedom. The First is here the condition of the possibility of "falling away" and "descending". The spreading of freedom by the Initial consists in giving all other things in relation to it the opportunity to regain the lost part of their freedom"¹⁵⁰ . At the same time, there is a possible interpretation according to which the being (the sphere of Mind) itself aims to be different from the One in order to be different in comparison with the Primordial. As a result, "the other in relation to the Good "gains" existence from the First, but loses the purpose of existence of the First, because the other distinguishes itself from the Good"¹⁵¹ .

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. C. 130.

¹⁴⁸ Plotinus. Treatises 1-11. C. 327.

¹⁴⁹ Fokin A. R. Principle of self-propagation of the Good. C. 93.

¹⁵⁰ Berestov I. V. Freedom in the philosophy of Plotinus. C. 131.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 331.

Obviously, in the understanding of the emanation of the One, *aporia* (antinomianism) cannot be completely eliminated: "The *aporia* of the beginning has no solution in the sense of the removal of contradiction. "Solution" does not solve the *aporia*, it allows us to think and to be, whereas the beginning of being and thinking remains outside of being and thought, but without this ultimate beginning neither thought nor being is possible, because it is it that is seen by the mind as the source. Therefore, the language of metaphors is quite appropriate in describing emanation; it is an allegory that makes it possible to tell about what cannot be told in the strict sense of the word"¹⁵² .

According to A.F. Losev, three conceptual tendencies converged in the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation: 1) Plato's idea of the One in conjunction with the Aristotelian understanding of energy; 2) the emphasis on the fluidity of things, which allowed the Neoplatonists to understand emanation in the mode of "providentialism, fatalism and teleology"; 3) the monistic idea of the active mobility of the One, which is immanent to all reality¹⁵³ . According to the Russian thinker, the concept of emanation was finalized by Proclus (who actively used the technical term "*πρόοδος*"¹⁵⁴ , i.e. "emergence", "emanation"): stay - emanation - return. From the Russian thinker's point of view, the Plotinian understanding of the All-Unity differs from the Platonic concepts that preceded it by its dynamic emphasis: "Plotinian unity becomes, moves, pours out energetically, comprehends and emanates"¹⁵⁵ .

An important problem associated with the Neoplatonic conception of the generation of the world is the explanation of evil and theodicy. Plotinus perceives evil as the absence of the good, its complete deprivation and non-participation in it, considering it pure nothingness and identifying it with matter. In his explanation of

¹⁵² Volkova N. Plotinus on the infinite power of the One in the context of emanation. C. 271.

¹⁵³ Losev A.F. History of Ancient Aesthetics. T. 8. Ch. 2. M.: AST; Folio, 2000. C. 272.

¹⁵⁴ The term *πρόοδος* is used by Plotinus in various contexts, and the main meaning of this term for the ancient thinker is the transition from being in possibility to being in reality. In this context, the translators' remark is interesting: "We translate the term descriptively ("going beyond one's own limits") for lack of suitable Russian equivalents. Its exact meaning is "the way forward". The words "producing", "progress", "coming out" are also often used in translation. All of them are inaccurate to a greater or lesser extent" (Svetlov R. V., Lukomsky L. Yu. Sad Times. Damascus Diadochus as a representative of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism. C. 801)

¹⁵⁵ Losev A. F. History of ancient aesthetics. T. 8. Ч. 1. M.: AST; Folio, 2000. C. 630.

evil, Plotinus adheres to the aspiration characteristic of the Platonic tradition to show that God is not guilty of the existence of evil. The Absolute Good cannot be the cause of evil. However, matter in Neoplatonism remains a necessary metaphysical principle that is necessarily produced by the One. Plotinus shows that matter has no autonomy to communicate its evil nature to anyone. The source of evil is the false relation of souls to their bodies, when souls forget their origin, their divine and immortal nature: "The beginning of evil for them turned out to be impudence, birth, the first distinction, and, of course, the desire to belong to themselves"¹⁵⁶. It is noteworthy that the notion of evil matter was criticized by later Neoplatonists. For Proclus, the condition for the existence of evil is the individuation of beings in the lower stages of being. What is important for us is that the Neoplatonists sought in every way to absolve God of guilt for evil and sought the cause of the existence of evil outside the divine nature. However, in the end, the lack of clarity of the causes of evil and, accordingly, the lack of clarity of the concept of the origin of the world (emanation), becomes an obvious sign (defect) of Neoplatonism. The main difficulty here is the impossibility to explain the act of negative freedom, inherent in the lower being and causing its "falling away" from the First, *without any participation of the First One Himself*.

In his special treatise *Against the Gnostics*, Plotinus criticizes the Gnostic explanation of evil, which places the cause of the autonomy of creation in the One itself. The ancient thinker seeks to prevent any element of dualism from entering his system. It is noteworthy that the said treatise is subtitled "Against those who assert that the world is evil and its Creator is evil". Plotinus dislikes the fact that the Gnostics think of themselves as a special caste of living beings who are especially interested in God, and that they deny the goodness of the visible world and the goodness of *its* Creator by virtue of the fact that *there is something directly opposite to goodness in its essence*.

But it is precisely the Gnostic idea of the origins of evil in God that is the most natural for a rational-philosophical solution to all the problems and antinomies

¹⁵⁶ Plotinus. Treatises 1-11. C. 311.

mentioned above. As researchers have noted, Plotinus himself, in trying to solve these problems, often converges with Gnostic ideas; where he rejects them in principle, he fails to explain logically the autonomy of creation at all.

Thus, we need to turn to a consideration of the Gnostic conceptions of the generation of the world as more complex and philosophically more fruitful. We shall focus on the Gospel of Truth as the only early authentic monument of this tradition (we know the content of the writings of Valentinus and Basilides only in the tendentious account of their ecclesiastical critics). From their very beginning, the Gnostic currents had a developed philosophical basis, which represented an original phenomenon in comparison with the pagan antique thought that already existed at that time. In the context of our study it is necessary to take into account the influence of the dualistic doctrine of Zoroastrianism on Judaism, as well as the development of the tradition of Jewish apocalypticism at the beginning of the first millennium A.D., within which Gnosticism originated. According to apocalyptic writings, God temporarily abandoned the care of the universe, and evil reigned in the cosmos. Further, representatives of this tradition began to assert that God will not save the world, which is the result of error or catastrophe on a cosmic scale due to the action of inferior forces that are inherently evil.

Before proceeding to the presentation of Gnostic cosmogony, it is worth outlining the central mythologem of Gnosticism. As is known, the main theme of Gnostic speculation was the emergence of a general order of the cosmos beyond the divine existence, as well as the origin of the lower powers. Gnosticism was a conjunction of pantheistic and dualistic ideas about the origin of the world and its development.

According to the general Gnostic paradigm, the supreme divine origin of the cosmos, called the Father (and not coinciding with orthodox Christian ideas of God the Father), is not the direct creator of the universe, but "spontaneously" generates a system of good entities, one of which, called Sophia-Wisdom, creates a "second" god, the Demiurge, who directly carries out the act of creation. If the supreme divine original is unconditionally good and perfect, then the Demiurge, due to some

accident that crept into the very act of its origin, turns into an evil god who creates a defective world full of evil beings who help him. In the process of creation, the Demiurge, without knowing it, creates man in the image of the heavenly man, who is created by the supreme God the Father. God the Father performs an act of withdrawal from his fullness, saving man once and for all by putting a part of his essence into him and thus making him a profoundly antinomian being.

In outlining the ideas of Gnostic Christianity, it is worth mentioning that its origin is probably the religion of the Nazarene Mandeans, whose doctrine is historically connected with the Gospel of John¹⁵⁷ (it should be said that the word "Mandaean" itself comes from "manda", i.e. "knowledge", "cognition" or "gnosis"). The supreme beginning, according to their ideas, is an impersonal and unformed essence, which is called the "World of Light" and "Great Life". Various divine beings of a lower ontological level emanate from it and create the earthly world (some of these beings are dualistically opposed to each other). The actual creator of the world is Ptahil, the fallen angel. The Jewish god Yahweh was recognized by the Nazoreans as one of the evil deities. According to the Nazorean gnosis, this archon deceitfully pretends to be God the Father and imposes the Jewish religion on people, by means of which he made people worship him. With the support of good spirits and on the basis of a righteous life, the human soul strives to return to the World of Light, from where it originated.

For the purposes of our study, it is especially important to analyze the cosmogony of the Gospel of Truth, one of the most philosophically loaded Gnostic Christian texts (along with the Gospel of Philip). The Gospel of Truth can be dated to the first half of the second century, and most likely belongs to the school of Valentinus¹⁵⁸. Several important features of this monument are worth noting. First, this Gospel is almost completely devoid of the mythologization of the narrative

¹⁵⁷ Modern scholars of the Nazorean religion suggest that the prologue of the Gospel of John, which contrasts sharply with the general style of the Gospel narrative and resembles rather the beginning of a philosophical-religious treatise, is a reworking of an ancient Nazorean monument, whose basic concepts - Logos, Life, Light - became the key concepts of Christianity - especially the concept of the Word-Logos, which gradually became the designation of Christ.

¹⁵⁸ See: Yevlampiev I.I. Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History. SPb.: CSO, 2024. C. 298-311, 350-352.

characteristic of other Gnostic texts (as well as of some orthodox ones). What we have before us is an example of a purely philosophical exposition of early Christian doctrine, an alternative to the attempts at philosophical interpretation of the foundations of Christianity (using ancient pagan conceptual tools) of the early Christian apologists (beginning in the second century). From the point of view of philosophical content, the Gospel of Truth is an example of an original concept, which by its type can be categorized as a pantheistic worldview (in the above-mentioned sense of the word "pantheism" formulated by Schelling). Secondly, we should pay attention to the fact that in this text Jesus clearly and unambiguously appears as a metaphysical principle - the Logos, which is generated by God. At the same time, in contrast to the tendency to make the Son of God a creating principle in orthodox early Christian apologetics, the Gospel of Truth does not regard the Logos as that which bears a creating function. Here Christ is understood as the one who proclaims the truth about God the Father to earthly beings.

In the monument we are considering, the beginning of all that exists is called the Father, who appears incomprehensible, containing all that exists. In the Gospel of Truth we meet with an original and traditional for pantheistic systems model of explaining how the phenomenal, finite and evil-filled world abides in the infinite and good Beginning. The resolution of this problem is realized within the framework of the following concept of the origin of the world: "Since everything sought Him from whom it came, and everything was within Him, incomprehensible, inconceivable, beyond all thought, ignorance of the Father became fright and fear. The consternation, however, became dense as a fog so that no one could see. Therefore it gained strength, delusion, it labored its substance in the void. Not knowing the truth, it appeared in creation, preparing in strength (and) in beauty a substitute for the truth. / And this was no humiliation to Him, the incomprehensible, the unthinkable, for it was nothing - a consternation, and an oblivion, and a creation of lies, but the constant truth is unchanging, unperturbed, unadorned."¹⁵⁹ . According

¹⁵⁹ The Gospel of Truth // The Gospel of Truth : twelve translations of Christian Gnostic writings / per. Dm. Alekseev; ed. by A. S. Tchetverukhin. Rostov n/D: Phoenix, 2008. C. 95.

to the Gospel of Truth, the world spontaneously emerges from the Original as a paradoxical realm of imperfect being, rather than being created by it in the traditional sense of the word.

It follows from this passage that the concept of the origin of the world of the Gospel of Truth contains the idea of two stages of cosmogony: in the first stage, some ideal beings emerge from the depths of the unknowable and incomprehensible Father, continuing their existence after their origin within the First, thus forming a kind of divine world. This model, traditional for Gnostic texts, is enriched in the Gospel of Truth with an original component: the above-mentioned beings taken together do not constitute the Pleroma proper, since they are not perfect and do not merge into an absolute unity. The incompleteness and non-purpose of the divine beings is a consequence of the fact that the Father is incomprehensible to them (otherwise, if it were a question of the Father's generation of the divine Pleroma in the strict sense, the Original would be perfectly transparent to the cognition of these beings). Everything that came from the Father, according to the Gospel of Truth, has the common quality of not knowing the Father, which acts as a cause of separation from the Original. In this case we cannot speak unreservedly of an act (process) of creation, for it is evident that the entities arise from the Father by themselves, by virtue of some hidden characteristic of the First, which both binds them to him and separates them from him. This mysterious quality of the Father acts as the deepest basis of cosmic evil. Ignorance, as the ontological pledge of separation from the First, is the reason why fright and fear arise in the entities that emerge, and they become the sources of cosmic materiality. As a result, the deepest source of being of the cosmos is recognized as *nothingness*, which is identical with fear and forgetfulness and is the hidden part or quality of the Original, since neither being nor nothingness is possible outside of and apart from the Father. In this case, it is the abyss of the depth of the Primordial that appears as the nothingness that is thought of as the foundation of the entire cosmos and, at the same time, as the source of the world's imperfection. The world arises in the Father because of the Father himself, but at the same time not by his design, but rather with his "consent".

The Gospel of Truth sharpens the problem of ontological "flaw", "defect" in the Primordial, which encompasses everything and is the cause of everything; the Primordial is recognized as the source of evil, which arises as a consequence of the ignorance of the Father by lower beings: "...forgetfulness did not come from the Father, though it came about Him"¹⁶⁰. The Father in the text under consideration appears as a non-existent divinity, i.e. as *nothing* in the *negative* epistemological sense from the point of view of our world and at the same time as the ultimate inner wholeness - the *Divine Nothing* in itself. The world in the Gospel of Truth is designated by the Gnostic term "middle," denoting the location of the earthly world between the negative nothingness and the supersubstantial Father. Nothingness in the negative sense of the word "and is the basis of the existing world; the emergence of the world can be understood as a kind of 'spontaneous' act that occurred 'with the consent' of the Father, but not by his will, or, more precisely, as an act in which the Father's will revealed itself incompletely, as the limited will of beings who decided to exist independently, though not apart from the Father."¹⁶¹. At the same time, the world manifests not only a negative but also a *positive* nothingness, which reflects the good will of the First and appears in the form of space as a paradoxically *existing* nothingness. Space in this case appears as a way of manifesting the divine will as existing in the cosmos. How the Father contains all that exists is logically inexplicable from the point of view of the Father himself. From the point of view of the world, by contrast, the reciprocal relation of the Father and the cosmos can be rationally expressed through the notion of the inclusion of all things in space. Another aspect of the Father's creative will is time, as a form of the world analogous to space.

Every being that has come into being through the Father's will has two ontological characteristics: an image and a name. The image designates the segment of space that a thing occupies, testifying to its relation to the Father and his will. The name of a thing, on the other hand, represents its supratemporal and superspatial

¹⁶⁰ The Gospel of Truth. C. 95.

¹⁶¹ Evlampiev I. I. The Gospel of Truth and the Birth of Christian Philosophy // History of Philosophy. 2017. T. 22. № 1. C. 19.

certainty in the Original, in the realm of the non-existent. In contrast to the image, the name of a thing is the designation of a mystical act of relating to the supra-existent, which cannot be rationally formalized. In this mystical act, metaphorically speaking, the supra-eternal Original identifies its ontological works as "parts" of itself. At the same time, the name as a sign of the mystical connection of the concrete being with its super-essential basis is signified in the Gospel of Truth by the word "call." This call, which is the pledge of salvation, is not addressed to all men, indicating that not all human persons are rooted in the Father. Some who do not have the "call" are essentially without ontological foundation, being unable to return to the Original and doomed to complete ontological annihilation. This view correlates with a well-known fragment from the canonical Gospel of John, which speaks of the necessity of the "new birth" as a fundamental condition for obtaining the Kingdom of God, as well as with a passage from the Gospel of Philip, which points out that some people are only apparently human. The peculiarity of the Gospel of Truth is that it excludes the possibility of metaphorical interpretation of these passages; according to the text, many creatures have no root in the Father, having arisen by chance, though by the will of the First.

In the context of our study, it is important to emphasize that the emergence of the metaphysical boundary between God and the world is due solely to the fact that God himself became inaccessible to the world and, in fact, equal to nothing, without any act of disobedience (sinfulness) on the part of created beings: "...the act of the world's coming into existence is not due to the 'sin' of human beings, it is rather the 'sin' of God himself, who 'allowed' the world to exist and thus 'fall away' from himself; this act can hardly even be called an act of creation"¹⁶². An important point of the cosmology of the Gospel of Truth is the non-illusory existence of a world that has fallen away from God: extra-divine nothingness is here thought of as having power and autonomy. This is evident from the fact that in the act of Christ's crucifixion, the cosmic "delusion" took revenge on Jesus for revealing to the world the knowledge of God that it had lost.

¹⁶² Evlampiev I. I. The Gospel of Truth and the Birth of Christian Philosophy. C. 22.

In the cosmological context described above, the main anthropological thesis of Gnostic Christianity, according to which man is the full empirical realization of God the Father, is organically present. The Divine Nothing, which is beyond cognition and existence, reveals itself in the form of the existing God, Christ, as the universal and absolute man, just as it does as any other human individual. This thesis correlates with the Gospel of John, in which Jesus repeatedly speaks of his oneness-identity with the Father and with his disciples and those who believe in him, which means the *immanence of* man with God.

The facts we have cited from the Gospel of Truth show that it "expresses a fairly consistent philosophical system of a pantheistic type, which can be considered a development of the Gnostic version of early Christianity, the origins of which are found in the Gospel of John"¹⁶³. A similar, though to a greater extent mythological rather than philosophical, pantheistic concept is also found in the Apocrypha of John, where God is understood as the transcendent beginning of all things and at the same time as the beginning that shines through in everything. God is fundamentally above all existing things and therefore he is non-existent. God appears as perfection and eternity, but God's eternity here is not identical with eternity as the highest sphere of the created world. He, having nothing outside and apart from himself, at the same time has everything in himself. The act of creation of the world is comprehended through the act of self-contemplation of the Absolute. Realizing itself as light, the incomprehensible Original receives its positive definitions (and God gives qualities, not has them: otherwise he would be an earthly limited being). Having found itself as the source of all things, the Primordial objectifies itself in the primary creative entity, Thought.

God's perfection is associated with light, which is his essence and not something external to him. God as an absolute being cannot have qualities that are not identical with his essence (this position was later strongly disagreed with by Hesychasm). Jesus in the Apocrypha of John manifests this transcendence by being one with God the Father, with his disciples, and with all things in the world. Christ

¹⁶³ Ibid. C. 24.

connects people with the transcendent depth of divine Silence, in which man discovers the prospect of his absolute and eternal being.

Comparing Gnosticism with Neoplatonism, it is necessary to pay attention to the judgment of L.P. Karsavin, who noted that it was the Gnostic Basilides in the second century, and not the representatives of Neoplatonism (as is commonly believed in the research literature), who first put forward the idea of God as a being without the property of existence, as not existing in any of the known senses. Basilides, in turn, drew on the tradition already established in Gnostic Christianity. The oldest text we have already mentioned, the Apocryphon of John, speaks of God as that being who stands above not only temporal existence but also that sphere which can be identified with the Platonic world of eternal ideas. There is reason to argue that the orthodox tradition borrowed the idea of principled divine supersubstantiality from Gnostic Christianity rather than from Neoplatonism. It can be concluded that the understanding of "creation" in the texts of Gnostic Christianity (in the Gospel of Truth and in the Apocrypha of John) has originality and anticipates the Neoplatonic concept of emanation¹⁶⁴.

Let us summarize the analysis made in this section. The concept of emanation is a philosophical construct organic to the ancient worldview, which received its theoretical development in the context of pantheistic cosmology, characteristic of both Platonism and Gnosticism. In a broad sense, the concept of the emanation of essence has not only an idealistic, Platonic version, but also a natu-philosophical one. At the very foundation of the idealistic concept of emanation - in Plato's philosophy - we find the concept of the Good, which transcends all being and generates it in a specific way. At the same time, Platonic thought also develops a different, demiurgic conception of the origin of the world, which could be correlated in various ways with the emanative scheme. Further conceptualization and detailing of Platonic emanationism was realized by Plotinus and other Neoplatonists.

¹⁶⁴ See: Evlampiev I.I. Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History. C. 361-369.

Examination of the Plotinian concept has uncovered a number of acute theoretical problems that are largely characteristic of the Gnostic cosmogonic scheme (including Gnostic Christianity) as well:

- 1) What is the reason for the Origin beyond itself?
- 2) Does the original bring forth the world by virtue of free "decision" or by necessity, purposely or accidentally, intelligently or unconsciously?
- 3) Does the Original need otherness, and if so, how can this be reconciled with its perfect freedom?
- 4) How is it that the First Things are at the same time everything, and at the same time different in relation to the totality of things?

In addressing these critical issues, Neoplatonism and Gnostic Christianity have both similarities and divergences. First, let us talk about the similarities. First, Neoplatonism and Gnostic Christianity are pantheistic systems. Second, in both directions, the origin of the world is not thought of as the realization of a consciously volitional act of a divine being (as in the official Christian dogma based on the Old Testament text). The original in both Neoplatonism and Gnosticism is not thought of as a positively existing divine nature (Demiurge); the term "demiurge" denotes in these systems an entity belonging to the lowest ontological levels. "Movement" towards the generation of the world in the Primordial itself is thought of as an unconscious process to a greater extent. Third, in both philosophical currents, the Primordial is thought of as the all-perfect and incomprehensible fullness, as super-existence. Fourth, the incomprehensibility of the Primordial causes the limited application of familiar terms from the empirical world to describe both it and the content of the act of emanation. Related to this is the metaphorization in the description of the cosmogonic process. Fifth, Neoplatonic and Gnostic cosmogony is characterized by the hierarchy of levels of being.

The differences between the two ideological trends are very significant and very important for understanding the subsequent history of philosophical thought. First of all, it concerns the different understanding of the origin of evil and the autonomy of the lower forms of being. For the Neoplatonists, God is not responsible

for evil in any sense, either directly or indirectly, and the world cannot be an evil creation of a defective God. Whereas in Neoplatonism the cosmos is harmonious a priori, for the Gnostics it is the result of cosmic catastrophe. Secondly, the stage-by-stage generation of all existing things in Neoplatonism does not require the presence of some second demiurgic type deity for the realization of direct creation, which is characteristic of Gnostic systems. The One in Neo-Platonism is not separated from the process of creation, being fully "in charge" of it.

The cosmogonic concept of Gnostic Christianity represents an original model in comparison with both the Neoplatonic understanding of emanation and the orthodox Christian interpretation of the origin of the world. In contrast to Neo-Platonism, the Gospel of Truth says that the basis of evil is found in some hidden feature of the inscrutable First, the Father. There is no question here of conscious design and its realization, but of a spontaneous act with the "consent" of the Father. In general, the above model of the emanation of the Original into the world, created by representatives of Gnostic Christianity and reflected in the Apocryphal Gospels, is an original and very influential ideological trend, which should be taken into account in all its specificity when considering the further development of philosophy.

Speaking of the results of this section, it is necessary to mention also the problem of labeling the relevant Neoplatonic terms with the word "emanation". Here attention is required to all the semantic nuances of those concepts which are labeled by the Latin term ("emanation", "going beyond", etc.). It has been shown that a careful contextual correlation of the concepts of "emanation" and "energy" is necessary when they are used together within the framework of one philosophical text: these terms can both converge up to synonymy and oppose each other in their cosmogonic meaning. In certain contexts it seems to us important to adhere to the terminological distinction between "essence emanation" and "energy emanation".

1.2 Peculiarities of development and problematic aspects of the biblical concept of the origin of the world in the history of Eastern Christianity

In this paragraph we will trace the paths along which European thought moved in line with the pre-Nicaean orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as well as the Byzantine ecclesiastical and peri-ecclesiastical tradition of the following centuries, comprehending the act of the world's emergence from the Absolute¹⁶⁵, as well as the principles of the correlation between the divine and the created.

A crucial moment in this history was the juxtaposition of the ancient pantheistic tendency in the understanding of God and the cosmos with biblical creationism. Church theology developed along several theoretical lines: 1) active criticism of the pantheistic scheme as such and its related elements (the idea of essential emanation, the concepts of panpsychism, hylozoism, the World Soul, pre-existence and transmigration of souls, etc.); 2) mastering some elements of ancient pagan cosmology and subordinating them to the idea of the creation of the world out of nothing (Plato's concept of the demiurge, the Neoplatonic idea of the self-propagating One Good, etc.); 3) periodic attempts to smooth out and even overcome the ontological gap between God and the created world within mystical and heterodox currents.

Before beginning the historical and philosophical analysis, a few preliminary remarks should be made. Various researchers point to the fact that the Old Testament paradigm, on which the traditional Christian understanding of God and the world is based, is a unique phenomenon in comparison with ancient pagan pantheism and even with the whole world religious culture. As T.Y. Borodai states, "creationism contradicts the entire Hellenic way of thinking"¹⁶⁶. E. A. Torchinov notes that

¹⁶⁵ "Of course, Greek philosophy does not know the Latin term *absolutum*, but in its lexicon there is an expression - "in itself" - the meaning of which exactly coincides with the meaning of the concept of the absolute in New European philosophy" (Month S. V. Transformation of the ancient understanding of the Absolute in Christian theology of the 4th century // *Cosmos and Soul. Doctrines about the Universe and Man in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (Studies and Translations). Moscow: Progress-Tradition, 2005. C. 824). C. V. Mesyats emphasizes that the authors of authoritative encyclopedic dictionaries agree that the meaning of the Latin term *absolutus* is adequately conveyed by the Greek expressions "in itself", "simply", "detached", etc. (ibid.).

¹⁶⁶ Borodai T. Yu. *The Birth of a Philosophical Concept. God and Matter in Plato's Dialogues*. Moscow: Izd. Savin S.A., 2008. C. 89.

"biblical religions in their theistic absolutism stand as if apart from the religions of the world, are a kind of exception, even a paradox..."¹⁶⁷ . In the Old Testament, indeed, one can find grounds for a radical ontological opposition of God to the world created by him, as well as for the assertion of the fundamental and irrecoverable ontological weakness of creation, which aggravates the gap between the divine and non-divine, although at the same time in the Old Testament one can find the opposite - some grounds for asserting the closeness of God and the world, God and man. According to E.A. Torchinov, "pure monotheism in its classical biblical form begins to prevail (although as a tendency it existed even earlier) from the time of the prophets and religious reforms of the late Jewish kings Hezekiah and Josiah, and especially from the period following the return from Babylonian captivity and the construction of the second temple"¹⁶⁸ .

The most obvious contrast to emanentism and pantheism is strict creationism, understood as the concept of God's creation of the world out of nothing. In speaking of the earliest origins of this concept, the following verse is often quoted: "I beseech you, my child, look at heaven and earth, and seeing all that is in them, know that God created all things out of nothing, and that in this way the human race also came into being" (2 Macc. 7:28). The statement about the creation of the world out of nothing in 2 Macc. can be explained by Hellenistic influences. It is noteworthy that the Book of Solomon speaks of God's creation of the world out of "ugly substance" (Prem. 11:18). Origen remarked on this point that "it should be known that the name of matter, in the sense of the substance underlying bodies, we have not yet found in the canonical Scriptures"¹⁶⁹ . Given that for the Platonists matter is ontological unformed (fundamentally *formless*) nothingness, the quotation from 2 Macc. can be understood in light of the thesis expressed in Prem. 11:18. The notion that the first lines of Genesis point to creation out of nothing, however, is debatable. A reading in which darkness and the abyss would already exist alongside God is possible (the

¹⁶⁷ Torchinov E. A. Religions of the World: Experience of the Beyond: Psychotechnics and transpersonal states. SPb.: Center "Petersburg Oriental Studies", 1998. C. 284.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. C. 286.

¹⁶⁹ Origen. On Beginnings. SPb.: Bibliopolis, 2008. C. 393.

creation of heaven and earth in Gen. 1:1 can be taken as a literary preamble or title to the detailing of the cosmogonic process in the following verses, rather than an indication of the actual fact of the formation of heaven and earth out of nothing). In particular, Gregory of Nyssa admits that Gen. 1:1 is precisely the preamble: "...[The Word] instead of saying, God created all creatures together, said: in the title or in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."¹⁷⁰ . It is also worth noting that the act of creating particular kinds of being is conceptualized in Genesis as the separation of one from another, the production of one from another, the gathering and forming of new varieties of being out of already existing "material," and not as creation "out of nothing." If we accept these arguments, then God did not create the darkness and the abyss, according to the book of Genesis: they pre-existed. The world thus comes into existence through the ordering of the world's Abyss. In this respect, the biblical Six Days converges with mythological archetypes. Here is how Elena Syrtsova writes about it: "It is noteworthy that neither the idea of creation "out of nothing", nor the idea of matter as a created substance, which precedes the formation of the earth, sky, luminaries, elements and bodies in the cosmos, finds confirmation in the Holy Scriptures, although we are talking about issues fundamental to Christian gnosis"¹⁷¹ .

Another quotation in support of the biblical origin of the concept of creation out of nothing is found in Rom. 4:17, where God is represented as "calling non-existent things as existing things" (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα), but it can be interpreted in various ways. First, we are not dealing here with a philosophical formulation that clearly describes the cosmogonic process: this verse emphasizes the omnipotence of God rather than describing cosmogony. Second, "non-existent" can be interpreted in a Platonic way, i.e., as matter co-existent with God and necessary for the acts of creation.

Subsequently, church thinkers repeatedly referred to the divinely revealed character of the dogmatic thesis of the creation of the world out of nothing,

¹⁷⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa. Defensive [word] on the Sixtodev // Works of St. Gregory of Nyssa. M.: Tip. V. Gautier, 1861. C. 11-12.

¹⁷¹ Syrtsova E.N. Origen on creation ex nihilo // Russia in the Global World. 2016. № 9 (32). C. 520.

perceiving this concept as an alternative to essential emanationism on the one hand and demiurgic formation of the world from eternally existing matter on the other (as well as the atheistic-materialist conception of the origin of the world)¹⁷². Prot. S. Bulgakov says that "in the Christian understanding of the relation existing between God and the world, first of all, two polar opposite views should be excluded: pantheistic or atheistic monism, on the one hand, and the dualistic understanding of creation, on the other"¹⁷³.

God, according to the official church dogmatics, for the creation of the world does not need any initial material, nor any sphere for the realization of his creative plan, nor the presence of nothingness or nothingness to be filled by being, nor any condition external to himself at all. The assumption of any external condition means for classical dogmatics a diminution of the divine perfection, the beginninglessness and omnipotence of God. The creation of the world is realized through God's free, absolutely independent decision to reveal the eternal design of the world beyond the divine essence.

Church thought asserts the unquestioned superiority of the idea of creation out of nothing over those cosmogonic concepts that do not include this doctrine. Christian apologists draw attention to the uniqueness of this concept as evidence of its unearthly origin, and also to the fact that the creation of the world out of nothing is more consistent with the idea of the omnipotence and omnipotence of God. However, we should not forget that this scheme of the origin of the world has its own characteristic system of problems that have never been resolved in history. For example, one can ask a question concerning the very phrase "creation from nothing", which, when read literally, can be understood as the emergence of the world from the *sphere of* nothing, existing alongside the divine existence and serving as the initial "material" or "matrix" for the creation of all things. Church orthodoxy denies this understanding, arguing that divine super-existence transcends the very

¹⁷² According to Fr. Ruzhitsky, "no point of revelatory doctrine was rejected by the pagans with such persistence and did not enter their consciousness so slowly and tightly as the doctrine of the non-self-existence of matter and the creation of the world out of nothing" (Ruzhitsky K., Fr. The Doctrine of the Holy Fathers and Church writers about matter (Master's thesis, 1914). Typescript. MDA, 1958. C. 11).

¹⁷³ Bulgakov S., Fr. The Bride of the Lamb. Paris, 1945. C. 7.

dichotomy of being and non-being. Thus, God appears not simply as super-existence, but as super-not-existence, which created both the phenomenon of being and the phenomenon of non-being, as well as their opposition in our reality and in our experience. Prot. S. Bulgakov says the following on this subject: "We must, without confusion, distinguish between two nothingnesses: pre-creation or non-creation nothingness, or pure ontological zero, emptiness, which we think of only through logical repulsion, the negation of all being, in a kind of 'illegitimate judgment' (in the words of Plato), and the being, creation nothingness $\mu\eta\acute{o}\nu$, by which, so to speak, creation is permeated or transfigured. The latter, however, is no more than a modus of this created being, but in this sense it is"¹⁷⁴. If this is so, then the question arises as to how correct the formulation "out of nothing" is, if nothing but God existed before the creation of the world and God did not need to derive being "out of" anything. More correct in this case would be a formulation indicating the creation of the world from the freedom of divine super-existence (which is thought of as super-nothing), i.e., from God himself through his establishment of the ontological boundary between Creator and creation. Church thought emphasizes the mystery of the act of creation out of nothing and offers its "negative" explanation: "out of nothing" means "not out of the essence of God" (not out of the divine "what") and "not out of some material consubstantial to God" (extra-divine "what"). However, negative judgments alone cannot meaningfully clarify the concept; it must use some positive statements as well. In this part, the concept of creation out of nothing proves to be contradictory and inconsistent. Creation out of nothing is proposed to be interpreted as creation out of divine freedom, but even here a difficult problem arises due to the necessity to specify whether God in the act of creation separated created things from himself by a rigid ontological boundary, taking them out of his freedom as elements alien to himself¹⁷⁵.

The idea of the creation of the world out of nothing as a divinely revealed and primordially biblical idea appears in church thought around the middle of the second

¹⁷⁴ Bulgakov S., Fr. The Bride of the Lamb. C. 11.

¹⁷⁵ See: Nadeina D. A. God, creation and nothingness: typology and problematics of the main concepts of the origin of the world in the history of European philosophy // Scientific Opinion. 2024. №1-2. C. 57-67.

century. In the apocryphal book "The Shepherd of Hermas", which refers to this time, the following is stated as the first commandment: "Above all, believe that there is one God, who created and accomplished all things, who brought all things *from nothing* into being. He encompasses all things, being Himself immense, and cannot be defined by words or comprehended by the mind"¹⁷⁶. We should also pay attention to the reasoning of Theophilus of Antioch, who polemicizes with Platonic cosmology: "Plato and his followers recognize God as beginningless, father and creator of everything, but then assume that God and matter are beginningless, and that the latter is consubstantial with God. If God is without beginning and matter is without beginning, then God is no longer the creator of all things, as the Platonists think, nor does the unity of God remain, as they allow. <...>And the man-artist, if he receives a substance from someone, makes of it what he wants. The power of God is found in the fact that He creates what He wants out of nothing. <...>As in all this God is mightier than man, so also in the fact that out of nothing He creates and has created existing things as much as He wills and as He wills"¹⁷⁷. Also in this context it is worth paying attention to the statement of Irenaeus of Lyons, who criticizes the Gnostic cosmogony and contrasts it with this concept: "While men can make anything not out of nothing, but out of matter to be made, God is especially superior to men in that He Himself called into being the matter of His creation, which did not exist before"¹⁷⁸.

Some scholars are inclined to believe that the origin of the concept of creation *ex nihilo* is connected with the Gnostic teachings of the second century, which represented the cosmos as a negative, evil beginning. Thus, in Basilides we can find the statement that "the bearing God unwittingly created the bearing world from the bearing (ὁ οὐκ ὢν θεός ἀβουλῆτως ἐποίησε οὐκ ὄντα κόσμον ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων)"¹⁷⁹. E. Syrtsova considers it possible to see "a logical connection between the concept of

¹⁷⁶ The Shepherd of Hermas // Writings of the Apostolic Husbands. M.: Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2008. C. 243.

¹⁷⁷ Theophilus of Antioch. Epistle to Autolycus // Works of ancient Christian apologists. SPb.: Aleteia. 1999. C. 27.

¹⁷⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons. Against Heresies. St. Petersburg: Oleg Abyshko Publishing House, 2008. C. 135.

¹⁷⁹ Bolotov V. V. Lectures on the History of the Ancient Church. Moscow: Spaso-Preobrazhensky Valaam Stavropigial Monastery, 1994. C. 205.

creation 'out of nothing' and the negative view of the cosmos characteristic of Gnosticism as an area of domination of evil, separated from the Good"¹⁸⁰. At the same time, some authors (mostly of ecclesiastical orientation) emphasize that in the second half of the second century "the anti-Gnostic polemic served as a turning point in the development of the doctrine of creation 'ex nihilo' to the form in which it became historically significant"¹⁸¹. However, this negative attitude towards Gnosticism was also an attitude through which developed philosophical concepts, including the concept of creation, were borrowed. However, of course, orthodoxy could not follow the logic of Gnostic thought completely, and this is where the elements of inconsistency arise: borrowing initial principles from the Gnostic model of creation, church thinkers did not give them a logical development, which deprived their constructions of wholeness and depth.

The ideas about the way the world came into being were formulated by church authors not only in the context of interaction with Gnosticism, but also in the context of the relationship of Christian thought with Middle Platonism. One cannot fail to notice the similarities between the Platonic model of the creation of the world and the cosmogonic ideas of the early Christian apologists. Researchers have noted the influence of Platonic ideas on the church thinkers of the II-III centuries both in content and in conceptual and terminological terms. The coincidence of Middle Platonism with Christian thought of the mentioned period is found in the aspiration of church authors to overcome anthropomorphism in the understanding of God, which was characteristic of the Old Testament narrative, in the idea of the creation of the world in accordance with an ideal design (interpretation of the concept of Demiurge in a biblical manner), as well as in the idea of the ontological "weakness" of material existence in comparison with the existence of the divine. According to the Church scholar, "the Middle Platonists, in accordance with the ancient Platonic tradition they had adopted, spoke of its <matter>non-materiality and eternity. If they used the term 'creation,' they understood it not at all in the Christian sense of creation

¹⁸⁰ Syrtsova E.N. Origen on creation ex nihilo // Russia in the Global World. 2016. № 9 (32). C. 520.

¹⁸¹ Zinkovsky K., Hieromon. Great Fathers of the Church on the Matter and Body of Man (Alexandrian and Cappadocian Schools). SPb.: Izd-vo Oleg Abyshko, 2014. C. 124.

'out of nothing,' but in the sense of God's activity in ordering the primary chaotic substance."¹⁸² . At the same time, Christian cosmology differed from Platonic cosmology by pointing out that the cosmos was created for man and that matter is not consubstantial to God as the limit of being opposed to the One. Celsus formulated the view of the correlation between man and the cosmos, which was traditional for ancient pagan cosmology: "So, everything was not created for man, just as it was not created for the lion, nor for the eagle, nor for the dolphin, but in order that the cosmos, as God's creation, should be complete and perfect in all respects"¹⁸³ . For contrast, let us cite the judgment of Justin the Philosopher: "In the beginning, in His goodness, He arranged everything out of ugly substance for men"¹⁸⁴ .

It is noteworthy that the Platonic and orthodox Christian conception of the creation of the world converge in the emphasis on the fact that matter as such is *ontological nothingness*: "The similarity between the Platonic cosmogony and the Christian doctrine of creation is striking, but not complete: the Demiurge did not create from nothing, but "brought out of disorder into order" that "which was in disorder and disorderly motion"¹⁸⁵ . A critique of the classical pagan concept of the Demiurge can be seen in the anathematisms on Origen: "If anyone says that the race of demons is dual and is made up of human souls and of the more powerful spirits descending into it, and only one mind out of all this imaginary unit of intelligent (beings) remained motionless in Divine love and contemplation, became the Christ and King of all sensible (beings), produced every corporeal nature, heaven and earth and that which is in the midst, and that world, having as existing (ἐνυπόστατα) elements older than its existence: dry, wet, hot, cold, and idea, received existence by taking its imprint, and that not the Most Holy and Consubstantial Trinity created the world, and through this (creation) it came into being, but the *creative mind*, of which

¹⁸² Zinkovsky K., Hieromon. Great Fathers of the Church on the matter and body of man. C. 35.

¹⁸³ Cited in: Ranovich A. B. Primary sources on the history of early Christianity. Antique Critics of Christianity. Moscow: Politizdat, 1990. C. 296.

¹⁸⁴ Justin the Philosopher. The First Apologia // St. Justin. Philosopher and Martyr. Creations. M.: Pilgrim; Blagovest, 1995. C. 39.

¹⁸⁵ Borodai T.Y. The birth of a philosophical concept. God and Matter in Plato's Dialogues. Moscow: Izd. Savin S.A., 2008. C. 89.

they speak, *pre-existing the world and giving existence to the world, brought it into being*: let it be anathema."¹⁸⁶ (italics mine - D.H). It is true that, as Plato explains, and the later Platonists would affirm, "'that which was in disorder' before the creation of the cosmos, <...>it is actually nothingness, the opposite of being, 'nothingness' as such <...>"¹⁸⁷ . The creation of the world out of matter for Platonic pagans is, in a certain sense, the creation of the cosmos out of ontological nothingness¹⁸⁸ . For Plato, however, the limit opposing the One in a specific sense "exists" in parallel with God, whereas Church thinkers denied this notion, speaking of the creation of the world by the Creator out of nothing in the sense of not out of a pre-existing "what" (in essence, out of God's omnipotence and his free decision to create something beyond himself by setting that limit). The creation of the world out of nothing inevitably makes the world changeable, a sphere of becoming, which brings orthodoxy and pagan Neoplatonism closer together in affirming the opposition between the ideal-unchangeable and the creaturely-changeable.

Thus, too, in the relation of the dogmatic model of creation to Middle Platonism, we see the same situation as in its relation to the Gnostic model: the borrowing of the starting points of a fairly consistent concept is accompanied by a refusal to develop them in the most natural and logical direction; this leads to the orthodox concept being incoherent and lacking in true depth.

Let us take the *specific cosmogonic positions* of the early Christian apologists as an example. Tatian says that the Logos creates matter out of nothing and then it undergoes differentiation¹⁸⁹ : "Matter is not beginningless like God, nor does it have power equal to God as beginningless; but it received a beginning and did not originate from anyone else, but was produced by the one Creator of all things"¹⁹⁰ .

¹⁸⁶ Way, Truth and Life. Faith-teaching texts of the Orthodox Church. K.: Poslushnik, 2013. C. 42.

¹⁸⁷ Borodai T.Y. The birth of philosophical concept. C. 89-90.

¹⁸⁸ Already Aristotle in his book "Physics" mentions philosophers who "recognize the direct emergence from the non-existent (ἐκ τὸ μὴ ὄντος)" (Aristotle. Physics. Op. in 4 vol. 3. M.: Mysl, 1981. P. 80).

¹⁸⁹ Although Tatian uses the verb προβάλλω to denote the act of creation (the apologist says that matter is "produced by God" - ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ προβεβλημένων), having "heretical associations" (in some Gnostic sects this verb denoted "emanations"), but his doctrine here is quite orthodox, for the verb in question has in Tatian the sense of "creation out of nothing."

¹⁹⁰ Tatian. Speech against the Hellenes // Monuments of ancient Christian writing. M.: In the University Printing House, 1863. C. 141.

Aristides argues that God has no image, has no name, being an unbounded being. On the contrary, all that exists apart from him is limited by him: "Heaven does not embrace him, but he heaven and all things visible and invisible are contained by him" (there is also the following variant: "Heaven does not limit him, but heaven and all things visible and invisible are limited by him")¹⁹¹. Justin the Philosopher tries to combine the ideas of transcendence and immanence of God in relation to the world created by him. On the one hand, the apologist asserts the existence of an "ontological gape"¹⁹² between the Creator and creation. On the other hand, God appears as the Father of all things and as the one who created the world, and this appears to be in harmony with Plato's *Timaeus*, as Justin himself admits: "When we say that everything is arranged and created by God, it will appear that we are expressing Plato's doctrine..."¹⁹³. Nevertheless, God by his Word, in accordance with his original design, easily bridges the gap by being present in the world. As a result, the question of whether Justin professed the concept of the creation of the world out of nothing or whether he was a supporter of the Platonic approach remains debatable. A.N. Chanyshv writes: "Justin does not yet have a dogma concept of creation of the world by God from nothing. He remains on the positions of Platonism, according to which God-demiurge only formalizes the material given to him in accordance with the ideas-samples and animates the world created by him. Justin, however, specifies (in accordance with John) that the world was created by God by the power of his word ('by the word of God the whole world was created out of substance')."¹⁹⁴. At the same time, in "Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew" we find a statement that can be interpreted in favor of the doctrine of the creation of the world from nothing: "God alone is beginningless and indestructible, and therefore He is God, but everything else after Him has a beginning and is subject to destruction"¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹¹ Aristides. *Apologia. On the Veneration of God Almighty // Works of Early Christian Apologists*. SPb.: Aleteia, 1999. C. 292.

¹⁹² Sidorov A. I. *Svyatootecheskie inheritance and church antiquities*. T. 2. Moscow: Sibirskaya Blagozvonitsa, 2011. C. 221.

¹⁹³ Justin the Philosopher. *The first apologia*. C. 51.

¹⁹⁴ Chanyshv A. N. *Course of lectures on ancient and medieval philosophy*. Moscow: Higher School, 1991. C. 378.

¹⁹⁵ Justin the Philosopher. *Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew // St. Justin. Philosopher and Martyr*. M.: Pilgrim; Blagovest, 1995. C. 143.

Athenagoras the Athenian emphasizes the essential difference between God and matter as between the Being and the not-being, as well as between the Potter and the clay. At the same time, the apologist is not a supporter of ontological dualism, refusing to understand matter as a commensurate and co-creator: "And to us who distinguish God from matter, and teach that the other is substance and the other is God, and that there is the greatest distance between them - for God is uncreated and eternal and can be comprehended only by the mind and thought, while matter is created and perishable - is the name of godless justly given?"¹⁹⁶ .

The considered thinkers insistently emphasize the transcendence of God to the world and his ontological non-identity with the created. At the same time, the transcendence of God was accompanied by the assumption of a mediating link between God the Father and creation in the form of the Logos¹⁹⁷ , performing demiurgic functions in relation to the world: "The need to connect God with the world, and at the same time to distinguish Him from the latter, is satisfied here by the fact that the Logos is regarded as the second, inferior God, who can be the mediator between God and the world"¹⁹⁸ . D. Dillon points to the interconnectedness of the notion of God's transcendence and the assumption of mediating links between the supreme being and the world: "The more transcendent God becomes, the more he needs mediators between him and the material world, which, as all Platonists agree, he controls by means of his Providence"¹⁹⁹ .

The demiurgic mediation, participation, and presence of the divine in the world was also conceptualized by Christian authors through the concept of "Sophia" (Wisdom), which in Patristics served as a designation for the Son of God, along with the term "Logos." "Both spiritual experiences crucial to biblical faith - the experience of primary ontological distance between Creator and creation and the experience of transcendent Presence - led to a tendency to replace God's name with

¹⁹⁶ Athenagoras the Athenian. *Petition for Christians // Works of ancient Christian apologists*. SPb.: Aleteia, 1999. C. 57.

¹⁹⁷ In this sense the term "logos" began to be used by Greek apologists in their writings around the middle of the second century, and for the first time this concept took a central place in Christian literature in Justin the Philosopher.

¹⁹⁸ Bulgakov S., Fr. *The Bride of the Lamb*. C. 20.

¹⁹⁹ Dillon D. *Middle Platonists 80 B.C. - 220 A.D.* St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2002. C. 221.

certain words signifying the *modus operandi* of His Presence in immanence, such as His 'Glory', His 'Power' (Lk. 22:69), etc. A special place among these names belongs to 'Wisdom' or 'Sophia'." Analyzing the book of Proverbs, S.S. Averintsev points out that the biblical-Christian Sophia is "neither transcendence as such nor immanence as such, but the meeting point of both of them"²⁰⁰. Such a combination, while satisfying the religious requirement to establish a connection between God and the created world, could not be justified and deployed strictly philosophically, since any such deployment led to dogmatically inadmissible conclusions about the unity of God and creation.

Another problem for the orthodox model of creation was the very important transformation of the Platonic Demiurge into the creating divine principle, the Logos. In Platonism, the *Demiurge* is the creator of eternal entities, whereas mortal beings are created by inferior gods. In the orthodox model, the Logos-Son of God is thought in a demiurgic way as an intermediary between God the Father and the world in the act of creation of the latter, but at the same time he retained his status as one of the hypostases of the Trinity, i.e. he appeared to be a "part" of the transcendent God, who was opposed to the world. The natural philosophical way to solve this problem is to refuse to recognize Christ-Logos in his creative function as a hypostasis of the Trinity; this path, in fact, was followed by Origen and his followers, but this idea was recognized as heresy²⁰¹. Middle Platonism also developed along this path, whose representatives argued that the first principle creates a secondary god-mediator for the realization of demiurgic functions.

S.V. Month points out that the bifurcation of the divine sphere into two origins - paternal and demiurgic - is characteristic not only of Platonism, but also of Gnosticism: "...in Gnosticism, as well as in Middle Platonism (Plutarch, Numenius), by the end of the I - beginning of the II century BC. A distinction between the demiurgic and paternal functions of the gods is doctrinally formalized: if God is called father insofar as he produces something homogeneous and consubstantial to

²⁰⁰ Averintsev S. C. Collected Works: Sofia-Logos. Dictionary. K.: Dukh i Litera, 2006. C. 395.

²⁰¹ See: Evlampiev I.I. Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History. C. 380-388.

himself (i.e., mind, world soul, individual souls, etc.), the Demiurge is called father insofar as he creates something different from himself. At the same time, the paternal function is usually attributed to a deity of a higher order, and the demiurgic function to a lower one, since the father, who generates something from his own essence, is thought to be immobile and self-sufficient in his generation, while the Demiurge is thought to be changeable and in need of a material and specimen for the creation of his works"²⁰². This shows that this model of understanding the act of creation is the most logical from a philosophical point of view; because orthodox thinkers rejected it, they could not construct a coherent and consistent concept of creation.

The difference between the Christian idea of the Logos-Demiurge and the original Platonic one also lies in the fact that, according to Plato, the ideal prototype of the world does not depend on the Demiurge (in Christianity, the eternal ideas about the universe are the eternal "property" of the Creator), who, moreover, is not, as in the Christian paradigm, omnipotent, being only the cause of the combination of the ideal and the material, not being able to fully resemble the world to his idea due to the passive resistance of matter-necessity. In this, according to S.V. Mesyats, "this is his essential difference from the God of theistic religions, who creates the world from nothing"²⁰³. In addition, according to A.F. Losev, the Demiurge in the strict sense cannot be considered a divine "person": "However, it would be a mistake to Christianize Plato, because in his Absolute he saw only unity, i.e. mathematical nature, but not a person with any particular name. Formally it is monotheism, but in essence it is a principled and consistent polytheism"²⁰⁴.

In the course of time, Christian ideas about the existence of the divine Logos with demiurgic functions and yet in a personified version of the Son of God began to diverge from the Platonic line of understanding of the Demiurge, which submitted to the pantheistic orientation of Neoplatonism: "Doctrinally, the transition from Middle Platonism to Neoplatonism meant a rigid opposition of the sphere of being

²⁰² Mesyats S. V. Demiurge // Orthodox Encyclopedia. T. 14. Moscow: Central Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2006. C. 375.

²⁰³ Ibid. C. 374.

²⁰⁴ Losev A. F. History of ancient aesthetics. T. 2. MOSCOW: AST, 2000. C. 365.

to the super-existence of the first god, the one, or good; and within mind-being, the identity of the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* and the mind-nous within which the paradigm-paradigm is placed."²⁰⁵ . In contrast to the Middle Platonic concept of two gods, with Plotinus we find the doctrine of a single Mind-Demiurge who creates the World-Soul, which fulfills part of the demiurgic functions through the ordering of changing existence. Late Neoplatonism will develop a hierarchized demiurgism.

In this context, it is worth making an important remark. When comparing the Neoplatonic ontology of the Absolute and the Church's orthodoxy, the following must be kept in mind: "...we are convinced that the Triune God of Christian theology corresponds to the realm of Mind or the one-being in the Neoplatonic tradition. <...>Indeed, let us compare the basic characteristics of the Godhead attributed to Him by the Cappadocian Fathers with the corresponding characteristics of the divine Mind in Plotinus. God is the infinite Mind, thinking Himself and all His creation. He is "Being," i.e., true being, eternal, unchanging, and perfect. Like the Neoplatonic Mind He has absolute life and truth inherent in Him. And just like this Mind, He is transcendent of all sensually perceived things, being at the same time the Creator of this visible world. He is also described in opposite terms and is at the same time both one and many"²⁰⁶ . Another researcher says the same thing: "Middle Platonism was objectively a more suitable philosophical doctrine for Christian theology than Neoplatonism. For the Christian God is not like the Neoplatonic One, which is the super-existential identity of being and non-being. The Christian God is analogous to the Divine Mind of middle Platonism. For he is the truly Being (Ex. 3: 14, 15), transcendent and unknowable, who gives existence to the world in his demiurgic activity and not in neoplatonic emanation."²⁰⁷ .

At the same time, it bears repeating that the Christian model of creation inevitably presupposed, for all God's transcendence, His immanence to the world (if only as a latent tendency that could not be developed rigorously and consistently) in

²⁰⁵ Shichalin Yu. A. Middle Platonism // *New Philosophical Encyclopedia*. T. 3. Moscow: Mysl, 2010. C. 632.

²⁰⁶ Month S. V. Transformation of the ancient understanding of the Absolute in the Christian theology of the IV century. C. 857.

²⁰⁷ Chernomorets Y. Sergei Averintsev and modern science of Byzantine philosophy. URL: <http://www.religion.in.ua/main/7-v-yetom-godu-ispolnyaetsya-pyat-let-so-dnya.html>

order to overcome the too sharp ontological boundary between Creator and creature; this was most explicitly realized in the early Christian apologists' discourse on divine Providence, which penetrated the world down to its smallest and lowest things regardless of their actual state, which is not characteristically "...a commonplace in Platonism is the assumption that there is a whole host of intermediate beings between God and man and that God himself does not directly intervene in anything and does not come into too close contact with matter."²⁰⁸ . The too close contact of the Christian God with the world was criticized by Platonists, such as Celsus, and perceived by them as an important point of difference between Platonism and Christianity. Notably, Celsus condemns the anthropomorphic biblical view of God as a craftsman who needed to rest in the seventh creation after performing creative acts.

Thus, we see that the Christian paradigm of understanding the relationship between the supreme original and the world contains an insoluble contradiction: it affirms the strict transcendence of God to the world and, at the same time, the fundamental closeness of God to all things, the fact that He permeates all things and relates Himself personally to each element of the universe. At the same time, Christian orthodoxy preserves the idea of the mediated relationship between the Absolute and the universe through the angelic hierarchy.

Subsequently, the idea of the creation of the world out of nothing was unambiguously expressed by Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Clement of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, and many others recognized by the Church as expressors of the orthodox view of the origin of the universe. Now it is necessary to say that in the pre-Nicene period of the development of Christian theology, which we are now considering, there was another line of understanding of what and how the world was created from. The fact that church writers apply the term "Demiurge" in relation to God not only in the case of the

²⁰⁸ Dillon D. The Middle Platonists. C. 59.

creation of the world from nothing, but also in the description of the creative process from the already created material is already remarkable²⁰⁹.

In order to reveal more fully the alternative line in the historical development of philosophical ideas about the transcendence and immanence of the Absolute, it is necessary to focus on the concept of Philo of Alexandria, who used the theoretical achievements of Greek culture in the interpretation of Holy Scripture and influenced Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Philo affirms the absolute transcendence of the biblical God. A significant concept of the Philonic cosmogony is the figure of the Logos, who acts as the instrument of creation, i.e., has the function of Demiurge and is called the "firstborn Son" of God. Here Philo develops his concept much more logically and consistently, recognizing the Logos as distinct from the transcendent God. At the highest level, Philo conceives of the Logos as transcendent to the world and almost identical with God himself, representing his Mind. At the next level, the Logos proceeds from God, gaining independence, but still retaining transcendence and acting as an intelligible cosmos, a model for the sensual world. In the third stage, the Logos is immanent to the empirical cosmos, acting as its inner law, the force that governs and permeates the world. In contrast to Plato's model of the *Timaeus*, Philo holds that the intelligible world as a model for the sensuous cosmos does not exist prior to the act of creation.

The reason for the creation of the world, according to Philo, is divine goodness: "In virtue of his goodness he did not deny the perfection of his own nature to matter, which in itself had no dignity, but which could become everything. <...>Having no helper - for was there any other? - but relying on Himself alone, God decided to bestow generous gifts on nature, which, without divine gifts, was not in itself capable of obtaining anything good. <...>However, in bestowing gifts, God does not measure them according to the greatness of his goodness, for it is boundless and infinite, but according to the capacity of those who receive them. For what is in becoming cannot by nature contain as much goodness as God by nature can

²⁰⁹ Month S.V. Demiurge. C. 376.

bestow."²¹⁰ . It is noteworthy that Philo considers it possible to speak of the creation of the entire cosmos in the image of God: "...all this sensual world, since it is greater than the human [image], is [also] an imitation of the divine image"²¹¹ . It is important to emphasize that Philo most likely recognizes two ontological beginnings, God and matter, with matter being thought of as not equal to God: "In this sense, Philo's view of the possibility of the origin of *ἐχθουμηνοντος*, from non-existent things, is slightly less unambiguous than, for example, Plutarch's, and slightly closer to the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*"²¹² . However, there is also a more cautious point of view: "Philo does not give a direct answer to the problem of the creation of matter because of his preferably exegetical and ethical interests"²¹³ .

Similar ideas to Philo's concept are found in Clement of Alexandria, who, in the spirit of the Jewish thinker, recognized the transcendence of God and at the same time his presence in the world by his power, and also shared the doctrine of the divine Mind-Logos, which contains all the ideas of creation and acts as a demiurgical instrument of God, but does not coincide with God. There is a debate as to whether Clement of Alexandria recognized the creation of the world out of nothing or considered matter to be eternally coexistent with the Creator (among modern researchers, opinions about the recognition or non-recognition of pre-eternal matter in Clement's teachings also differ to the point of contradiction). The Church thinker's words about the creation of the world "out of non-existence" (*ἐκμηδοντος*) can be interpreted both in the Platonic and in the orthodox Christian sense. Here is how the authors of the article on Clement of Alexandria in the Orthodox Encyclopedia comment on this ambiguity: "An additional basis for such a conclusion <about the eternity of matter> is given by a remark of St. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople; according to him, Clement in his "Essays" asserted that "matter is timeless", i.e. exists before the creation of the sensual world. The assertion of St. Photius does not find confirmation in the extant writings of Clement. In the "Stromata" he directly

²¹⁰ Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the World According to Moses // Philo of Alexandria. Interpretations of the Old Testament. M. Greek-Latin Study of Y. A. Shichalin, 2000. C. 54.

²¹¹ Ibid. C. 55.

²¹² Ibid. C. 97.

²¹³ Zinkovsky K., Hieromon. Great Fathers of the Church on the matter and body of man. C. 36.

rejects the philosophical doctrine of matter as a "beginning", noting that Plato, speaking in the "Timaeus" about the "beginning of all things", thereby covertly expressed the true doctrine that in reality "the beginning is one". "Clement's recognition of the eternity of matter follows from the fact that he accepts as a philosophical characteristic of matter the 'qualitylessness' which some authors who belonged to the Platonic tradition associated with its eternity."²¹⁴ . Church authors also emphasize that the notion of the creation of the world out of nothing is inextricably linked to the affirmation of the personal existence of the Absolute: "The notion of the appearance of the cosmos 'out of nothing' was completely alien to ancient thought and, as a theological and philosophical concept, was not explicitly voiced even by the biblical exegete Philo. In our opinion, this is closely connected with the inability to realize God as a Person who, by a free creative act, calls the created cosmos out of nothingness into being"²¹⁵ . We must, in turn, state that here orthodox thought becomes entangled in insoluble contradictions. Ascribing to God, precisely as the supreme Absolute, a personal beginning, makes him limited and involved in the created being, since the quality of personality, as any positive quality is a limitation inherent in the created world. Asserting the transcendence of God and the presence of the personal beginning in him cannot be combined in a strictly philosophical sense. In the same way it is impossible to recognize the transcendent God Himself as the source of the act of creation of the world, this act is naturally attributed to a lower beginning, Christ-Logos, but in this sense it is impossible to consider him as a hypostasis of the transcendent God, philosophically strictly he can be understood only as a secondary and lower beginning in relation to God the Father. Clement apparently understood all these difficulties, hence his doubt about the possibility of justifying the concept of the creation of the world out of nothing in its strictly dogmatic version.

Apparently, all these difficulties were understood by another famous representative of Alexandrian Platonism - Origen, who created a very complex and

²¹⁴ Biryukov D. S., Smirnov D. V. Clement of Alexandria. Doctrine of Creation // Orthodox Encyclopedia. Moscow: Central Research Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2014. T. 35. C. 635-636.

²¹⁵ Ibid. C. 51.

deviating from the orthodox model of creation: "Being formally an ecclesiastical thinker, he combined all the main ideas of the early Gnostic teachings in his original philosophical and theological doctrine"²¹⁶. He taught a dual process: first the souls of sentient beings were created, then there was the creation of qualityless matter out of nothing and from this mind-body matter the elements and components of the cosmos arise. Initially disordered matter receives its final arrangement at the expense of the Logos of God. The Father endows souls and matter with being, while the Logos continues creation by forming bodies and endowing matter with qualities. At the same time Origen simultaneously called Christ-Logos the Wisdom (Sophia) and considered him to be the lowest and even imperfect instance of divine existence, in these ideas he clearly approached the Gnostic tradition²¹⁷.

Origen emphasized that the Church has not spoken definitely about what was before the world came into being. The Christian thinker also emphasizes that in the biblical text we do not find the philosophical idea of matter as a substance at the foundation of things²¹⁸. Also noteworthy is Origen's commentary on Jn. 17: 24 and Eph. 1:4, where he draws attention to the use of the term "ἡκαταβολή" in these verses, which means in Greek "casting off", "falling down"²¹⁹, this in Origen's conception is interpreted as the lowering of creatures (originally created souls) from a higher to a lower state. Origen juxtaposes this concept with the idea of creation from nothing: "But since those rational beings, created, according to the foregoing, in the beginning, were created from nothing, it is precisely because they did not exist before, and [then] began to exist, that they received by necessity a coeval and changeable existence, for, the virtue which was added to their substance was not inherent in them by nature, but was produced by the grace of the Creator."²²⁰. At the same time, Origen taught about the repetitive creative process and the plurality of worlds, which was condemned by orthodox thought. The world, according to the

²¹⁶ Nadeina D.A., Evlampiev I.I. The problem of the origin and essence of nothingness in the Christian concept of the creation of the world by God // *History of Philosophy*. 2024. T. 29. №1. C. 20.

²¹⁷ See: Evlampiev I.I. Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History. C. 380-388.

²¹⁸ Syrtsova E.N. Origen on creation ex nihilo. C. 519.

²¹⁹ Syrtsova E. N. Ex nihilo or ex semetipso: the problem of creation in Origen, Hermogenes and Tertullian from the point of view of the logic of Areopagitus // *ESSE: Philosophical and Theological Studies*. 2016. T. 1. № 1. C. 272.

²²⁰ Origen. On the Beginnings. Novosibirsk: ICHL "Lazarev V. V. and O.", 1993. C. 152.

philosopher, is eternally born just as the Son is eternally born of the Father. In this context, the problem of the eternity of matter in Origen's system is sharpened: "In a certain sense, matter can be considered 'eternal': it, as well as the soul, was created by God for 'permanent existence', i.e., it cannot be finally destroyed by nature. <...>Its eternity is neither autonomous nor absolute; it is the eternity of one of the elements in God's eternal creation"²²¹ .

In general, Origen sought to harmonize the biblical view of God as the Creator not only of the sensual but also of the intelligible world, on the one hand, and the Platonic view of the eternity of the ideal world, on the other. In Origen's scheme, God first creates perfect intelligent and free beings among whom there was no hierarchy. These original minds contemplated God through his Son. The world of these perfect entities does not now actually exist because there has been a descent of the original entities, who have exercised their freedom in different ways in relation to God. Thus a hierarchical cosmos emerges. By creating these secondary cosmic constructs, God creates the conditions for the restoration of the fallen entities.

God as Being, perfectly One, simple, good, incomprehensible and incorporeal, being at the same time above mind and essence, according to Origen, is beyond time and space, everywhere present, filling and encompassing the whole world. In the spirit of Plato, Origen identifies the eternally created cosmos with the Son (i.e., he makes the Son an inferior beginning): "Thanks to the Son, the world is centered in God, but the Father continues to be transcendent in relation to the world because he is above the Son."²²² .

The concept of the eternal creation of the world was rejected by the Church orthodoxy. Subsequently, John Philoponus developed a polemic with the Neoplatonic and, in general, traditional for pagan antiquity ideas about the eternity of the world, opposing it with the concept of creation of nothing. An important point in this justification was Philoponus' doctrine of God's ideal plans for the world: unlike Platonic ideas, which are naturally "resolved" into things, Philoponus'

²²¹ Tkachev E. V. Origen // Orthodox Encyclopedia. T. 53. Moscow: Central Research Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2019. C. 230.

²²² Ibid. C. 231.

creation of the world according to the ideal divine pattern depends on the Creator's free decision (orthodoxy began to assert that an idea is kept from natural resolution into its material embodiment by God's free will). Subsequently, a special work criticizing Neoplatonic cosmology would be written by Nicholas of Mephon, criticizing Proclus' "Beginnings of Theology" (this work had authority among Byzantine intellectuals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries).

The church dogma of creation out of nothing has historically served to affirm the idea of the substantive non-identity of the world and God. This principle, as we have already said, came into conflict with the notion, necessary for religious consciousness, of the possibility for man to come into unity or at least into an indissoluble relationship with God. In the Gnostic tradition and in Neoplatonism this second tendency became dominant, and this conditioned the popularity of these ideological currents - not only in antiquity, but also in subsequent epochs in the respective philosophical concepts. In the orthodox tradition, the first tendency prevailed, and this conditioned the peculiar "cruelty" of ecclesiastical Christianity, which to a greater extent indoctrinated people with the idea of their sinfulness, weakness, and God's abandonment than with the idea of the possibility of coming into union with God. Church writers began to speak about the existence of a rigid ontological boundary between the Creator and creation already in the pre-Nicene period. Titian, for example, criticizing Zeno of Cytia, speaks about it. Objecting to Stoic pantheism, which recognizes the unity of God and the world, he argues that this concept leads to the fact that "God turns out to be the creator of evil, manifested in worms and ditches and in those who indulge in indiscriminate debauchery"²²³.

Clement of Alexandria, in his polemic with the Gnostics, rejected the doctrine of the emanation of the world from the deity and, at the same time, the notion that man, together with creation, have a natural connection with the deity, being part of his nature. For the church thinker, the spirit of man is not identical in nature to the spiritual nature of God, i.e. the Gnostic concept of the oneness of God and man is

²²³ Variant translation: "God is the perpetrator of evil and resides in unclean places, in worms and those doing unclean things" (Tatian. Speech against the Hellenes. P. 138-139).

untenable for him: "However, contrary to the opinion of the heresiarchs, God by nature has nothing similar to us. It does not matter whether we are created out of nothing or out of matter, since the former does not exist at all, and the latter must be recognized as entirely distinct from God, unless one considers man to be a part of the Godhead, consubstantial to Him (ὁμοούσιους). To tell the truth, I do not see how such views can be expressed in cold blood, especially if one casts a glance at our life and the calamities with which it is full. In that case, it would appear that some parts of his being God may be sinning (and this is totally unacceptable). For these parts must indeed be parts of the whole (if they do not make up the whole, then they are not parts). Being essentially rich in mercy, God, by virtue of his goodness, cares for us, even though we are not by nature his parts or his children."²²⁴ .

The assertion of a radical ontological boundary between God and the world is also repeatedly found in the history of Byzantine thought. Thus, Athanasius the Great states: "Whatever is created is not at all similar in essence to its Creator"²²⁵ . Gregory of Nyssa states that "the distance separating uncreated nature from every created essence is great and impassable"²²⁶ . John Damascene says that "everything is far from God, not by place but by nature"²²⁷ .

In general, in its classical scheme, church dogmatics tends to affirm unconditionally the radical transcendence of God. However, in contradiction to this, God's immanence to the world, his actual omnipresence and providential care for everything down to the smallest segments of creation are often affirmed. This duality and contradiction of the orthodox concept has had various meaningful resolutions in history, but it can be stated that its adequate philosophical resolution has never been found, due to which a *strict concept of God's creation of the world out of nothing has never been created*, despite the assurances of church historians of theology.

Specific examples of the fruitful realization of the concept of creation in the history of Christian theology are connected with the imperceptible introduction of

²²⁴ Clement of Alexandria. Stromata. SPb.: "Oleg Abyshko Publishing House", 2003. C. 300.

²²⁵ Cited in: Florovsky G., Fr. Eastern Fathers of the IV century. Minsk: Izd. of the Belarusian Exarchate, 2006. C. 34.

²²⁶ Ibid. C. 170.

²²⁷ John Damascene. Exact statement of the Orthodox Faith // John Damascene. Source of Knowledge. M.: INDRIK, 2002. C. 182.

non-orthodox - Platonic and Gnostic - elements into it. The idea of the creation of the world out of nothing, which is fundamental to Christian orthodoxy, has historically been associated with a certain assimilation of the Platonic demiurgic tendency, just as well as with a specific interpretation of emanatism (both lines have their foundations in Platonism): "The dogma of the creation of the world, clearly stated already in the first verses of the Book of Genesis, could not be abandoned for obvious reasons, but the idea of emanation was also to the liking of the philosophers of the Middle Ages. It is not difficult to guess how and why the concept of emanation penetrated into Christian theology (and in such a way that it remained dominant in it for many centuries), because when the need arose to clothe the Good News in philosophical garments, Neoplatonism was the most suitable, as it seemed at the time, fabric for them. This opposition between creationism and emanation had to be reconciled within the framework of Christian philosophy, for if creationism is rejected, this philosophy ceases to be Christian in the full sense, and if it completely gets rid of emanation, there is little of philosophy left in it."²²⁸ .

The Christianization of the concept of emanation manifested itself in the development of the idea of God as a self-extending Good. In the development of this idea, church orthodoxy strove to dissociate itself from pantheistic emanationism in every possible way, although in essence it never managed to do so completely: "...the emanationist version of the self-distributing good, characteristic of Neoplatonism, was perceived by Christian thinkers only in a truncated form; it found its application almost exclusively to justify the existence of three consubstantial and co-equal hypostases in the one God"²²⁹ . In essence, there are only two religious and philosophical models of the origin of being: the emanation of the Absolute, understood as a willless, natural process from which the diversity of being arises; or Creation, when the Absolute by its will creates a world that is simply different in relation to the Absolute, and not its "other being". Christianity uses both of these

²²⁸ Shishkov A. M. Preface to Bishop Robert Grosseteste's treatise "On Light, or on the Beginning of Forms" // *Voprosy filosofii*. 1995. № 6. C. 122.

²²⁹ Fokin A.R. Principle of self-distribution of good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 102.

models: the first - to explain the mystery of the Trinity, the second - to explain the origin of the universe, the created world.

An important stage on the way to overcoming, or at least smoothing out the meaning of pantheistic emanationism was the establishment of *a conceptual distinction between the terms "to beget" and "to create"* in the context of trinitarian discussions. A significant role in this process is played by Athanasius the Great: "The Word of God created everything, Himself being not a creature, but begotten; because among creatures He created nothing equal or similar to Himself. To beget is proper to the Father, and to create is proper to the artist"²³⁰. Cyril of Alexandria says the same thing: "To create belongs to activity or energy, and to give birth belongs to nature. But nature and activity are not the same thing. Hence, it is not the same to give birth and to create."²³¹. This statement blocks the attempts of pantheistic interpretation of the cosmogonic process, asserts the rigid energy-demiurgic principle and establishes a clear ontological boundary between the inner essence of the God-Trinity and the created cosmos.

Prot. Fr. Davydenkov emphasizes that the terminological subtlety achieved by official theology in trinitarian discussions allows for a firmer blocking of pantheistic tendencies in comparison to other Abrahamic religions, which he characterizes by the term "strict monotheism": "For "strict monotheists" there is no distinction between the pre-eternal birth and exodus as acts of the Divine nature, and creation as an act of the will, and this inability to distinguish between the spheres naturally leads to their fusion. Hence there is always a danger for "strict monotheism" of thinking of the creation of the world in the image of a pre-eternal birth and emanation. Most importantly, in the Jewish and Muslim belief system, it is difficult to see why exactly this is not the way to think. The doctrine of creation out of nothing is of great spiritual and moral importance, because only the doctrine of creation out of nothing can be the theological and philosophical justification of the primacy of personal being over impersonal being. Only in this way is it possible to affirm the

²³⁰ Athanasius of Alexandria. Exposition of Faith // Works. Ch.1. Holy Trinity Sergius Lavra, 1902. C. 267.

²³¹ Cited from: Kastalsky-Borozdin A., Archim. Dogmatic Theology: A Course of Lectures. Sergiev Posad : Holy Trinity Lavra, 2014. C. 163.

value of personal being, the personality of man"²³² . The author of the popular dogmatic manual, summarizing centuries of theological experience, radically opposes Christianity to the pantheistic worldview, although his statements remain unsupported "proclamations": "If God is the absolute fullness of being, if He encompasses everything and encloses everything in Himself, how can something different from God arise alongside God? Should not God then somehow limit Himself in order to make room for the existence of something different from Himself alongside Himself? <...>This question is based on inadmissibly *naturalistic* conceptions of the Godhead and transfers to the Divine Being the conceptions developed as a result of the observation of the created world. Here there is an underestimation of the otherness of God and the world, since the *nature of the created and the non-created are different in the most radical way*"²³³ .

Church thinkers influenced by the dialog Timaeus began to develop the concept of the creation of the world *because of the goodness of the Creator*. For example, Athanasius of Alexandria agrees that the creative act was largely due to the *excess of goodness* in God, which is associated with the property of generosity: "God is good, rather the Source of goodness. And the good cannot be stingy in anything. That is why God, not being stingy with existence for anyone, created everything from non-existent things by His own Word"²³⁴ .

The influence of "Timaeus" is also found in the worldview of Gregory the Theologian: "But since it was not enough for goodness to exercise only in contemplation of itself, but it was necessary that the goodness should spill over, go on and on, so that the number of beneficiaries should be as large as possible (for this is characteristic of the highest goodness), God first devises angelic and heavenly Powers. And thought became a work that is filled with the Word and made perfect by the Spirit."²³⁵ . The Church thinker *distances himself from direct emanationism*, as well as from ideas about the *necessary and unconscious* character of the process

²³² Davydenkov O., Fr. Dogmatic Theology. MOSCOW: PSTU, 2005. C. 156.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Cited in: Fokin A. R. The principle of self-distribution of the good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 93.

²³⁵ Symphony on the Works of St. Gregory the Theologian. M.: DAR, 2008. C. 5.

of creation of the world: "We dare not call it [the origin of the hypostases] a pre-infusion (υπέρχυσιν) of goodness, as one of the philosophizing Greeks dared to call it, who, philosophizing about the first and second Causes, clearly expressed it: 'like a certain cup overflowing [over the brim]'" [We dare not speak thus for fear] lest we introduce an involuntary birth and a kind of natural and irrepressible emission, which is the least consistent with [true] conceptions of the Godhead."²³⁶ . But again it may be stated that the proclamation of one's disagreement with a known and philosophically elaborated conception has not the same capital justification as the theory criticized: emotional confidence in the accepted conception substitutes for the orthodox thinker a philosophical justification, which, as we understand, is impossible, owing to the insoluble inconsistency of the Church's conceptions.

Subsequently, the concept of the appearance of the world from an excess of goodness appeared in the history of Byzantine theology several times (in Maximus the Confessor, Nicholas of Mephon, Gregory of Akindin, Nicephorus Gregory, Callistus Angelicus). But this concept becomes more or less consistent only through the use of Neoplatonic and Gnostic ideas. Among the various formulations of the concept of self-extending divine goodness, it is necessary to single out the statement of John Damascene: "Since the good and super-good God was not satisfied with the contemplation of Himself, but according to the excess of goodness was pleased that something should happen that benefited from His goodness and was partaker of His goodness, He brings from non-existence into existence and creates everything, both visible and invisible, as well as man, consisting of visible and invisible. But He creates by thinking, and this thought becomes a work, which is fulfilled by the Word and perfected by the Spirit."²³⁷ . In Damascene's conception, the *demiurgic emphasis* clearly emerges, i.e. God is thought of as a *consciously free, personal* steward of goods.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who, as is well known, was in the strongest dependence on Neoplatonic discourse, had a special influence on the development

²³⁶ Cited in: Fokin A. R. The principle of self-distribution of the good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 95.

²³⁷ John Damascene. An accurate exposition of the Orthodox faith. C. 187.

of the concept of creation in the history of Byzantine theology: "In Pseudo-Dionysius we meet for the first time in the history of Christian thought with a *well-developed* concept of the self-propagation of the Good, combining in itself the characteristic features of both *demiurgic* and *emanatic* versions, which subsequent generations of Byzantine and Western theologians borrowed from him" (italics mine. - D.N.)²³⁸ .

In the treatise "On the Heavenly Hierarchy" we find the above-described idea of the emergence of the world from the excess of divine goodness: "The Substantial Godhead, in goodness having realized all the essences of beings, brought them into being. For it is peculiar to the Cause of all and all surpassing Goodness to call beings to communion with itself in such a way as each of the beings is determined, according to its particularity" (translated by A.R. Fokin)²³⁹ .

In the Areopagitica we see an overcoming of the "standard" understanding of emanation as the direct emanation of the world from the essence of the Absolute. God for Pseudo-Dionysius is above being and non-being, but at the same time he encompasses everything, being the beginning, middle, and end of everything; at the same time, it seems that he does not attribute to the Absolute the qualities of personality (although it is not explicitly stated anywhere): "And in Him all [beings] are found, being stored and contained in Him as *in the all-embracing Depth*, and to Him all [beings] *return as to their own Limit* allotted to each one, and to Him they aspire" (italics mine. - D.N.)²⁴⁰ .

The Absolute *by a free* act creates the world out of nothingness, according to his eternal *designs* (which at the same time are his desires), communicating to his creatures the *communion of* goodness and likening them in a certain respect to the highest goodness. But the very notion of "out of nothingness," can be understood as "out of itself," since the Absolute is above being and for all that exists in our world

²³⁸ Fokin A. R. The principle of self-propagation of the good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 97.

²³⁹ Ibid. C. 95. Translation by G.M. Prokhorov: "First of all, it is true to say that the supra-essential Godhead, having by goodness constituted all the essences of things, brought them into being. It is a characteristic feature of the Cause of all things and of all-exceeding Goodness to call beings into being" (Dionysius the Areopagite. On the heavenly hierarchy // Dionysius the Areopagite. Works. Interpretations of Maximus the Confessor. SPb.: Aleteia, 2002. C. 79).

²⁴⁰ Fokin A. R. The principle of self-propagation of the good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 97.

acts as Nothing. On the other hand, the author of the Areopagite corpus *comes closer to the Neoplatonic version of the emanative generation of the world*. Pseudo-Dionysius considers "Good" to be the first name of God, which reveals the act of his creative performance from beyond the limits of his hidden superessence. The nature of the super-good necessitates the emergence of the world: "...for the Good to exist - as for the Good in essence - means to extend goodness into all things"²⁴¹. In the treatise *On the Divine Names*, we find Plato's designation of the Good as the sun that naturally gives rise to all that exists. The divine original, preserving its super-unity in the process of self-propagation of the good beyond its essence "multiplies and multiplies itself"²⁴². It is noteworthy that in formulating his concept of the origin of the world, Pseudo-Dionysius borrows specific formulations from Proclus. In particular, the borrowing of the Proclusian term "πρόοδος" ("emanation", "advancement"), which in Neoplatonism meant, as we have already indicated, the process of emanation of the higher beginning into the lower, is evident. It is also worth noting that the transformation of emanationism through the formal introduction of a personal component from the Old Testament paradigm sharpened the problem of theodicy, which in Pseudo-Dionysius is solved in general according to the Neoplatonic mold of understanding the essence of evil as a lack of good.

As has already been said, there is a view according to which the Areopagite proclaims the idea of the creation of the world not out of nothing, but out of and in Himself: "That carrier out of which God creates all things is His as the Supersubstantial carrier in relation to the beings of created existence, i.e., His own "internal" carrier, which is not logically equal to the formula of the Latin notion of creation "out of nothing." In the texts of the Areopagite neither τὸ μὴ ὄν nor οὐδὲν correspond to the idea of ex nihilo, but are used in the sense of His Super-existence and pre-existence with the beings of the world He created, i.e., in the ontological sense of creation from Himself, ex semetipso. Therefore, matter cannot be the source

²⁴¹ Dionysius the Areopagite. *On Divine Names* // Dionysius the Areopagite. Works. Interpretations of Maximus the Confessor. SPb.: Aletheia, 2002. C. 293). It is noteworthy that divine light is called "excessive" in the Areopagite.

²⁴² Syrtsova E. N. Ex nihilo or ex semetipso: the problem of creation in Origen, Hermogenes and Tertullian from the point of view of the logic of Areopagite. C. 280.

of evil, since it is created out of Himself, as being from the Supersubstantial. His treatise is an elaborate philosophical justification of the idea rejected <...> by the representatives of various Christian conceptions of creation in the II-III centuries of God's creation of the creaturely world out of Himself as the Supersubstantial (ὀυπερούσιος, ὁὐτωςπρῶν). Neither the hypothesis of creation out of matter nor the hypothesis of creation of the world out of nothing is needed by the author of the treatise to explain the logic of the creation of the world of being out of the Supersubstantial God, interpreting the world as created by God out of and in Himself."²⁴³ . In any case, the emanative emphasis in the cosmology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite is very strong, although, as history shows, an orthodox interpretation of the Areopagite doctrine of the creation of the world is also possible.

Subsequently, Byzantine thought returned to the conceptualization of emanationism more than once. Maximus the Confessor sought to combine the conceptual emphases of Gregory the Theologian and Pseudo-Dionysius, smoothing out the emanationist bias of the latter. Nicholas of Mephone, criticizing Proclus's "Primordia Theologica," observes that beings, having arisen from the highest Good and *partaking of* his goodness, are not ontologically good in themselves or good from themselves: "God alone, then, is self-sufficient, since he alone needs nothing and is Good in himself. And all [beings] are filled with [goodness], insofar as each [one] accommodates it, being partakers of the goodness arising from the Super Good."²⁴⁴ . Nicholas also criticizes the Neoplatonic idea of a chain of hierarchical causality, opposing it to the concept of a single cause of being, which distinguishes the position of the Byzantine thinker from the Areopagite: "In Nicholas of Mephonos we find a paradigm fundamentally different not only from Proclus' paradigm, but also from the Dionysian paradigm, which assumes the real existence of causes (beginnings) of created things"²⁴⁵ .

²⁴³ Ibid. C. 282.

²⁴⁴ Fokin A. R. The principle of self-propagation of the good: from Plato to Bonaventure. C. 98.

²⁴⁵ Biryukov D. S. Nicholas of Mephon. Polemics with the Latins and with Sotirichus, the doctrine of Pentecost and the refutation of Proclus in the context of the doctrine of the hierarchy of causes and the problem of universals // Anthology of Eastern Christian Theological Thought. Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. T. 2. Moscow, St. Petersburg: Izdvo "Nikea", RCHGA, 2009. C. 364.

In the Byzantine orthodox tradition, the differences and similarities between the highest Good and the creaturely varieties of well-being originating from nothing are explained through the concept of *communion*. According to the research of D. V. Biryukov, the Eastern Christian tradition inherited from antiquity several basic paradigms of communion to describe the relationship between God and man. The paradigms of communion came into conflict with each other when the parallel discourses of communion with the divine essence and its perfect non-participation collided with each other: "This conflict is connected with the fact that Eastern Christian authors used different paradigms of communion: in the case of the discourse of communion with the divine essence, the Platonic paradigm of communion is assumed; in the case of the discourse of the perfect non-participation of the divine essence, the Neoplatonic paradigm is assumed"²⁴⁶. According to the researcher, the paradigm of the perfect non-participation of the divine essence became established in Byzantine thought under the influence of the Areopagitica and the development of the Neoplatonic understanding of communion by Maximus the Confessor (before that the Neoplatonic paradigm was used by Arius, but his interpretation did not become widespread). After Maximus the Confessor, for a long time the discourse of the perfect non-participation of the divine essence was weakly manifested until it was dogmatized by orthodoxy in the context of the Palamite controversy. In the pagan Platonic context, the paradigm of non-participation meant that "the transcendental beginnings themselves remain unaffected by virtue of this communion"²⁴⁷. On Christian grounds, non-participation came to be interpreted as the perfect inaccessibility of the divine essence to all, including those who are united with God and adorned. The conflict between the discourses of communion and non-communion can be found in the legacy of John Damascene and more vividly in the content of the Palamite controversy.

It can be said that in the context of the Palamite disputes the orthodox Eastern Christian cosmogony received its full conceptualization, together with all its

²⁴⁶ Biryukov D. S. Relation of Communion: Concepts of the Common and the Special in the Eastern Christian Philosophical Tradition (Antique and Byzantine Periods): autoref. diss. D. philos. M., 2016. C. 21.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. C. 29.

insoluble contradictions. The notion of the creation of the world out of nothing, the criticism of ancient pagan pantheism (and attempts at its reconstruction in the late Byzantine period), the affirmation of a substantive boundary between God and the world, the distinction between "birth" within God and "creation" outside of him, the omnipresence of the Creator and Creation, the dependence of the created on the non-created, the relation of the rational human soul to the incomprehensible God, and the hierarchical diversity of the world began to be conceptualized in the context of the Palamite essence-energy discourse. This discourse sought to substantiate the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God: "Do you see that the revered theologians have handed down to us both, that the essence of God is not communicable and in some way is communicable, and we are in communion with the divine nature and in no way communicated? We should guard both and consider both as an index of piety, and those who use one [statement] against the other and identify one with the other should be rejected as impious and insane"²⁴⁸. The distinction between the essence of God and his will, attributes, actions, and performances as aspects of his inner and outer life has been found in the Eastern Christian tradition before. In the context of the Eunomian controversy, the Cappadocians substantiated the fundamental incomprehensibility of the divine essence. According to E. Zaitsev, "Palamas transforms the essence-energy distinction used by the Cappadocian Fathers in a purely epistemological sense into an ontological distinction at the level of God himself, using philosophical terminology that carries different semantic loads"²⁴⁹.

It is worth bearing in mind that the separation between the divine essence and energies-performances made by the tradition preceding Palamism can *in principle* be *interpreted in an anti-Palamite way*, as shown by the anti-Palamite essentialists as well as by the scholastic Western Christian tradition. The famous phrase from the New Testament about the possibility of "communion of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:

²⁴⁸ Palamas G. Intercourse of the Orthodox Theophanes with Theotimus, who returned from the Barlaamites, or On Divinity and what in it is sacramental and what is non-sacramental // St. Gregory Palamas. Treatises. Krasnodar: Text, 2007. C. 205.

²⁴⁹ Zaitsev E. V. Lossky's doctrine of theosis. MOSCOW: BBI, 2007. C. 223.

4), so important for the dogmatic Orthodox understanding of man's union with God, can be interpreted differently, as the history of Christian thought has shown, not only in the Palamite sense.

The dubiousness of the biblical justification of Palamism lies in the materialism of the Old Testament, which knows of no other light than created light. Divine light emanating from the divine essence as energy is, for Palamas, immaterial and uncreated. The energies of God are understood as God himself, only in the external, world-facing modus of his existence. Energy acts as a mediating link between the unattached divine essence and the created world. Thus, in God there always remains an unattached and incomprehensible residue. To comprehend and commune with the divine essence for the Palamites means to become a new hypostasis of the holy Trinity and to know God from these inner divine positions. Obviously, this conclusion directly contradicted dogmatics and therefore could not be stated explicitly. It is important to emphasize that the *incomprehensible essence* for Palamas *is not identical with the Light*; they are different, despite the divinity of the latter. And at the same time, Light is *not some special force "near" God*, not being him. This antinomy turns out to be insoluble: "If God in His energies is equal to God in His essence, then communion with energies is no different from communion with the essence, the nature of God, because in this case it is impossible to separate nature from energies - where is the line separating one from the other? - and such a distinction acquires a purely rhetorical meaning"²⁵⁰. Critics of Palamism rightly point out that "by enclosing the Divine Persons in an unapproachable divine essence to which it is impossible to become a partaker, Gregory has indeed excluded the Trinity from our salvation"²⁵¹.

Another problem of Palamism is *how the non-temporal light can be contemplated by the creature*, which, given the rigid ontological boundary between creature and Creator, by its creaturely nature is capable of seeing only the non-

²⁵⁰ Anikin D. F. Divine Light (non-traditional judgments on a traditional topic) // Bulletin of the Ekaterinburg Theological Seminary. 2011. №2. C. 48.

²⁵¹ Konev A. Comparison of the doctrine of *обожение* in the theology of Thomas Aquinas and Gregory Palamas. / Work for the degree of Bachelor of Theology. St. Petersburg: Catholic Higher Theological Seminary "Mary Queen of Apostles"; Theological Institute of St. John Chrysostom. 2010-2011. C. 33.

temporal light. Gregory Palamas explains the fact that the Apostles at the Transfiguration saw the non-corporeal light from Christ with their bodily eyes by the fact that this vision was communicated to them by grace. It turns out that God Himself, by a special act of His grace, gives to spiritually purified man the ability to see that which surpasses his nature. This is what the Palamite Mark of Ephesus says: "If vision alone is capable of perceiving figures, colors, and light itself, which is, properly speaking, incorporeal, then what wonder is it that, by means of divine power, the divine incorporeal light can one day also be perceived?"²⁵² . At the same time, this transformation, "remaking" or elevation of the natural faculties of created man by grace does not eliminate the ontological boundary between God and creation, i.e., the the problem of the possibility of the vision of the non-eternal by a creature foreign to God at the theoretical level still remains and, obviously, is solved only at the level of mystical praxis: "The question: Why should human eyes be treated in some mystical way so that they can see what in their ordinary state they cannot see, when the same Divine power, without in any way invading human nature, can itself clothe itself in created light to show weak and sinful men the greatness of the Creator, His holiness, perfection and love? Would this be a diminution of God's power?"²⁵³ .

Byzantine Palamism, giving the final outline of Eastern Christian cosmology, holds the notion of the substantive non-identity of the Creator and the creation, which came "out of nothing", the ontological weakness of the created cosmos in comparison with God and, at the same time, the providential omnipresence of God and the possibility of energy-mediated contact with him *in accordance with the spiritual-ascetic readiness of a particular person and by virtue of God's free will to visit man* (in some cases, even in spite of his readiness, as seen in biblical and hagiographical examples). In this sense, at the level of religious practice, it satisfies the believer's need for communion with God, but this does not eliminate the problem

²⁵² Mark of Ephesus. On Essence and Energy // Losev A. A. F. Name. SPb.: Aletheia, 1997. C. 478.

²⁵³ Anikin D. F. op. cit. p. 43.

of the radical impossibility of a strict philosophical expression of the dichotomy of God's transcendence and immanence, which was never resolved by Hesychasm.

Parallel to the final expression of orthodox cosmology and cosmogony, alternative lines of understanding emerged in the history of Eastern Christianity. It should be noted the fact that the *revival of Neoplatonism* in Byzantium at the beginning of the second millennium A.D. forced the Church to condemn the ideas about the beginninglessness of ideas and independently existing matter, as well as those who deny creation "out of nothing" at the Council of Constantinople of the eleventh century in connection with the case of John Italus.

A religious system opposed to orthodoxy was proposed in the fifteenth century by Plifon (who, by the way, was acquainted with Nicholas of Cusa). He explicitly denied the idea of God's creation of the world out of nothing, defending the Platonic affirmation of the eternity of the world. Pliphon recognizes a single, uncreated and self-existent supreme God, whom he calls Zeus (the thinker uses the names of the ancient Greek gods largely to designate the relevant concepts). Zeus contained within himself all existing things and then brought them outward, creating various beings, including gods, and maximizing the perfection of creation. In Pliphon's system there was also the idea of a second demiurgic type god, Poseidon, who is uncreated in comparison to other beings, sharing with the Father the administration of the cosmos. Ultimately, we see the traditional Platonist distinction of three instances: The One-First, the mediating Mind/Demiurge, and the matter-receiver: "...the essence of all things is divided into three orders: first, nature is one and the same and essentially unchanging; then, nature which is constant but subject to change in time; finally, transient nature."²⁵⁴ . It is noteworthy that matter is perceived by Plifon as one of the forms of the generating activity of the One, i.e. non-dualistically. The sensual world appears here as an image of the supersensible.

Pliphon distances himself from the orthodox essence-energy discourse: "In describing the nature of Zeus, Pliphon takes a distinctly non-Palamite position on the question of the relation between essence and energy of the original. The creative

²⁵⁴ Gorfunkel G. F. *Philosophy of the Renaissance Epoch*. Moscow: Higher School, 1980. C. 74.

activity is portrayed by Pliphon in a general Neoplatonic spirit, but it is closer to the doctrine of "explication," the deployment created by N. Kuzansky"²⁵⁵ . At the same time, Pliphon's cosmogony has specific moments in comparison with Kuzansky's concept: "Pliphon does not use the traditional Neoplatonic notion of "emanation", and there is no "unfolding" in his works, which is characteristic of the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa. The point here is not only in terminological differences. Understanding the emergence of the world as an eternal and constant process, he sees in the transition from God to the world not the "unfolding" in nature of the "rolled-up" divine essence, which is characteristic of Nicholas of Cusa's dialectic of the coincidence of opposites, but a much more straightforward and direct "unfolding" in the world of things of those ideas that, according to his Platonic ideas, are contained in God"²⁵⁶ .

From time to time in the history of Christianity in the East, another *characteristically Gnostic alternative to classical cosmogony* emerged. For example, the Paulicians revived the Gnostic notion that there were two gods - the supreme perfect God, who did not manifest himself in the sensual world, and the Demiurge as the creator of the visible world, who, from their point of view, was worshipped by the official church. The doctrine of the Paulicians resembles that of the Manichaeans, which was based on the opposition of the forces of Light and Darkness. The Paulicians believed that there was a divine germ in every human being. The Demiurge did everything possible to prevent people from realizing their higher nature by forbidding them to eat from the tree of knowledge. However, Adam disobeyed the command and was given the opportunity to break free to true divinity. According to the Paulicians, the immanent connection of every soul with the supreme god cannot be destroyed by the Demiurge.

The cosmogony of the Bogomils also has a Gnostic character. According to their ideas, in the beginning there was only a good supreme God who created the invisible universe with the basic elements, sharing control of the primordial cosmos

²⁵⁵ Svetlov R. V. Plifon Georgios Gemistos. URL: http://summa.rhga.ru/edin/pers/detail.php?rraz=&ELEMENT_ID=5213

²⁵⁶ G. F. Gorfunkel, op. cit. p. 72-73.

with his son Satanael. Satanail became jealous of the Father, resulting in their conflict, and the son was overthrown by the Father. As a result the lower god creates the visible universe together with bodies of people and addresses to the higher god that he breathed soul in them as Satanail himself was not able to do it. Thus, according to the doctrine of the Bogomils, the human body is from the lower God, and the soul is from the higher God.

Above we have pointed out the paradigmatic aspects of orthodox Byzantine cosmogony and cosmology, which distinguished it from ancient pagan philosophical thought, as well as from the Gnostic trends in European culture. It is also worth mentioning that the transition from the pantheistic scheme of understanding God and the cosmos to the biblical creationist scheme was connected not only with the refutation of the most fundamental provisions of pagan cosmology, but also with the criticism of its private elements. The criticism of the natural identity of God and the world, as well as the eternity of the latter, in the history of church orthodoxy was combined with the refutation of the concepts of the World Soul and Fatum.

For example, Gregory Palamas criticizes the Hellenes for the concept of the World Soul, which they "declare to be the Creator, Provider and Provider of the entire sensual world and our souls"²⁵⁷, as well as opposes the ideas about the autonomously existing along with God Fatum, widespread in antiquity: "And we are also taught that His humanity and goodness to us, and His Providence, and in general all such things, are neither essences nor hypostases, but energies contemplated in the neighborhood of God, inseparable from His nature - in other words, non-temporal"²⁵⁸. It is also worth mentioning the anthropological deepening of the ontological difference between God and creation, which is expressed in the criticism of the concept of the pre-existence of souls²⁵⁹, the presence in man of a "particle of

²⁵⁷ Palamas G. One hundred and fifty chapters devoted to questions of natural science, theological, moral and related to spiritual work, as well as intended for purification from the Barlaamite foulness. Krasnodar: Text, 2006. C. 19.

²⁵⁸ Palamas G. Antirretics against Akindinus. C. 173-174.

²⁵⁹ Although Clement (with some degree of probability) and Origen adhered to this concept, since the pre-Nicene period the concept of pre-existence of souls has been condemned by many church authors: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus of Rome, Methodius of Olympia, Peter of Alexandria. Nevertheless, it was somewhat widespread: "Sometimes thoughts reminiscent of emanatic ideas about the origin of the soul can be found in Orthodox authors when they discuss the creation of the soul in a non-dogmatic context. For example, St. Gregory the Theologian,

the Godhead" and the development of the concept of man's natural sinfulness ("original sin"). The latter belief reinforced the already normative ontological weakness of man, created from nothing. To the Gnostic doctrine of the presence of the divine element in man, orthodox thought opposed the concept of man's creation in the image and likeness, which preserved the ontological gap between the Creator and his higher creation, formally copying some of his properties, but in a truncated version and on an ontological ground foreign to God.

Thus, in this section we have first of all pointed out that in the Old Testament itself, contrary to the assertions of Church theology, there is no unambiguous basis for the concept of God's creation of the world out of nothing. The "abyss" from which God creates the world in the Book of Genesis corresponds more to the indeterminate matter of ancient philosophy than to strict nothingness. This concept originally (already in the middle of the first century) originated in the Gnostic tradition and was only later borrowed in a transformed form by orthodox thinkers, and it was used mainly to refute alternative models of creation associated with Platonism.

The relationship between God and the world within the framework of this orthodox conception is conceived on the basis of fundamental dogmatic provisions: (1) the creation of the world out of nothing (not out of divine substance and not using matter consubstantial to God); (2) the assertion of an insurmountable substantive gulf between the Creator and creation; (3) the notion that no necessity compelled God to create the world outside of His essence; (4) the idea of the absolute ontological weakness of creation in comparison with the Creator. At the same time, no less dogmatic and necessary is (5) the conviction of orthodox thought that God fills the whole world with himself, permeating it with his providential presence and sustaining its existence by his divine energies. This latter belief is obviously contradictory to the preceding ones and requires a capital harmonization with them, but it has proved impossible to do so within a strictly orthodox, dogmatic framework.

probably wishing to emphasize the highest dignity of the human soul, calls it 'a jet of invisible deity' and 'a particle of the Divine'" (Davydenkov O., Prot. op. cit. Moscow: PSTGU, 2017. P. 272).

All philosophically consistent conceptions have implicitly utilized elements of (certainly heretical) alternative models of creation.

The absolute presence of God in the entire universe, recognized by some orthodox thinkers following Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, did not mean for them an automatic sanctification of the whole creation: only those who are internally ready for it on the paths of church and ascetic life, subject to the free will of God to become available to a particular person at a particular moment in time and space, commune with God. The omnipresence of God does not automatically eliminate man's actual detachment from God. On the one hand, he, like the world, exists by virtue of his communion with divine energies (at some basic level), which support the existence of a non-self-existent creature (its present independence is ensured by constant divine support). On the other hand, this communion with God can be strengthened in the ways of spiritual and ecclesiastical life. In addition, the direct relationship between God and man is supplemented in orthodoxy by a commitment to mediating forms (e.g., angels doing God's will and ecclesiastical institutions transmitting grace). At the same time, ecclesiastical orthodoxy eliminated the traditional mediating cosmological links of pagan antiquity, such as fateum and the World Soul. We can also say that church thought replaced the stable cosmological structures: the role of the Demiurge/Um/Logos was replaced by the Son of God, the role of the World Soul by the Holy Spirit, the emanation relation between God and the world was replaced by a demiurgic-energetic relation, etc.

The development of the notions of transcendence and immanence in the context of the doctrine of the substantive non-identity of God and the world in Byzantine orthodoxy reached its crystallization in Palamism, which developed the essence-energy discourse. As we have shown, the Palamite attempt to justify the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God most acutely reproduces all the insoluble contradictions that were characteristic of all Eastern Christian thought since the pre-Nicene period.

1.3 The development of cosmogonic concepts in the history of Western European philosophy

If in the previous section we considered mainly Eastern (Byzantine) theological concepts of the creation of the world based on Christian dogma, in this paragraph we will trace the history of ideas about the relationship between the Absolute and creation in Western philosophical thought (up to the Renaissance), which is more loosely related to the dogmas. We will pay special attention to the theological and cosmological views of Nicholas of Cusa, as well as some pantheistic thinkers who preceded him, since this is of fundamental importance for revealing the peculiarities of the concept of creation in the philosophical work of L. Karsavin.

As in Greek patristics, Latin thought, beginning in the pre-Nicene period, began, on the one hand, to develop the orthodox concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, establishing an ontological boundary between the divine and the created, and, on the other hand, to make creative use of elements of the Neoplatonic and Gnostic model of creation.

Let us consider a few characteristic personalities. Lactantius conceives the reason for the creation of the world in the goodness of God, who wants to share it with otherness. The thinker adheres to the concept of the creation of the world from nothing, not from pre-existent matter: otherwise God would have the same limitation as the artisan - the need for the material to be used, and we could not recognize him as omnipotent. Matter cannot be coeternal with God, for otherwise we introduce two opposite metaphysical beginnings, which would naturally antagonize and seek to destroy each other. Also the recognition of matter as eternal forces us, according to Lactantius, to recognize it as unchangeable, and thus incapable of generating things.

In the history of the concept of creation from nothing, an important place is occupied by Tertullian, who criticizes the notion that matter is consubstantial with God, in particular in his treatise "Against Hermogenes, or against the eternity of matter" (the beginning of the 3rd century). Also the idea of creation out of nothing is found in his other writings: "And the Rule of Faith," so that we may now declare what we are defending, "is this: by it it is certified that God is one and there is no other God but the Creator of the world, who produced everything out of nothing

through His Word, which came first of all."²⁶⁰ ; "The God whom we honor is one. He, for the adornment of His majesty, sculpted out of nothing this vastness of the world in its entirety, together with all the decoration of elements, bodies, and spirits, by means of the word by which He commanded, the reason by which He ordered, the power by which He was able [to accomplish this]; hence also the Greeks called the universe by the word κόσμος"²⁶¹ . At the same time, the apologist notes that Scripture does not clearly and precisely say that everything was created out of nothing. "Therefore I maintain that although Scripture did not explicitly declare that everything was created out of nothing or, on the contrary, out of matter, yet there was no such necessity to explicitly state that everything was created out of nothing as would have arisen if the universe had been created out of matter."²⁶² . For Tertullian, the recognition of the co-creativity of matter with God threatens the idea of the perfect freedom and omnipotence of the Creator; the idea of the creation of the world out of nothing for him is associated with the idea of the resolution of everything into nothing: "If you saw how it was created out of nothing (de nihilo), you would know how it goes into nothing (in nihilum)"²⁶³ . The Christian apologist points out the possible variants of God's generation of the world: 1) out of Himself; 2) out of nothing; 3) out of anything. It is noteworthy that, while criticizing Hermogenes' arguments against the concept of creation from nothing, Tertullian does not turn his analysis to the concept of the creation of the world from God Himself and apparently accepts it.

With the end of the pre-Nicaean period, philosophical thought continued to develop concepts similar to the official Eastern dogma on the relationship between the Creator and creation. For example, Ambrosius of Mediola defends the concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, believing that the cosmos did not arise

²⁶⁰ Tertullian. On the prescription [against] heretics // Tertullian. Selected Works. M.: Progress, 1994. C. 112.

²⁶¹ Tertullian. Apologetic. St. Petersburg: Oleg Abyshko Publishing House, 2005. C. 141.

²⁶² Tertullian. Against Hermogenes // Tertullian. Selected Works. M.: Progress, 1994. C. 145.

²⁶³ Tertullian. On the Flesh of Christ // Tertullian. Selected Works. M.: Progress, 1994. C. 164.

from divine essence, not from pre-existing matter, but exclusively by a volitional divine act²⁶⁴.

Augustine Aurelius also adheres to the concept of the free creation of the world by a good God out of nothing. God is conceived by Augustine as an absolutely simple Being in whom there is no distinction between substance and accident. It is pure form without matter. Unlike God, the world is changeable and has no independent existence. At the same time, while affirming the substantive difference between Creator and creation, Augustine softens this opposition: "That nature which has the highest being and by which all existing things are created, is opposed only to that nature which has no being. The existent is opposed to the nonexistent. Therefore also God, that is, the highest essence and Creator of all and every kind of essences, is not opposed to any essence"²⁶⁵.

In Augustinian theology, as in the teachings of Eastern Church thinkers, there is a concept of "distribution" of creative "functions" among the persons of the Trinity, in which the role of the divine Word is emphasized. The Creator creates the world at the beginning on an ideal level (influence of Platonism). Then divine ideas are embedded in formless matter, which, being "almost nothing", is brought by God into being from perfect nothingness (the stage of creation of the world in possibility), after which comes the stage of real creation, when the potencies embedded in the cosmos begin their temporary unfolding. According to K.A. Shpeka, the concept of the creation of the world is formulated by Augustine very confusingly and confusingly, due to which it is very difficult to restore the logic of his thought²⁶⁶, as a result, no strict philosophical concept of the creation of the world from nothing in the works of Augustine is not seen. In many ways, he uses the Neoplatonic concept

²⁶⁴ Fokin A. R. Ambrosius of Mediolanum. Doctrine of Creation // Orthodox Encyclopedia. T. 2. Moscow: Central Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2001. C. 124.

²⁶⁵ Augustine Aurelius. On the City of God. SPb.: Aletheia; Kiev: UCIMM-Press, 1998. C. 515.

²⁶⁶ "As it seems to us, Augustine's discourse is still very much a sermon. <...> Work with this work <"On the Book of Being"> is hampered by the extreme confusion and confused presentation. For this reason, one often gets the impression that the author has lost his core thoughts. This impression is reinforced by numerous and cumbersome rhetorical passages. <...> a feeling close to confusion is experienced by the reader of Augustine. After all, he himself, after demonstrating a seemingly exhaustive consideration of this or that place from the Bible, completely avoids unambiguous conclusions" (Shpeka K.A. Augustine the Blessed about the creation of the world in the treatise "On the Book of Being" // Problems of History, Philology, Culture. 2003. № 13. C. 280-285).

of emanation, but obscures its use by artificially embedding biblical quotations in his reasoning.

In Augustine Aurelius we find the idea of a self-extending good: from the Highest Good all goods of a lower order flow. God is the totality of perfections and the Good in itself, not by communion. The self-propagation of the Good for the Latin thinker is at the same time the self-propagation of love. Augustine emphasizes the volitional character of the outpouring of the good into the world from the Absolute.

Characteristic for understanding the origins of the Western Christian concept of creation is the theology and cosmology of Marius Victorinus, who was significantly influenced by the Neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus and Porphyry. The Latin thinker understands God as non-existent in the sense of his super-existence (non-living, non-thinking, non-essential). In this case the Absolute is called pre-existent (*προόν*), at the same time it is called One, but again in a super-existence sense, as exceeding the phenomenal sense of unity and oneness. According to Victorinus, the creation of the cosmos is not the result of any necessity; God creates the world of his own will. The formation of the world in this scheme is understood as the mysterious descent and ascent of the deity. First the intelligible world is created, and then the sensual world is created. It is noteworthy that the Latin thinker disputes the concept of creation of the world from nothing. All that is, potentially existed in God from eternity. From the point of view of being in possibility the world is eternal, whereas from the point of view of actual being the cosmos is not. The name "Creator," according to Victorinus, must be preferentially attributed to the divine Logos, who manifests his creative power in the world through the outpouring of divine life into it. This outpouring, gradually waning, endows everything, including matter (which is itself dead), with life. Victorinus distinguishes between the "not truly non-substantial"-bodies, which are composed of matter and qualities of the corporeal order-and the "non-substantial"-matter, which is taken by itself, representing in this perspective total indeterminacy and qualitylessness. Through the divine Logos the whole world as a single organism is partaken of by the Father, while remaining at the same time not identical with him in essence. It is noteworthy

that in the cosmology of Victorinus there is a place for the Platonic concepts of the world Mind and world Soul (the former acts as the highest part of the latter)²⁶⁷.

The Neoplatonic concept of the world's generation is also present in Boethius' conception of the world, who affirms the existence of the One Good "in itself". It arranges everything through its goodness, and all things aspire to it. Important for Boethius is the principle of the identity of being and goodness²⁶⁸. God is an essence beyond all essence, a form without matter, a perfect unity, a coincidence of subject and predicate. At the same time, God is omnipresent and incomposible. It is noteworthy that Boethius combines two tendencies in his cosmology. On the one hand, in agreement with orthodoxy, the theologian teaches that God created all things from nothingness. On the other hand, the thinker recognizes the world as beginningless and infinite in time, including the idea of the beginninglessness of matter.

In the context of the tasks of our study, we should emphasize the theological and philosophical views of John Scotus Eriugena (IX century) on the act of creation and the principles of the relationship between the divine and the created. Eriugena expressed an unusual for a medieval thinker boldness in assessing the possibilities for man to cognize the world and God: "Remarkable for a thinker of the IX century is the determination with which he speaks out for the principle of independent, unrestricted rational cognition in relation to the subjects of religion"²⁶⁹. Eriugena's translation work had a significant impact on the further development of Christian theology in the West, including the development of the concept of the creation of the world. The philosopher introduced Western Christianity to the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite²⁷⁰. At the same time, we should note the fact that in his ideas about creation Eriugena anticipated the appearance of the later German mystics

²⁶⁷ Fokin A. R. *Antique Philosophy and the Formation of Trinitarian Doctrine in Latin Patristics: dissertation*. ... D. philos. n. M., 2013. C. 231.

²⁶⁸ Moreschini K. *History of Patristic Philosophy*. M.: Publishing House "Greek-Latin Cabinet of Y. A. Shichalin", 2011. C. 569.

²⁶⁹ Brilliantov A. *The Influence of Eastern Theology in the Works of John Scotus Eriugena*. Moscow: Martis, 1998. C. 244.

²⁷⁰ It is worth recalling that the Areopagica were first translated into Latin by Gilduin, abbot of the monastery of St. Dionysius in Paris (c. 832).

Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme: "...not being a scholastic in the proper sense, Eriugena also belongs to the mystics, although his Eastern authorities - the author of the *Areopagitica* and Maximus the Confessor - were mystical writers, and Eriugena himself, through his translation of the *Areopagitica*, rendered an important service to later Western mystics. He is not concerned with the methodology of mysticism and he himself acts as a discursive philosopher"²⁷¹. Researchers have noted the principles that "link Eriugena to German classical philosophy, particularly Fichte's idealism"²⁷².

Eriugena's teaching was condemned several times by orthodoxy. The Church was not satisfied with the pantheistic orientation of the philosopher's views, in particular the doctrine that everything is God and that in the end everything will return to God. God for Eriugena is in a sense the first of what is not. "Such a view contradicted both Augustine and Scripture, in which God himself refers to himself as Being (Ex 3:14)."²⁷³. For Eriugena, nothingness is not simply absence or deprivation, but also a designation of supremacy. God represents Nothingness as a reality that transcends any definition: 'God is nothing of what is and what is not'²⁷⁴. God cannot be defined by anyone, not even by himself, i.e. God's unknowability is not only a consequence of the limitations of human reason, but also a property of the divine essence itself²⁷⁵. Thus, even God does not know himself, which is a consequence of his pre-essentiality, not an indication of his inferiority. God knows himself as incomprehensible. Beyond this, God does not know evil; he does not know other things than those he has created; he does not know what he himself is in some of the things he has created. Even ideas God creates in such a way that he does not realize his identity with them; they are eternal objects of his thinking. In expiring from eternity, real beings do not lose their being in causes. "The earth barren and

²⁷¹ Brilliantov A. Eriugena John Scotus // Encyclopedic Dictionary of Brockhaus and Efron. 1904. T. 41. C. 16.

²⁷² Tolstenko A. M., Kuznetsova S. V. The problem of ontotheology in the philosophy of Eriugena and Fichte // Problems of Modern Education. 2018. № 1. C. 19.

²⁷³ Petrov V. V. The totality of nature and methods of its study in the Periphuseon of Eriugena // Philosophy of Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages / General ed. II. P. Gaidenko, V. V. Petrov. M.: Progress-Tradition, 2000, p. 449.

²⁷⁴ Cited from: *ibid.* C. 450.

²⁷⁵ Berezovskaya O. B. The Doctrine of God and Return in the Philosophy of John Scotus Eriugena // Vestnik PSTGU. 2007. № 18. C. 92-110.

empty' denotes the original causes of corporeal things, the prototype of the sensuous world created in the beginning."²⁷⁶ . Things exist for a reason that is foreknowledgeable by God from eternity. Moreover, "for just as God Himself is above all creatures and cannot be comprehended by any mind, so also in the innermost core of created things, created by Him and existing in Him, the considered 'ousia' is incomprehensible"²⁷⁷ .

In this context, the creation of the world "out of nothing" would mean that the Absolute "produced entities out of its own pre-essentiality <...>, out of the negation of all that is and all that is not - the affirmation of all that is and all that is not"²⁷⁸ . Simply put, *God produces the world out of himself as the Divine Nothing*; Eriugena created an exemplary theory of creation of this type that many of his followers, most directly Meister Eckhart, would look up to. At the same time, God, who transcends all things, does not relate to his creation as something external, lying outside: "Creation, according to Eriugena, is as it were the appearance of some object of divine knowledge, and this object is in God, since there is nothing outside and apart from God, and is distinguished by God himself from his incomprehensible essence."²⁷⁹ . But since there is radical, non-divine imperfection in creation and the created world is complicit with evil, it turns out that *these qualities derive from the essence of God himself*. This paradoxical idea of Eriugena, obviously originating from the Gnostic tradition, is well expressed by the translator of the main treatise of Eriugena, V.V. Petrov. Petrov: "Yes, *in God there is that which is not God, but it is created from God*"²⁸⁰ .

As the causal principle, God encompasses, surrounds, and contains all that is and is not. Both existents and non-existents flow from God as a stream from its

²⁷⁶ Cited in: Petrov V. V. The Doctrine of Original Causes and Biblical Exegesis in John Scott's Periphuseon II, 545v-562v // Historico-Philosophical Yearbook-2004. M.: Nauka, 2005. C. 34. Cf. Augustine: "By the name of the earth, invisible and unsettled, and darkness above the abyss, is signified the imperfection of that corporeal essence from which the temporal creations subsequently sprang" (Augustine Aurelius. On the Book of Genesis literally // Blessed Augustine. Treatises. SPb.: Aleteia; Kiev: UCIMM-Press, 2000. C. 324).

²⁷⁷ Cited in: Petrov V. V. The totality of nature and methods of its research in the Periphuseon of Eriugena. C. 445.

²⁷⁸ Cited from: *ibid.* C. 450.

²⁷⁹ Berezovskaya O. B. The doctrine of God and return in the philosophy of John Scotus Eriugena. C. 98.

²⁸⁰ Petrov V. V. John Scot on "creation from nothing" and eternity of creation in the Word of God // Historical and Philosophical Yearbook-2006 / Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences. M., 2006. C. 70.

source of all goodness. Thus God is both that which exists and that which does not exist. In terms of causality, God is everything, and in terms of transcendence, God is Nothing. In sum, God is both what is and what is not; He is above what is; He is nothing of what exists and does not exist; He is the cause of the existent and the non-existent; He is all that is and all that is not. "Eriugena, and quite characteristically, softens the sharp opposition between God and creation by putting forward intermediate combinations of creature and creature, modifying them by means of both affirmation and negation. Whereas the traditional God/creature opposition, ultimately reduced to an opposition of active and receptive beginnings, would have shifted the center of gravity unreservedly to the side of God, the *Periphuseon*²⁸¹ employs a more dynamic system of four, rather than the usual two, interacting forms."²⁸² . Eriugena manages to combine a pantheistic conception with a theistic orientation: "Thus, not only does everything come from God and exist in God, but also everything is God (*ipse omnium essentia est*); creation is as it were a descent (*processio*) into the creature through the mediation of ideas or a manifestation in the creature of God himself. The one universal nature is precisely the divine nature. These completely pantheistic, apparently pantheistic, positions, however, receive in Eriugena a theistic character due to the fact that, speaking of the manifestation of the Godhead in everything, he represents the Godhead by analogy with the human spirit and sees in the world the manifestation of the thought and will of the absolute self-conscious Spirit"²⁸³ . Man in this context appears as a *modus* of Absolute Being, and at the same time as its image, the thought of the Godhead capable of thinking itself.

The totality of all things is God in its various aspects: "God is all things, He abides everywhere and in everything in fullness, He is both Creator and created, and the Spectator and the visible at the same time. God is both the place in which all things are created and the essence of the created, its substance and its accident. God

²⁸¹ The title of his work, written in Latin, is given by Eriugena in Greek: *Περὶ φύσεως* ("On the Division of Nature"). That is why researchers often use not the Russian translation, but a tracing from the Greek version of the title.

²⁸² Petrov V. V. The totality of nature and methods of its research in the *Periphuseon* of Eriugena. C. 458. These are the well-known concepts of Eriugena describing the "forms" of God in the process of creation of the world: nature uncreated and uncreated, nature uncreated and created, nature created and created, nature created and uncreated.

²⁸³ Vasilik V. V. John Scotus Eriugena // *Anthology of Medieval Thought*. SPb.: Izd-vo RCHGI, 2001. C. 164.

is all that truly is and is not, supersubstantial in essences, supersubstantial in substances, the Creator above all creation, he is created in all creation and is the foundation of things."²⁸⁴ . God is immanent and transcendent to the world at the same time, but unlike the orthodox scheme, Eriugena does not establish an impassable ontological boundary between Creator and creation. The universe acts as an intermediate moment of divine being, matter and the sensual world are fundamentally constituted by incorporeal qualities. We should also note that in the writings of Eriugena there is the distribution of demiurgic functions among the persons of the Trinity, which we have repeatedly mentioned, emphasizing the role of the divine Logos.

Eriugena's conception includes the familiar idea of a good God, who by nature cannot but share in the goodness of life: "The Supreme Good, who is good in His ability to exist by Himself and in Himself, should not restrain Himself from producing goods that are good not in themselves or in themselves, but because of Him and in Him. And for this reason It [the Supreme Good] brings the original things out of non-existence, so that He may not be reproached with envy on account of refraining from creating things which It could have created."²⁸⁵ .

Eriugena's concept of creation is philosophically overhauled, with significant borrowings from both the Neoplatonic and Gnostic models of creation²⁸⁶ . The most prominent European philosophers of subsequent centuries who reflected on the relationship between God and the world utilized his model or its individual principles to varying degrees, up to and including Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. In this sense, it is extremely telling that the strictly orthodox concept of the creation of the world out of nothing has never been developed with the same degree of philosophical thoroughness. All significant concepts that have escaped direct accusations of hereticism have nevertheless utilized one or another element of Neoplatonic and Gnostic ideas.

²⁸⁴ Armstrong A. H. et al. *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* / D. M. M. Armstrong, ed. Cambridge, 1967. P. 529.

²⁸⁵ Cited in: Berezovskaya O. B. *Ibid.* B. Op. cit. p. 99.

²⁸⁶ For more details see: Evlampiev I.I. *Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History*. C. 519-547.

The Eriugenian understanding of creation is most often opposed to cosmogony and cosmology, which were formalized in the theological and philosophical concept of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas in his works develops and substantiates traditional for official Catholic theology views on the creation of the world from nothing²⁸⁷ and the substantive non-identity of the Creator and creatures: "God exceeds everything by the perfection of His nature, but in everything He is the cause of being..."²⁸⁸. However, he too cannot avoid an implicit appeal to "forbidden" ideas. First of all, he asserts the omnipresence of God: "God is in all things; not, of course, as [some] part of their essence or accident, but as an agent [who] is present in that in which he acts. <...> God conditions this effect in things not only at the moment of bringing them into being, but during the whole time of their existence; just as light in the air is conditioned by the sun during the whole time that the air is illuminated. Hence, as long as a thing exists, so long, according to the modus of being, is God present in it. <...> Hence it is necessary that God should be in all things, and in the most intimate way. <...> He is in all things, giving them being, power, and ability to act; thus He is in every place as giving to that place its being and power. And, moreover, the things placed are in a place in so far as they fill it; God fills every place; not so, of course, as a body, for a body is said to fill a place, in the sense that this excludes the presence in that place of another body; whereas the presence of God in a place does not exclude the presence in that place of other things..."²⁸⁹. All things have the possibility of communion with God: 'Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be superior to its effects. But the gift of grace transcends any capacity of created nature, since it is but a communion with the divine nature, which transcends all nature. Consequently, no creature can be the cause of grace. Indeed, it is God alone who is able to divine in a necessary way, granting communion with the divine nature by communion by likeness (which is like fire

²⁸⁷ See: Thomas Aquinas. *Summa contra Gentiles*. Book II. Moscow: St. Thomas Institute of Philosophy, Theology and History, 2004. Chapter 16. On the fact that God produced things into being out of nothing S. 47-54; Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. T. 2. Kiev: Elga, Nika-Center, 2003. Section 1. Question. 45. Does creation mean making something out of nothing? C. 12-14.

²⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa theologica*. T. 1. Kiev: Elga, Nika-Center, 2002. C. 80.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* C. 80.

alone is able to kindle)."290 . All creatures have the likeness of God: 'All created things, so far as they exist, are likenesses of God as the first and universal beginning of all things'291 . Thomas even claims that there is a "trace of the Trinity" in them: "But the trace of the Trinity is found in all creatures, for in every creature there is something present which must be elevated to the divine Persons as its cause. Indeed, each creature is established in its own being, possesses a form by which it is determined to [its] own kind, and is related to something else. Thus, as long as it is created substance, it displays cause and beginning, and thus reveals the Person of the Father, who is the 'beginningless beginning'; as long as it possesses form and species, it displays the Word (just as the form of a man-made thing [displays] the master's design); as long as it is included in order, it displays the Holy Spirit, who is Love, for the ordering of the effect to something else is the result of [the action of] the Creator's will."292 .

Let us note that in his doctrine of creation Thomas Aquinas raises a very serious problem characteristic of all traditional Christian theology, based on the idea of creation from nothing and the essential otherness of God and the world: "On the one hand, Aquinas was convinced that God, as a personal and all-intelligent being, had to choose speculatively from the infinite sphere of the possible those finite things which He created. He was not compelled by his nature to create, nor was he compelled not to create; nor was he compelled to create this or that possible world. On the other hand, Aquinas was also convinced that the creative act, insofar as it exists in God, is identical with the divine nature, which is essentially unchangeable. Furthermore, he was convinced, on the one hand, that the creative act, insofar as it exists in God, is necessarily eternal, and, on the other hand, that the external manifestation of this act is not eternal."293 .

The prelates of Byzantine Hesychasm solved this problem by attributing the creative act to the category of divine energies rather than to the divine essence, thus

²⁹⁰ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa theologiae*. T. 4. Kiev: Nika-Center, 2010. C. 371.

²⁹¹ Thomas Aquinas. *Summa theologiae*. T. 1. C. 50.

²⁹² Thomas Aquinas. *Summa theologiae*. T. 2. C. 28.

²⁹³ Copleston F. C. *Thomas Aquinas. An Introduction to the Philosophy of the Great Medieval Thinker*. Dolgoprudny: Vestcom, 1999. C. 144.

attempting to affirm both the immortality of the world and its non-emanation from God (if the creative energy is not distinct from the divine essence, then the world will always be generated directly from it, since there is nowhere else). However, the problem still remains: energies are eternal and noneternal, so the world somehow derives from the eternal and unchanging divine noneternity according to both Catholic and Orthodox theology.

The problem of transcendence and immanence of God in relation to the created world in medieval Christian thought was also attempted to be solved with the help of the concept of *analogy of essence*: "The analogy of essence (*analogia entis*) is a concept that goes back to Plato's typology of essences that are not united by a common line of being, as a consequence of which different types of essences are considered separately, as separate regions bound by the relation of causality"²⁹⁴. It was necessary for orthodox church thinkers to hold both the similarity and dissimilarity of God with his creation at the same time, because mere similarity erases the boundary between Creator and creature, which is dogmatically unacceptable, while mere difference breaks the connection between God and the world, which is also dogmatically unacceptable. In the case of the concept of analogy of essence, objects are not related according to the principles of identity or difference, but according to the principle of similarity to their non-natural source. According to Thomas Aquinas' concept of analogy, God, who possesses the totality of being, has arranged so that creatures possess being in a certain proportionality. God for Aquinas is a pure act that dynamically provides all creatures with being, thus drawing them into participation in divine existence. As defined by the Lateran Council of 1215, the semantic similarity between Creator and creation means at the same time affirming their even greater dissimilarity to one another.

The Scholastics referred to the Areopagite corpus in developing the concept of analogy: "Hence, there is a connection by analogy between God the Creator and creature-creature. But this connection points not to a definition of divine Being

²⁹⁴ Gaginsky A. M. On the Meaning of Being and Meanings of Existence: Historical and Philosophical Investigations // Philosophical Journal. 2016. № 9 (3). С. 69.

(divine essence, or nature) but to a display of the otherness of God's personal properties - 'divine patterns,' as the Areopagite says."²⁹⁵ . Sometimes the analogy of essence is taken as a third way in comparison with cataphatic, and apophatic theology: "The figurative use of the analogical method allows us to approach the knowledge of divine reality through the definitions of both essences and non-essences"²⁹⁶ . Thus, in traditional Christian thought one can find judgments that the world is a projection of divine perfections in a diminished form and their realization. We should also note that in contrast to Eastern Christian Hesychasm, official Catholic scholasticism affirms the possibility of essential theological knowledge in the future life (whereas Hesychasm insists on the possibility and importance of energetic theological knowledge in the present life)²⁹⁷ .

Among the Church mystics of the Middle Ages we can find deviations from orthodox rigor in formulation and even partially in content, which brought some of them closer to the views of Eriugena, although in general medieval Catholic mysticism maintained the official line of understanding of this question: "Paying attention to the doctrine of Western Church mystics on the relation of God to the world and man, we notice that it has moderate idealistic shades familiar to us from the works of Eastern Orthodox mystics. Between God and the world an inner living relation is allowed and the boundaries separating them are not eliminated at all. The world is presented as a representation of God's ideas and everything in it is valued insofar as it relates to God, "participates in Him" (Hugo S. Victor). All things are considered in their relation to eternity"²⁹⁸ .

For example, Bonaventure understands God as a pure act, being as such, perfectly simple and unified. The world is created without intermediaries by God himself out of nothingness. Here the possibility of the creation of the world out of matter consubstantial to God is excluded. Also, for Bonaventure, the cosmos is not

²⁹⁵ Yannaras H. Heidegger and Areopagite, or the Absence and Incomprehensibility of God. Moscow: Direct Media. 2007. URL: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Hristos_Yannaras/hajdegger-i-areopagit-ili-ob-otsutstvii-i-nepoznavaemosti-boga/

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ We leave out of brackets the details of the question of the creatureliness or non-creatureliness of grace, which in comparative theology is taken as a significant watershed between Catholic and Orthodox tradition.

²⁹⁸ Vertelovsky A. F. Western medieval mysticism. Kharkov: Tip. okr. headquarters, 1888. C. 271.

part of the Absolute: the Creator and creation are essentially non-identical. At the same time, all things reflect God because they are created in accordance with the Creator's eternal designs. God is within things and outside of them.

Bonaventure distinguishes two modes of the outpouring of divine goodness: internally, within oneself, and externally, into creation: "The outpouring [of goodness] into creation, accomplished in time, is only a drop or a point compared to the immensity of eternal Goodness"²⁹⁹. The highest modus of the self-deployment of goodness is both natural and volitional, free and necessary.

The notion of transcendence and immanence of God is particularly developed in the theology of Meister Eckhart. In many ways he follows the path outlined by Eriugena. God, taken by himself, in the writings of the Dominican theologian, is a Nothingness that correlates with the created nothingness. The presence of God in nothingness is described by Eckhart thus: "All creatures are pure nothingness. I do not say that they are of little value or are anything at all; they are pure nothingness. What has no being is nothing. Creatures have no being, for their being floats in the presence of God."³⁰⁰. Eckhart illustrates the problem of God's involvement and non-involvement in the world by means of the antinomy of the sign: being a sign of some object, it testifies about it, although as a thing this object is absent from the sign. The world created by God, on the one hand, reveals the Creator and, on the other hand, conceals him as a certain defense against being blinded by divine light. In the Dominican theologian's conception, the dialectic of God's likeness and unlikeness to his creation is pronounced: "There is nothing so unlike the Creator and every creature. But on the other hand nothing is so unlike as the Creator and any creation. Further nothing is so unlike and yet so similar to each other as God and any creation are unlike and yet similar."³⁰¹. On the one hand, Eckhart emphasizes the depth of God's presence in the world: "God is present in every creation by force, presence, essence: in each fully, wholly within and wholly without. That is why He does not

²⁹⁹ Cited in: A. R. Fokin. *The Principle of Self-Propagation of the Good: From Plato to Bonaventure*. C. 100.

³⁰⁰ Cited in: Reutin M. Yu. *Christian Neoplatonism of the XIV century : experience of comparative study of the theological doctrines of John Eckhart and Gregory Palam. Paris Disputations of John Eckhart*. Moscow: RSUHU, 2011. C. 37.

³⁰¹ Cited in: Reutin M. Yu. *op. cit. op. cit.* p. 47.

move, change, or pass away when everything perishes, just as the soul does not perish when the hand is cut off. For the soul thus abides completely in the hand, which at the same time remains completely outside of it."³⁰² . At the same time, the Rhenish mystic does not forget to emphasize the transcendence of God: "God is something that must necessarily be above being. God is present in all creatures insofar as they have being, and yet abides above them. What God is in all creatures is precisely that He exceeds them. What in many things abides one, must willy-nilly be above things."³⁰³ .

In Eckhart we find the concept of God as self-extending Good-Love that we have already mentioned: "'God is Love,' for God has extended His love to every creature and yet [remains] Himself alone in Himself. [Therefore] in all creatures and in each of them there is something worthy of love."³⁰⁴ ; "God has poured into the creatures abundant delight and joy, but God has left the root of all delight and the substance of all joy only with Himself."³⁰⁵ . Speaking of God's ineffability and at the same time his manifestation and presence in the world, Eckhart divorces the essential and formal (grace) emanations, and compresses the Dionysian multi-stage hierarchy down to the interaction of God and man. In the writings of this theologian we find an original synthesis of the creationist and emanationist model through the use of the heretical (Gnostic) concept of "two Gods" - the apophatic Deity, identical with the Divine Nothing, and the ternary God-creator: the Godhead emanates from itself the ternary God, who in a special act creates the world. Yet man is removed from the act of creation and directly relates to the Godhead in his essence. Although scholars claim that Eckhart contrasted his doctrine of emanation with the pantheism of the radical Beguines, Beguards, and "Free Spirit brothers and sisters"³⁰⁶ , it cannot

³⁰² Meister Eckhart. Interpretation on the Book of Exodus // Reutin M. Yu. Mystical Theology of Meister Eckhart. The Tradition of Plato's "Parmenides" in the Late Middle Ages. M.: RGU, 2011. 304. Cf: "And notice that all creatures, from all eternity abiding in God, are God and have no distinction in their basis other than that which has been spoken of. They have the same life, the same essence, the same possibilities, since they are in God, and they are the same One and no less. But after expiation, when they receive their own essence, each of the creatures is endowed with its own special essence, distinguished by its own, only inherent form, which is communicated to it by its natural essence" (Heinrich Suso. The Little Book of Truth // Anthology of Medieval Thought. T. 2. M.: Izd-vo RCHGI, 2002. C. 470).

³⁰³ Cited in: Reutin M. Yu. Mystical Theology of Meister Eckhart. C. 204.

³⁰⁴ Cited from: *ibid.* C. 87-88.

³⁰⁵ Cited from: *ibid.* C. 128.

³⁰⁶ Reutin M. Yu. Mystical Theology of Meister Eckhart. C. 230.

be denied that this doctrine is itself heretical, since it actively utilizes Gnostic and Neoplatonic principles, and to a rather substantial degree.

Now, taking into account the context described above, let us proceed to the theological and cosmological views of Nicholas of Cusa. First of all, it is necessary to say that in the works of Kuzantz, according to most researchers, the Platonic concept of the all-unity is present as a basis. For the German thinker was characterized by a direct appeal to the Platonic heritage. Kuzanetz was also well aware of patristic and medieval thought, including the tradition of Christianized Platonism. He used material from the writings of Augustine Aurelius, Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena, Bonaventure, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, and others. (although by no means all of these thinkers were directly referenced). However, in our opinion, it is wrong to reduce Kuzantz's theological and cosmological constructions to a mere transposition of the Neoplatonic concept of emanation, and certainly to a reproduction of the theoretical scheme of the officially recognized orthodoxy of Christianized Platonism. According to I. Evlampiev, the concept of Nicholas of Cusa has its origins in early Christianity, not in Neoplatonism, "but only not in the orthodox teaching of the Church, but in the teaching of the Christian Gnostics..."³⁰⁷. Indeed, there is a significant overlap between the Gospel of Truth, which we have already analyzed, and the cosmogony of Nicholas of Cusa, which we will discuss later. To begin with, let us outline the foundations of the theological-cosmological conception of the philosopher.

The ideological core of the philosophical heritage of Nicholas of Cusa is an original understanding of the relationship between God and the world. In his works the philosopher emphasized that this question cannot be exhausted by human reason. God in Himself is fundamentally incomprehensible, and only negative formulations are correct in relation to Him. In itself, God is not a "what"; neither is he superior to "nothing". At the same time, God appears as Mind, in which all opposites coincide (similar to the distinction between the One and Mind in Neoplatonism); on the transcendent level, God is himself the ground for this coincidence and the superior

³⁰⁷ Evlampiev I. I. L. P. Karsavin and the tradition of mystical pantheism in European philosophy. C. 186.

of this coincidence. God in Cusan's understanding is an *absolute maxim*, one, complete and perfect, transcending the possibilities of affirmation and negation. The tradition of apophatic theology, which had existed for centuries at the time of the philosopher's life, is combined in his conception with the principle of "coincidence of opposites", and the concept of omnipresence receives mathematical and geometrical substantiation. Thus, Nicholas of Cusa demonstrates the essence of the maximum on the example of an infinite line, which contains all other lines, and all its parts will be identical to it. Thus, the infinite essence appears here as the simplest essence of all essences, which, in turn, are modifications of the universal essence. Kuzanets asserts that "every essence in the maximum essence is this maximum essence itself"³⁰⁸, which allows us to characterize his worldview as pantheistic. It is noteworthy that the philosopher agrees that God exceeds his creation, but he is against establishing an ontological gap between the Absolute and the world, to make God an entity separate from the cosmos.

Cusanian pantheism is largely determined by the Western Christian tradition of radical affirmation of divine simplicity, which requires that all of God's actions and qualities coincide with the divine essence. Nicholas of Cusa explicitly states that in God all difference represents identity, in connection with which all that is inherent in God is himself without distinction or otherness. It should also be noted that the philosopher in his pantheistic scheme develops the doctrine traditional for Christian Platonism that all essences from eternity are in God as his thoughts, ideas or forms, asserting the reducibility of all forms to one infinite form, which is revealed in various forms like a unit in the numerical sequence.

Things exist insofar as they abide in the infinite act of God. God's creative act coincides with the divine essence, which is eternal, and thus the results of this act must be eternal. This view is clearly opposed to the orthodox view of the emergence of the world as creation out of nothing by a single act of divine will with the justification of the essential gap between the Absolute and the cosmos. The phenomenon of creation is reinterpreted by Cusan in a monistic context: "to create"

³⁰⁸ Nicholas of Cusa. On scholarly ignorance // Nicholas of Cusa. Essays: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. M.: Mysl, 1979. C. 73.

for God means "to be all". The answer to the question of the co-creativity of the world with God can be twofold: creation is eternal in the perspective in which it is the being of God, whereas in the perspective of time, creation is eternal. The biblical account of the creation of the world, according to the philosopher, should be interpreted symbolically: creation is accomplished by God outside of time.

Cusanian does not hold to a "positivist," straightforward interpretation of the divine omnipotent will that acts as the cause of the world: the cosmos is coagulated (contracted into unity) and unfolded (resolved into multiplicity) in God: "In the one God all things are coiled up, since all things are in Him; and He unfolds all things, since He is in all"³⁰⁹. In absolute being, will and reason coincide: the former does not desire otherwise, and reason does not allow its being. Creation for Cusanus is finite infinity and the created God. The universe endlessly aspires to actual infinity (God as such), but never reaches it. The absence of an ontological gap between Creator and creation, as well as the use of pantheistic formulations³¹⁰, does not mean for Nicholas of Cusa the denial of a fundamental distinction between God and the world: God is the pole of absolute unity, whereas the world is the pole of plurality. Kuzansky, in response to accusations of anti-Christian pantheism, spoke openly about the fact that he did not share the radical concept of omniscience³¹¹. Creation represents God in a certain perspective or *modus*, with certain limits. Creation coincides with God only in its convolution. As perfect in its being, a thing exists in God, and as imperfect in the world: "Everything that exists in a worldly way is in the world, and in a non-worldly way in God, since everything is divine there."³¹². At the same time, at the summit of theosophy, the boundary between the contemplating subject and God, taken as the object of aspiration, disappears: "Because God will not be other, different or distinct in relation to this spirit itself,

³⁰⁹ Nicholas of Cusa. On scholastic ignorance. C. 104.

³¹⁰ "Consequently, God and creation appear to be one and the same - in the *modus* of the giver by God, in the *modus* of the given by creation"; "every creation is in some way God" (Nicholas of Cusa. On the gift of the Father of lights // Nicholas of Cusa. Works: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. Moscow: Mysl, 1979. C. 324).

³¹¹ Nicholas of Kusan. Apologia of scholarly ignorance // Nicholas of Cusa. Works: in 2 vols. Vol. 2. Moscow: Mysl, 1980. C. 5-32.

³¹² Nicholas of Cusa. On Possibility-Existence // Nicholas of Cusa. Essays: in 2 vols. Vol. 2. Moscow: Mysl, 1980. C. 178.

nor will the divine sense, the divine Word, or the divine Spirit be different: all otherness and difference are much lower than theosophy"³¹³.

It is also worth paying attention to the ontological, real interaction between God and nothingness in the context of Nicholas of Cusa's cosmogonic scheme. The philosopher states that "the multitude of things arises by virtue of the fact that God abides in nothingness"³¹⁴. The act (process) of creation in this case is a mapping of infinite form into nothingness (i.e., the result of God's "entry" into nothingness). The world and man represent in the context of this view a limited incarnation of God in the sphere of nothingness, which arises spontaneously in the Absolute. About nothingness itself, Kuzansky writes the following: "Who is able, by combining in creation the absolute necessity from which it arises with the accident without which it does not exist, to understand its being? Being neither God nor nothing, creation stands as if after God and before nothing, between God and nothing, as one of the wise has said: "God is the opposite of nothingness through the mediation of being""³¹⁵.

In considering this cosmological scheme of Cusanus, we are confronted at a new turn with a problem that is also characteristic of the Neoplatonic concept of emanation: why does the infinite form reflect itself in different degrees of perfection? According to the philosopher, creation is forced to be imperfect: it is not in its entirety identical with the absolute maximum. The multiplicity, discordance, and imperfection of creation have no cause, and even God is not a cause. All these differences of things from the absolute form are the consequence of contingency (contingency), which does not allow the created to coincide with the divine perfection to the point of complete indistinguishability³¹⁶: "God creates everything, subject to otherness, change and destruction - also. But of otherness, changeability and destruction he does not create; he is beingness itself and creates not perdition

³¹³ Nicholas of Cusa. On theosophy // Nicholas of Cusa. Essays: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. M.: Mysl, 1979. C. 311.

³¹⁴ Nicholas of Cusa. On scholastic ignorance. C. 105.

³¹⁵ Ibid. C. 100.

³¹⁶ A comparison with the situation in which Plato's Demiurge found himself is suggested: striving to liken things to the maximum good, he encountered the resistance of necessity, which prevented him from realizing his plan to an absolute degree.

but being. Destruction and changeability in things are not from the Creator, but they happen to things"³¹⁷. Thus, evil in Kuzantz's view is neither a direct result of divine free-will decision, nor indirect ("by permission" as it is commonly called in orthodox theodicy)³¹⁸. Interpreting the biblical image of the fall into sin, Nicholas of Cusa speaks of an accomplished fall into ignorance, which turns out to be "unexpected" for God himself.

The universe from the point of view of Kuzanz is derived from God by the principle of simple emanation, where God acts as absolute whatness and absolute possibility for all entities. All the possibilities of a thing in God are real, in contrast to the existence of the same thing in cosmic reality, where the real being of a thing differs from its possibilities. God is present in the universe, on the one hand, as a unity at the base of cosmic diversity, and as a representation of himself in that diversity. The absence of difference in God as such accounts for the profound interpenetration of things and their interconnectedness, where everything is present in everything. Nicholas of Cusa gives an original interpretation of the traditional for orthodox thought idea of the reflection of the persons of the Trinity in the universe: the Father is the absolute possibility of everything, the Son is the basis of the transition of possibility into reality, and the Spirit is the basis of the relationship between possibility and necessity (matter and form). This understanding is supplemented by the following scheme: the Father is an aspect of the transcendence of divine unity; the Son is an aspect of the transcendent-immanent unity-multiplicity of the same God, and the Spirit is a designation of immanent divine multiplicity. The hypostases of God thus show the levels of divine presence in the world.

It is noteworthy that Kuzanec uses the concepts of "world soul" and "universal spirit" to refer to the inner connectedness of the universe. The philosopher reduces the Neoplatonic levels of Mind and World Soul into the divine Logos. Also,

³¹⁷ Nikolai Kuzansky. *The Game of the Ball* // Nicholas of Cusa. *Essays*: in 2 vols. Vol. 2. Moscow: Mysl, 1980. C. 292-293.

³¹⁸ Sometimes Nicholas of Cusa considers it possible to speak about the creation of the world by the will of the almighty God, but in the limit he treats it in a monistic way. We have considered similar problems in connection with Neoplatonism. In one way or another, the pantheistic and monistic deployment of cosmology in the opposition "free will - necessity" in relation to the act of creation inevitably inclines to the second point in this dichotomy (even if we allow for a motivation that may transcend this duality).

Nicholas of Cusa refuses to think of the World Form, which contains all forms, as an intermediary link between God and creation (we noticed this tendency in our analysis of orthodox ideas about the divine Logos-Um with demiurgic functions). The World Mind and the World Soul for the philosopher are not mediating realities, but functional aspects of the divine Trinity manifested in the world.

The doctrine of Nicholas of Cusa differs sharply from the classical demiurgic-emanative scheme of Christian orthodoxy, just as it differs from the Neoplatonic concept of emanation. As in *The Gospel of Truth*, God is conceptualized by Cusanus in an utterly apophatic way; he does not even possess existence, and yet he is understood as the one source of all things, incomprehensible to all those who have emerged from him. It is noteworthy that in both the *Gospel of Truth* and the concept of the philosopher we are considering, God is not thought of as a person (even at the level of the "subtle" anthropomorphization that characterizes the orthodox understanding of God as a consciously free being of demiurgic type). Similarities can also be observed in the fact that the act of origin of the world from God is perceived as unmotivated and spontaneous. Also notable is the connection between the emergence of empirical experience and the phenomenon of "unknowing" arising in the realm of the divine. Finally, the nothingness from which the world emerges, on the one hand, is thought by Cusans to emerge from God himself (it is "after" him, but "before" creation), but, on the other hand, appears beyond God's control, since the result of God's "entering" into nothingness cannot be predicted by God himself, and *appears to be accidental for him* (this quality of created being is described especially vividly in Nicholas of Cusa's "The Ball Game"). All these features make us recognize the model of creation created by Kuzantz very far from the church-dogmatic model and *exactly corresponding to the Gnostic concept of creation*.

Summarizing the whole history of theology and philosophy from the second to the fifteenth century, we can say that three Christian versions of the idea of creation and two pagan ones were discussed and opposed to each other in history. The pagan models are the classical Neoplatonic model of emanation and the demiurgic concept set forth in Plato's *Timaeus*, which reduces to the creation of the

world by a secondary God from pre-existent and independent matter. The three Christian concepts are the Christian version of the concept of emanation, most fully embodied in the *Areopagitica*, the Gnostic concept of the spontaneous emergence of the world from some "defect" eternally inherent in God, and the orthodox concept of the creation of the world out of nothing by a personal God in a free will act.

The most important conclusion that can be reached on the basis of the analysis of the history of ideas about the creation of the world is that only the Gnostic model of creation meets the criteria of philosophical consistency and depth. Of the concepts considered, the most consistent and logical were those of Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, and Nicholas of Cusa, and all three were based to a greater or lesser extent on the Gnostic model of creation.

The shortcomings of the emanationist and orthodox conceptions have already been pointed out many times in the previous presentation. The model of emanation, which originated in Neoplatonism, but which has been organically combined with the Christian worldview, is purely pantheistic, and hence its major shortcomings. Here it proves difficult to make an effective distinction between God and the world "arising" from God; and even if such a distinction is established, it proves very difficult to explain the imperfection of the world and the evil in it. This problem was already present in its entirety in the philosophy of Plotinus, and it has been fully reproduced in the Christian version of Neoplatonism. We have already mentioned above the fact that Plotinus wrote a special treatise "Against the Gnostics", in which he objected to the Gnostic model of creation. He categorically rejected the idea of a metaphysical "defect" in the Absolute, by virtue of which an imperfect world emerges from the Absolute. Here is how he criticizes the corresponding idea of the Gnostics (the concept of the "fall" of Sophia): "...The soul, as they say, having fallen, saw and illuminated already existing matter. But where does the darkness itself come from? If they are going to say that the Soul created it by its fall, then obviously it had nowhere to fall and darkness itself was not the cause of the fall, but the nature

of the Soul itself. But this is the same as considering the cause of the fall to be a prior necessity, and thereby elevating [evil] to the First [beginnings]."³¹⁹ .

It is to this model that he contrasts his model of emanation, and within this contrast he is forced to insist that the world emanating from the Absolute is completely perfect. In pursuing this tendency consistently, he is even forced to deny the existence of essential evil and imperfection of creation in the material cosmos. Some researchers try to interpret Plotinus' concept of matter as the beginning of evil, opposite to the One-Good. However, in this case A.F. Losev is more right, who rejects this interpretation and decisively states that matter in Plato is as positive as the One: "...by his characterization of matter as non-existent Plotinus, in fact, only misleads the reader, not very well-read in his texts. Basically, matter in Plotinus is indeed not-substantial. But this not-being is understood by Plotinus in a profoundly dialectical way, not as an abstract and immobile logical category. So it actually turns out that matter in Plotinus plays a role decisively everywhere and is as universal a principle of being as the three basic hypostases. If anything is beautiful, lovely, sumptuous, sublime, etc., it arises only through the complicity of matter in the general universe along with the three principal hypostases, which are appropriately embodied in it. And if there is anything ugly, ugly, it also arises due to matter itself, i.e. matter. In this case, matter plays a purely artistic role"³²⁰ .

Losev insists on the necessity of Plotinus' conclusion about the perfection of the material cosmos: "This cosmos, according to Plotinus, is beautiful and is the ultimate beauty of effective matter"³²¹ . Particularly clearly, according to Losev, this conclusion is present precisely in Plotinus' treatise against the Gnostics. Here he most decisively describes the cosmos as unconditionally and absolutely perfect: "The world did not come into being in such a way that its life is something incoherent, it is not like the smallest thing in it, which it from the fullness of life produces day and night, but it is uninterrupted, clear and great, and everywhere alive, manifesting itself as artless wisdom - how can we not call it an obvious and beautiful

³¹⁹ Plotinus. *Against the Gnostics* // Plotinus. *The Second Ennead*. SPb., 2004. C. 326.

³²⁰ Losev A.F. *History of Ancient Aesthetics. Late Hellenism*. Moscow: Art, 1980. C. 650.

³²¹ *Ibid.* C. 662.

sculpture of the intelligible gods! If, then, being an imitation, he is not the mind-knowable itself, this imitation he has according to his nature, for if he were the mind-knowable cosmos itself, he would no longer be an imitation. But it is false that imitation is not like [the original], for it lacks nothing of that which makes it the beautiful natural image [of the intelligible]. <...> And if there is another cosmos, better than this one, what kind of cosmos is it? If there must be a cosmos that preserves the likeness of the mind-knowable, and there is no other, then it is our cosmos. The whole earth is full of beings living and immortal, and everything is full of them down to the sky; are not the stars - both those in the higher spheres and those in the lower ones - gods? Are they - moving in order and circular in beauty? Why do they not possess virtue; what prevents them from having it?"³²² . In other treatises, Plotinus proves to be a more realistic thinker and recognizes the presence of evil and imperfection in the cosmos, but he cannot explain these negative features of reality.

It turns out that Neoplatonism, just as its later Christian variant, explains the emergence of an ideal perfect world rather than a real earthly world filled with evil. In its consistent form, emanation explains the world's indissoluble relationship with God, but cannot explain their difference. In particular, it leads to the fact that emanation itself is seen in unity with the inseparable process of the return of the spheres of being that have emerged from the Absolute back into the Absolute; the independence of the created world is inexplicable in this logic.

The orthodox concept of the creation of the world out of nothing by a personal God has even more radical shortcomings, which do not allow us to consider it possible to give it a rigorous philosophical unfolding. For its consistent exposition it is necessary to somehow resolve its basic problems and contradictions: the combination of the apophatic understanding of God, according to which no qualities can be attributed to him, with the attribution to God of the quality of personality; the unclear metaphysical status of the nothingness from which God creates the world; the combination of the strict transcendence of God with his immanence, presupposed

³²² Plotinus. *Against the Gnostics*. C. 314-315.

in the idea of divine grace governing the world, etc. Strictly orthodox thinkers ignored these problems because their solution was possible only at the expense of alternative ideas, which inevitably came into conflict with the dogmatic teaching of the church. As a result, we see in history a number of statements about the existence of a consistent theological and philosophical concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, but in reality there was no such concept. All that could be done within the framework of strictly dogmatic constructions was to create chaotic and incoherent systems, arbitrarily combining unexplained philosophical statements with clearly mythological reasoning based on biblical mythology.

As a result, let us repeat once again: all deep and consistent philosophical concepts of the world's emergence from the Absolute in history were created within the framework of the Gnostic model. In this model, the world arises as a result of spontaneous objectification of the hidden "defect" of the divine essence; no free will act of God is assumed here, since God is understood as an impersonal Absolute devoid of any definitions. The philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa provides an exemplary version of this understanding of the "act" of creation. As we have seen, he recognizes creation as *accidental* in relation to the divine will; this accident is connected with the fact that God creates the world through the transference of his being into nothingness, and the beginning of nothingness, although it "came out" of God, appears to be independent of God. In some of his works, Nicholas attempts to describe in more detail the status and cause of the origin of nothingness; in these cases, he strongly diverges from the dogmatic system according to which, as we have seen, God creates both the being of the world and nothingness in one act. In a later work, *On Being-Possibility*, Nicholas writes: "...since 'to create' means 'to bring from nothingness to being,' it is clear that nothingness itself is in no way a creation."³²³ . This means that Kuzanec refuses to equate the being of the world with nothingness. He further develops this view: 'You see,' says the Cardinal to his interlocutor in the dialog, 'that something exists, the sky, for example, the earth, the sea, and the rest; and since you see that one thing is not another, and thus see that all

³²³ Nicholas of Cusa. *On Possibility-Existence* // Nicholas of Cusa. *Essays*: in 2 vol. T. 2. C. 139.

this is after nothingness, you therefore see that it is from eternal being after nothingness exists as what it is'³²⁴. Here it is quite clearly asserted that the world arises from "eternal being" (God) but after nothingness (nothingness). It turns out that nothingness in some mysterious way arises before the act of creation from God himself and, "admixed" to the creation in addition to the "will" of God makes the created world plural. It should be added that this nothingness (nothingness) in Kuzantz's system is the cause not only of the plurality of things, but also of their destructiveness and perdition, i.e. the cause of evil. So, this *negative* nothingness, which God could not generate in accordance with the good "plan" of creation, it unexpectedly, "accidentally" comes out of God himself, who as if "resigns" to its presence in the act of creation. One can see the coincidence of the general scheme of understanding the origin of the world in the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa and in the Gospel of Truth, the most famous Gnostic monument. It is quite obvious that both the description of the origin of the world in the philosophy of Eriugena and in the philosophy of Meister Eckhart fit into the same model.

Л. П. Кarsavin began his philosophical work after a long study of medieval history, in which he paid special attention to the development of heretical movements and their most important religious concepts. In his philosophy he was the first to clearly formulate the conclusion that it was the Gnostic line in medieval philosophy that proved to be the most fruitful, and it was its results that had the greatest influence on the development of subsequent European philosophical thought. In particular, he drew the same conclusion about the most fruitful conception of creation that we have drawn as a result of the historical review we have made. In this sense, Karsavin's philosophical reflections are extremely important for a correct understanding of the main trends in both medieval and modern philosophy.

³²⁴ Ibid. C. 177.

Chapter 2: The Question of the Origin of the World in the Philosophy of L.P.Karsavin

2.1 The Relationship of the Absolute and the World in the Metaphysics of L.P.Karsavin: Ontological and Anthropological Conclusions

The problem of the correlation between God and the world occupies the most important place in Karsavin's philosophy: "He addresses the most difficult and fundamental problem: he tries to understand how it is possible to think along with the Absolute, which encompasses all existing things, also the created world, which does not coincide with the Absolute"³²⁵. The development of this theme is carried out by the Russian thinker in the framework of the concept of universality as a variant of pantheism, which he gives an original form in comparison with other philosophers of this direction.

The development of the paradigm of universality, as historical and philosophical analysis shows, is associated with a set of persistent problems. The main issue here is the following: how to think the relative in the context of the absolute, if it follows from the very notion of the absolute that the absolute cannot have anything opposing itself, limiting it: the absolute by default must include everything that is. The principle of omnipresence requires that everything that exists be in some respect the absolute itself. The problem of a consistent and consistent disclosure of the concept of omnipresence is further complicated if it claims to express a Christian worldview.

To understand the origins of Karsavin's philosophical outlook, it is necessary to remember that he was originally a historian-medievalist and his professional topic was religious heretical movements in medieval Europe - primarily the Cathars and Waldenses. Karsavin presented the results of his research in his major work "Foundations of Medieval Religiosity in the XII-XIII centuries, mainly in Italy"

³²⁵ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in the XIX-XX centuries: Russian philosophy in search of the Absolute. Part. 2. SPb.: Aleteia, 2000. C. 139.

(1915), where he gave a detailed analysis of the prevailing in medieval society orthodox religious worldview and heretical deviations from it. After completing a purely historical study of medieval religiosity, Karsavin turned to its substantive-philosophical analysis, and in this analysis he paid special attention to the central problem of medieval theology and medieval philosophy - the problem of creation.

In 1919, Karsavin's first purely philosophical work, *Saligia*, or a very brief and soul-helpful reflection on God, the world, man, evil and the seven deadly sins, stylized as a medieval treatise, was published³²⁶. In this work, Karsavin aims to formulate the model of creation that he regards as the only possible and true one - bringing together all the medieval concepts known to him. The basic component of Karsavin's metaphysics is the assertion that God represents the totality of being: "God, as the highest being, must be everything, an all-unity. Otherwise it is possible to conceive of something higher than God confronting created things, i.e., to conceive of the unity of God and created things, which will then be the true Godhead. God is unconditional, and consequently, next to Him there is not and cannot be a creature, or: the creature is a complete nothingness"³²⁷. Based on this thought, we must recognize that everything that we distinguish from God in some way is not opposed to him, but is included in him, being immanent to the Absolute.

Like F. Schelling, the Russian philosopher tries to show that the only possible and extremely adequate philosophical scheme for understanding the relationship between God and the world is a consistent *pantheistic* worldview, which means that all creatures descended from God remain immanent to him, although not in the sense of a complete erasure of all actual and potential differences between the divine and the created, as it is portrayed in popular and crude ideas about pantheism. Schelling's worldview and the pantheism he defends holds the aspect of the *transcendence of* the deity in relation to the multiplicity of things and to the whole of created things:

³²⁶ "It is as if he is trying to imagine what a medieval German thinker could have written if he had lived to the beginning of the twentieth century. The result is a paradoxical work, equally filled with both the spirit of the XV and the spirit of the XX century" (Evlampiev I. I. Two poles of perception of Nicholas of Cusa in Russian philosophy (S. Frank and L. Karsavin) // *Voprosy filosofii*. 2010. № 5. C. 133). The stylization of the Middle Ages can be perceived as an indication of the medieval mystical origins of Karsavin's concept.

³²⁷ Karsavin L.P. *Saligia*, or a very brief and soul-helpful reflection on God, the world, man, evil and the seven deadly sins // Karsavin L.P. *Soch.* M.: *Raritet*, 1993. C. 32.

'...'.all singular things taken in their totality cannot, as is usually supposed, constitute God, for there is no connection by which that which is derivative in nature can pass into that which is original in nature, just as the singular points of a circle taken in their totality cannot constitute the circle, since it as a whole is necessarily prior to them in its conception"³²⁸ .

The originality of the model developed by Karsavin is achieved by introducing a *dynamic component* into the understanding of the Absolute-Unity: the Absolute every moment generates from itself its divided and imperfect other, which, provided that it instantly returns to the fullness of the Absolute, in no way diminishes its unity and perfection: "...in a certain sense it is possible to speak of such a divine, and therefore also of a creaturely movement, for absolute goodness pours all of itself into nothingness in order to create its creaturely likeness out of nothingness and, having quite deified it, to make it itself."³²⁹ . The continuous *movement* from the Absolute to nothing and in the opposite direction in Karsavin's philosophy acts as the main characteristic of universality: "There was not a single moment in God when the world was not created, redeemed and deified by Him"³³⁰ . In this case, the essence of the Absolute is perceived not statically, but extremely dynamically, although in a certain sense everything is already given for the Absolute itself in such becoming.

Karsavin points out that the different forms of understanding the absolute depend on how the act of creation is interpreted, as well as the relationship between the Absolute and the relative being that comes from it. The Russian thinker distinguishes three versions of the solution to this problem: *dualistic, pantheistic, and Orthodox Christian*. In the *dualistic version*, God forms the creation from some inferior to him beginning by his will, which makes the world disconnected from the Absolute, being outside it in the status of ontological imperfection, not being able to reach the divine height. Karsavin writes that such a position is inherent in Gnosticism, vulgar Christianity, and partly in the Aristotelianism of Western

³²⁸ Schelling F.W.J. Philosophical Studies on the essence of human freedom and related subjects // Schelling F.W.J.. Essays: in 2 vol. T. 2. M., 1989. C. 92.

³²⁹ Karsavin L.P. On Freedom // Karsavin L.P. Small Works. SPb.: Aleteia, 1994. C. 239.

³³⁰ Karsavin L.P. Noctes Petropolitanae // Karsavin L.P. Small Works. SPb.: Aleteia, 1994. C. 172.

European scholasticism. But here we should bear in mind his peculiar understanding of the designated religious movements. By "Gnosticism" Karsavin means only the mythological form of this religious movement, ignoring the fact (certainly known to him) that already from the second century it was actively developing in philosophical form and included such famous thinkers as Eriugena, Meister Eckhart, and Nicholas of Cusa; their teachings Karsavin later often mentions and analyzes, pretending that he does not know their relation to the Gnostic tradition. By "vulgar Christianity" he means ordinary Catholic Christianity, which, from his point of view, became "vulgar" because of the extreme simplification of its worldview in history. In a later work, "East, West, and the Russian Idea," Karsavin calls the dualistic version of Christianity "theism" and attributes it to Western, Catholic civilization. In this case, it is not only a purely Platonic interpretation of the process of creation using eternally existing matter, but also a dogmatic model of creation from nothing: as we have shown earlier, in this model God also creates outside of himself an alien beginning - primary matter, which he then forms into various kinds of being.

At the opposite extreme, Karsavin sees pantheism in its traditional sense as the "identity" of God and the world. In this model, the world completely loses any ontological independence: "When <...>unity is unilaterally asserted in the negation of dualism, it is inevitable to identify the act of creation from nothingness with creation from God and 'nothingness' with God. This is the view of Eriugena and many mystics who confuse the Divine Nothingness, which is everything, with nothingness as absolute and pure nothingness. Quite clearly such a confusion (though less clearly than Eriugena's) is in Meister Eckhart, more covertly in Schelling (the distinction between "Gottheit" or "Natur Gottes" and "Gott"). This identification of the creature with God and the denial of absolute nothingness, substituted for the Divine Nothingness, is necessarily transformed into an affirmation of the absolute nothingness of the creature as such, and into a denial of Divine perfection."³³¹ . In this description Karsavin so clearly simplifies and distorts the meaning of the concepts of creation of famous thinkers that some explanation is

³³¹ Karsavin L.P. On the Beginnings. Moscow; Berlin, 2016. C. 41-42.

required for this fact, which cannot be recognized as the result of sincere belief. It is impossible to believe that Karsavin was so ill-informed about these concepts that he recognizes them as "standard" forms of pantheism as the doctrine of "the identity of God and the world." This statement by Karsavin looks especially strange in view of the fact that Schelling, in his discussion of pantheism, specifically dwells on the fundamental difference between the correct (his own) understanding of pantheism and its "standard" understanding ("the identity of God and the world"). It can be assumed that in this place of his work Karsavin fundamentally differentiates his own philosophical position from the position of the "author" of the treatise Saligia, who, having, according to Karsavin's idea, a medieval psychology, should be afraid of accusations of pantheism and therefore, realizing that he himself is developing a pantheistic concept, deliberately denies this fact in front of a hypothetical "inquisitor" who could drag him to a strict church court for heretical views.

Karsavin emphasizes that the fundamental error of "standard" pantheism is the denial of the independent significance of nothingness, from which and in which God creates the world. Only Neoplatonism is close to this kind of pantheism, but in the systems of Eriugena, Meister Eckhart, and even more so Schelling, one can find not only "positive" nothingness, coinciding with the unknowable God-Absolute, but also "negative" nothingness as the pole of absolute deprivation of divine being. Karsavin has this very model in mind in the third tendency, which he calls "Orthodox Christian. He takes it to the limit, asserting that nothingness must be interpreted as an independent ontological beginning. In this case, a metaphysical model emerges that cannot be called fully either pantheistic (in the "standard" understanding of pantheism) or dualistic, because, according to Karsavin, nothingness is not, strictly speaking, a second metaphysical beginning. All being belongs to God; "other" being is obtained only as a result of God's free "displacement" of his own being into nothingness. This free creative act creates the creature as an entity independent of God and free, moving toward unity with its original source on the paths of perfection.

These arguments of Karsavin, of course, cannot be called consistent with strict Orthodox Christian orthodoxy, and in this connection it is impossible to agree with

his division of religious-philosophical worldviews into three types. The version of the concept of creation that he formulates cannot in any way be recognized as corresponding to dogmatic Christianity; it is certainly a kind of gnostic-mystical model, which in the history of philosophy has been demonstrated by many thinkers from Origen, Eriugena, and Nicholas of Cusa to Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Vladimir Soloviev. For the main principle of this model turns out to be *the independent* existence of nothingness "next to" God. In order to become truly absolute God must integrate this nothingness into himself, eliminate its independence, for this purpose he "enters" it, seeking to make this beginning himself. But as a result, nothingness does not become God, but God becomes, through union with nothingness, the world.

The absolute inconsistency of Karsavin's reasoning with the orthodox conception of creation, in which nothing depends entirely on God, is manifested in Karsavin's thesis that nothing is *opposed to* God: "The Godhead is absolute, being the Unity and comprehended by us as such. But in the fullness of our experience It is absolute only on the condition that somehow there exists, without limiting His absoluteness, something different from Him in some sense. And this "something" in order not to limit God and in order to be different from Him, somehow to oppose Him, must not be an identity or something, i.e., in its difference it must be a perfect nothing, for if it is even the slightest identity point, it is no longer different from God or - limits Him. "Otherness" can exist only as the Godhead creating and being created, and in the creaturely distinctness of its being "nothing." But the self-creation of the Godhead cannot be self-creation as the unfolding of the Divine Fullness. The self-creation of God, in order to be such, must be His free self-determination, i.e., the self-limitation and self-finishing of the Absolute, for only on this condition is Epiphany distinct from God-existence. And this very Epiphany, or better to say - Epiphany is the creation of a finite and relative something, which exists only by and in God who has self-determined Himself, and with the departure of God ceases in its conditional being.³³² . Any created "something", according to the Russian

³³² Karsavin L.P. Saligia. C. 40.

philosopher, is a "theophany" of the deity, if the latter is removed from this something, it is annihilated to complete *nothingness*. Creaturely being, which can be considered in opposition to the Absolute or in complete difference from it, is perfect nothingness, non-existence: "As another qualitatively, this something is nothing, and yet it is not nothing, but, being identical to God and reflecting God in itself, is numerically or essentially different from God"³³³ .

Thus, the created world appears as *God's repetition of his divine life* in the realm of nothingness, which appears as relatively independent of God. If one still poses the question of how the said nothingness is related to God, whether it can also be regarded in a certain sense as his creation, Karsavin's answer completely repeats the logic of Gnostic models, from the Gospel of Truth to Schelling: nothingness *is formed by God within himself as his self-limitation*. "In the Godhead-Unity there is a Godhead-Contradiction of creature-nothing. God-Unity is opposed to nothing or is opposed to Him by perfect nothingness. But in a marvelous and inexpressible way in this nonexistent nothingness God, without ceasing to be the Unity, manifests or becomes Himself by pouring Himself into nothingness, which is thereby created or made by God as something that denies Him and does not cease to be nothing."³³⁴ . In this case, we are dealing, in fact, with the act of God's self-creation in the ontological "space" of nothing that is alien to him, although "revealed" in himself. In Karsavin's case, nothingness is perceived as a certain independent sphere into which the Absolute has the possibility of introducing itself with the acquisition of finite and therefore definite characteristics.

God's self-limitation in creation is at the same time his self-reflection, "his creation of a living mirror for himself"³³⁵ . Karsavin reveals the image of the mirror-creation (it is present in the texts of Nicholas of Cusa) as follows: "And its depth is fathomless, and from the depths God grins benignly at us, only becoming small, as small as the reflection of the sun in your pupil. And we will not find anything in our mirror except God, we will not see the mirror itself, but we will see in it only what

³³³ Ibid. C. 40.

³³⁴ Ibid. C. 43.

³³⁵ Ibid. C. 44.

it reflects, because it reflects only because God Almighty looks into it. But our mirror is a special mirror: it is a living mirror and it is always swarming and shining, showing us the Godhead in a new way. So it seems to you and me that the mirror shines of its own will, rejoicing and spinning in the rays of God's radiance. In fact, every movement of the mirror exists only because God moves it, adding new joys to it and reflecting Himself in a new way in it.³³⁶ . The Russian philosopher emphasizes that in this analogy God cannot be thought of only as a support for the movements of this creaturely mirror, giving it the opportunity to move as it wishes. The movement of the creature in this context becomes the movement of God himself, though different from him. God, in contrast to creation, is "standing still and standing mobile"; creation cannot contain this fullness. The creaturely cycle of being reflects "the infinitely swift and powerful cycle of the being of the True One"³³⁷ . It is the reflection "in itself of all things" and "itself in all things," not the fact that reflection is limited, that gives creation absolute value.

Thus, Karsavin presents creation as a process involving two acts: first, God limits himself in some "local" sphere, which becomes the sphere of nothingness in himself; then he repeats himself in the sphere of nothingness and thus gives his "complete" copy in this sphere, which is the created world. The principle of God's self-limitation and self-finishing, which includes two components, becomes the center of the concept of creation, which, according to Karsavin, is an effective alternative to both the standard emanationist model, according to which the world is generated by God as its *perfect* likeness outside of himself (as if "overflowing" across some ontological boundary), and the standard creationist model, according to which God in one act creates both nothingness and an imperfect world, limited to nothingness, remaining unaffected by this process.

Although Karsavin insists in many of his works that he is creating a "strictly orthodox" conception, these statements cannot deceive anyone: it is quite obvious that his views belong to the Gnostic tradition of European philosophizing; from a

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid. C. 65.

metaphysical point of view, this means that he adheres to a moderate metaphysical dualism. On the one hand, Karsavin, in his inclination toward monistic metaphysics, retains for the Absolute a certain ontological advantage over nothingness. The status of created being of the sphere of the relative is obtained exclusively due to the fact that God needs to have something different from him; for this purpose he "transfers" his own being into the "space" of nothingness, making it a contingent being. However, we should not forget another facet of his concept of universality: in his essay "Saligia" Karsavin shows that the Absolute can only be understood as Absolute if it is *correlated with the non-absolute*, i.e. the relative (something other). It turns out that the relative is necessary to the Absolute and must exist as an independent metaphysical principle. Prot. V. In his evaluation of the Karsavinian concept, Zenkovsky noted that, although Karsavin does not have the pantheistic identification of the world and God to the point of indistinguishability, in his scheme the Absolute is relative to the world, inconceivable without the world, which means that the Absolute does not have complete freedom in relation to creatures (neither in the creative act, nor in the line of relations with creatures). Outside the creative act of generating the world and relating itself to the world, the Absolute is not able to realize itself as the Absolute.

Another crucial facet of the Karsavinian model of omniscience is the principle of *coincidence of the whole and any of its parts*, which is *imperfectly realized* in our world. In this context, there is no need to construct a hierarchical metaphysics, which is obligatory for the orthodox tradition. Here the beginning of being is recognized equally as the Absolute-Unity and every smallest element of the Unity, identical to the whole. At the level of perfect unity, this identity of each element with the Unity and, hence, with every other element is fully realized, and this means, in particular, that there is no distinction between "vertical" unity (the unity of part and whole) and "horizontal" unity (the unity of a part of one relative whole and a part of another relative whole). This distinction appears only at the level of imperfect being, as does the familiar hierarchization of phenomena, their division into the more general and holistic and into the particular and secondary. For Karsavin, the created world is

situated as if "in the middle" between a perfect unity, in which all its components are in perfect identity with each other (and each person is identical to the unity), and an extremely diminished unity, in which all elements are equally independent and equivalent in their significance for the whole (the image of such an extremely diminished unity is mathematical space). In the real created unity, its components are partly united and partly divided, and the creatures embody the degrees of divine perfection in different ways.

It is noteworthy that for Karsavin discreteness and multiplicity are no less significant phenomena in comparison with unity: "Karsavin recognizes plurality, disjointedness as no less important a characteristic of the omnipresence than unity; the most complete and adequate description of the omnipresence must be connected with the elimination of the very opposition between unity and plurality. This is achieved through a radical "closure" of the unity: the most "insignificant", "smallest" element of the unity must be recognized as absolutely identical with the unity as a whole"³³⁸. The most important elements of the Unity are, of course, human persons; the thesis formulated in this case means that each person is equal to the whole, i.e. God, in its significance. Obviously, this metaphysical construction expresses the key principle of Gnostic Christianity - the notion that each person is a manifestation in the empirical existence of the apophatic God-Absolute.

It is obvious that in Karsavinian metaphysics, based on the principle of the identity of the part and the whole, we encounter certain limitations in the description of the all-unity by means of classical rationality. Only an *intuitive-dialectical approach* is possible here: "It offers a radical version of an irrational (it would be more correct to say super-rational) dialectic, which admits a minimal degree of rationalization, leaving the key contradiction underlying it in its immediate, irrational-intuitive form"³³⁹.

Karsavin's belonging to the tradition of Gnostic Christianity is clearly manifested in the *duality of his fundamental philosophical tendencies*. The first

³³⁸ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 187.

³³⁹ Ibid. C. 188.

tendency is natural for any religious philosophy: recognizing the primacy of the beginning of absolute all-singularity in its ultimate perfection, the philosopher after that only as a supplement carries out the disclosure of relative being, completely dependent on the Absolute. However, in the works of the Russian philosopher one can find the opposite tendency, when the thinker begins with the analysis of created being and its center - man, using then the results obtained to understand the structure of perfect absolute being. In the second tendency, the imperfect receives an independent ontological value and even a certain primacy in relation to the absolute. Here, for Karsavin, the figure of Jesus, which he interprets in a completely different way from the orthodox, dogmatic tradition, takes on an important significance. For Karsavin, Jesus serves as an expression of the *absolute meaning of imperfection* and makes it possible to transfer the imperfect properties of the created world into the absolute, to ontologize imperfect being as an independent entity that *complements* and *enriches the* absolute. Karsavin's opposition of the absolute and nothingness implies the identification of the essence of the Absolute through its appearance in the sphere of nothingness, which means the possibility of metaphysical analysis of absolute being through the consideration of the movement from the Absolute to the other and back.

In the context of considering Karsavin's understanding of creation as the "entry" of the Absolute into nothingness, we should pay attention to the fact that for the Russian philosopher the central component of the doctrine of the Absolute is *human metaphysics*: the essence and "structure" of the Absolute in this case is comprehended through the analysis of human existence. Thus, anthropology becomes the core component of ontology. Man in the context of Karsavinian metaphysics appears as a relative all-unity, which is both identical to the absolute all-unity and at the same time different from it. In his existence, man both coincides with God and differs from him: he differs in that he represents God's theophany in nothingness. Man becomes in this scheme a potentially absolute being who is called to reveal his divine nature. For Karsavin, the created world is a system of imperfect empirical persons immersed in a spatio-temporal context, and "the system of

empirical persons turns out to be the 'real' Absolute, while God turns out to be some ideal limit of human becoming, of 'perfecting'"³⁴⁰.

In Karsavin's anthropology, the concept of "*all-temporality*" is of great importance. Each person represents both the plurality of moments of his material existence and their unity, their fusion: "We have come," writes Karsavin, "to recognize the soul as both all-temporal and temporal at once, understanding its temporality not as something opposed to its all-temporality, but as an incompleteness of this all-temporality, as a holistic moment of it in its own way"³⁴¹. According to this understanding, the all-temporal being of the individual is absolute being, i.e., in fact, the being of God himself, who "lives" empirical life in the sphere of the temporal and plural: "Every act of the soul and the soul as an all-inclusive act is the absolute itself. It is not I who cognize truth - truth cognizes itself in me <...> It is not I who exist - being itself exists in me. It is not I who become good - the All-Unified Good actualizes itself in me"³⁴². "Therefore, if I cognize myself by being, then being also cognizes itself by me, and its cognition of itself by me is my cognition of myself - by it"³⁴³. The soul in the context of Karsavin's metaphysics can be characterized as an image of the Absolute in nothingness. The description of the Absolute is realized in this philosophy through the explication of the intuition that man discovers in the act of comprehending the fullness of his personhood.

In this light, "nothing can be recognized as the true concrete Absolute except the empirical personality itself, comprehended in all its irrational-intuitive fullness"³⁴⁴. On the one hand, Karsavin argues that only the Absolute is a person, while people in earthly existence acquire personhood by virtue of their communion with this absolute person. On the other hand, Karsavin has a different line of justification of personhood, in which the imperfect human personality acts as a basis for attributing this quality to the Absolute. At the same time, the definition of

³⁴⁰ Ibid. C. 142.

³⁴¹ Karsavin L. P. On Freedom. C. 228.

³⁴² Ibid. C. 238.

³⁴³ Karsavin L.P. On Personality // Karsavin L.P. Religious and Philosophical Works. T. 1. M.: Renaissance, 1992. C. 29

³⁴⁴ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 188.

personality in these cases turns out to be very different. In the first case, the processes of separation and union which operate "instantaneously" in the Absolute come to the fore, and define it as both absolute unity and absolute multiplicity; this definition cannot be transferred to the finite and imperfect human being. In the second case, the definition of personality emphasizes the relation of the individual to its other, i.e., this definition, by contrast, does not literally apply to the Absolute, which excludes the other. In the second case, personality outside of communication (with the other, i.e., with another personality) is impossible. Thus, the Absolute is a person only when it is opposed by otherness, i.e. when it performs the act of "descending" to the relative: "the Absolute can be recognized as a person only because it is, in fact, 'not quite' Absolute, in its being it is determined by the creaturely otherness that opposes it"³⁴⁵. Formally, Karsavin is in favor of the first version of the understanding of personality, but in most of his philosophical discourse he takes the imperfect human person as the model of personality.

The shift of emphasis in the religious concept from God to man is one of the most original features of the Gnostic philosophical tradition in history. We find a clear development of this theme already in the philosophical system of Eriugena, who, just like Karsavin, affirmed that God is an apophatic Absolute to whom no properties, not even being, can be ascribed. But this apophatic Absolute accomplishes "theophany," reveals itself in the sphere of existence, of being, and it reveals itself as the divine Person who is the creator of our world. Entering into this world after its creation, the divine Man mixes with nothingness and turns into a multitude of empirical human persons.

Later, very similar concepts were developed by Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa. Karsavin confidently follows the same path, or rather, he generalizes the ideas of all his predecessors and formulates a similar concept in a very original and modern form, using the latest philosophical systems of E. Husserl and A. Bergson.

In accordance with the general logic of Gnostic systems, Karsavin argues that, entering into nothingness, God reveals himself as the *First Man*, or *Adam Kadmon*,

³⁴⁵ Ibid. C. 215.

in accordance with the designation adopted in the Kabbalah, the doctrine of late Jewish Gnosticism. Adam Kadmon united in himself all men, was the divine personification of all mankind. But his task in the realm of nothingness was to return to that fullness of divine wholeness which takes place without nothingness. This required him to make some effort to overcome the nothingness in himself, but Adam Kadmon was "lazy," not properly active in moving back to the fullness of his divinity. This "laziness" resulted in his not only not overcoming his imperfection, but reinforcing it, and it was this that led to his disintegration into a multitude of human persons, already radically imperfect and mortal. Nevertheless, Adam Kadmon remains a deep essence in each of us, and in this essence we are one with other human beings: "Adam Kadmon does not exist as a separate person distinct from others. He is in each of us whole and complete in all of us at once, though not yet complete for earthly existence. He is neither an abstract unity nor a plurality, but a multiplicity, <...> and each person expresses him in a special aspect, unique to the others, although she is in all of them and all of them in her"³⁴⁶. The supreme life task of each individual now becomes the overcoming of his individual separateness and freedom and "dissolution" in the whole of humanity for the sake of the restoration of Adam Kadmon, who must return to the fullness of divine wholeness.

This most important anthropological moment of Karsavin's philosophy is closely connected with the solution of the fundamental question of the *correlation (priority) of the perfect and the imperfect*: "If "on the surface" of the philosophical system we find a statement about the ontological priority of perfection over imperfection and the recognition of the Absolute as standing "above being and non-being" (i.e. "indifferent" to the existence of the created world), then in its "depth" everything turns out to be different. Imperfection appears more fundamental than perfection, which is to be understood as the result of making up for imperfection."³⁴⁷. Thus, the perfect Absolute is defined through its correlation with human persons, and it can be defined as the absoluteness of the imperfect human person, i.e., as the duality of the imperfect person and the ideal generated from itself.

³⁴⁶ Karsavin L.P. Noctes Petropolitanae. C. 135.

³⁴⁷ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 216.

2.2 Development of the Problem of Evil and Freedom in the Context of L.P.Karsavin's Cosmology

In the previous section, we revealed the fundamental structure of Karsavinian metaphysics - the characteristic understanding of the relation between the Absolute and nothingness, and considered some key ontological and anthropological conclusions from this theoretical principle. It is now necessary to turn to an equally important problem - the explanation of the existence of evil and freedom (as well as suffering and death) in the context of the pantheistic paradigm of omniscience. The interpretation of the origins of evil and its essence is the most important problem in Karsavin's philosophy. As we pointed out earlier, this issue caused characteristic difficulties in various pantheistic concepts.

Before outlining the Karsavinian understanding of the essence of evil and freedom, let us once again draw attention to the *twofold* nature of the *cosmogonic process*. When God appears in nothingness, the birth of the all-unified man Adam Kadmon takes place, which is a kind of first act of cosmic "tragedy. Creation for Karsavin is, first of all, an act of self-limitation of the perfect all-unified Absolute, as a result of which the world becomes a limited all-unity. The entities arising in this act resist complete separation, and in this their limited unity is manifested. These elements, the individual human persons, are part of Adam Kadmon (in the aspect of their timelessness and perfection).

The second (in a logical, not chronological sense) moment in God's creative self-restraint is the free unwillingness of the all-unified man to accept divine being in its entirety, the unwillingness to merge completely with God. Karsavin writes that Adam Kadmon could not help but accept God, but he did so incompletely: "The omnipotent Man undoubtedly accepted God: otherwise he would not have existed. But he did not accept God entirely. - He accepted Him, made Himself and established Himself only as life; but he did not want to give himself to God, to die in Him for true life and complete life"³⁴⁸. The paradox of the situation is that Adam

³⁴⁸ Karsavin L. P. Noctes Petropolitanae. C. 172-173.

Kadmon's incomplete acceptance of God has not only a negative but also a positive result. If the omnipotent Man had accepted God completely, he would not have been able to possess complete freedom, since human freedom in its distinction from divine freedom is realized only in the state of incomplete acceptance of God. This requires an intermediate being "between" nothingness and perfect absolute being.

The second moment of God's limitation, "terminating" is the sin and guilt of man in the person of the first all-man, who as a result disintegrated into separate empirical persons and space-time continuum: "God, embedding his being in nothingness, creates the creature, man, but at the same time man himself, in whom everything that really is, is God, "participates" in himself, limits the Being that is God in him"³⁴⁹. In this respect, Karsavin generally repeats the scheme of Soloviev, who in his metaphysical constructions introduces a "second Absolute", different from the first as a becoming all-unity and at the same time coinciding with the first in the aspect of all-unity as such: "This 'second' Absolute is the all-unified Man, the Adam Kadmon of Gnostic speculations, a created but still perfect 'image' of the all-unity, in which, as a result of a subsequent metaphysical 'deduction', individual empirical persons and the natural world (as even more 'weakened' images of the all-unity) are distinguished"³⁵⁰.

In understanding the foundations of the Karsavinian doctrine of evil and freedom, it is important to take into account that the Russian thinker recognizes in the Absolute the *tendency to disintegration* and refuses to perceive it as negative in opposition to the "positive" desire for unity. The full realization of the essence of the Absolute is possible only in the course of simultaneous and continuous interaction of both tendencies in the Unity without the final victory of any one of them. The tendency to decomposition does not lead to the "diminution" of the Absolute, if it is instantly replaced and compensated by the tendency to reunification of the divided. Expressing himself in the spirit of the Gnostic-Christian tradition, Karsavin characterizes the tendency toward unity and the elimination of the separate as the

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 147.

creature's striving toward God and "dying" in him, while the tendency toward decomposition appears as a natural need for the Absolute to express itself in the realm of nothingness and to reveal explicitly all the richness of its concrete content. The duality of these tendencies manifests itself at all levels of the Absolute's realization. However, at the level of perfect omnipresence the striving for unity and the striving for separation coincide, instantly changing each other and not leading to the "diminution" of the Absolute; at the level of relative omnipresence these tendencies *are separated* from each other and therefore exist in an incomplete form; this leads to the fact that separation is not compensated instantly by reunion and begins to dominate over it. In particular, this is expressed in the fact that at the level of imperfect unity the principle of the identity of the part and the whole is not fully realized.

Let us emphasize once again that, unlike the general opinion that has prevailed throughout the history of European philosophy, Karsavin does not consider the tendency toward separation (as such) to be a sign of imperfection: "...the very fact of separation is not evil. It is evil only as a loss of unity, i.e. insufficiency. But as an affirmation of all things, it is good, without which there is no unity itself"³⁵¹. Already in ancient Greek philosophy, the idea of the identity of evil and disunion was expressed, which later became a characteristic feature of the philosophy of universalism.³⁵² But for Karsavin, disconnection within the space-time continuum as such is not an imperfection of the created world: the imperfection consists in the fact that the processes of disconnection and connection are not realized in their entirety and do not compensate for each other: "The imperfection of the world, it turns out, does not consist in the fact that it possesses a more 'radical' form of disconnection in relation, for example, to its own perfect state (the ideal image of Adam Kadmon); rather, on the contrary, its imperfection consists in the fact that the individual elements of the world in the world are in a more 'radical' form of disconnection. The problem is that the disunion does not reach its *ultimate*

³⁵¹ Karsavin L. P. On Good and Evil // Karsavin L. P. Small Works. C. 272.

³⁵² Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 165.

consummation, after which it should naturally pass into unity. The most important aspect of this imperfect state is, according to Karsavin, space, which is understood by the philosopher as an intermediate, "frozen" form of the desire for separation, which is not removed by the reverse process of reunion. In Karsavin's metaphysics, time is also a form of the imperfect world, but ontologically higher in comparison with space. If space represents the "freezing" of the process of separation, then time, on the contrary, is the very essence of the movement toward oneness, not absolute, which would be instantaneous, but imperfect, characteristic of the creature, i.e., of God, who abides in nothingness.

In our world there is a "slowing down" of the infinitely rapid process of the generation of creatures and their subsequent dissolution into the fullness of deity: "In such a case, the emergence of a real creature opposed to God, a limited 'theophany' in himself, can be understood as a sudden 'slowing down' of the infinitely rapid process of the emergence of the 'theophany' and its dissolution into the fullness of God that has occurred in some sphere; this 'slowing down' causes the 'theophany,' the creaturely 'something,' having emerged from God, to last, to receive a temporal extension of its existence: it, although it strives to dissolve into the fullness of God, does not achieve this goal instantaneously."³⁵³ . Time will thus act as a slowing down of the infinitely fast divine movement. Karsavin expounds this scheme as follows: "All created things are a God-like movement by God, in God and toward God, but the movement is relative, i.e., not infinitely fast and, consequently, not supertemporal, but temporal. God becomes Himself in the created things, but He does not become Himself in His fullness, which cannot be accommodated by the relative, not in His supertemporality and superspace, but in the temporal and spatial inferiority of all His created things, which can accommodate the Godhead even in a participatory way, only by unfolding His infinite variety in space and time"³⁵⁴ .

Using the image of God as possibility-existence proposed by Nicholas of Cusa, the same idea can be expressed in another way: the loss of the fullness of its

³⁵³ Evlampiev I. I. L. P. Karsavin and the tradition of mystical pantheism in European philosophy. C. 181.

³⁵⁴ Karsavin L.P. Saligia. C. 52-53.

being as the loss of all *simultaneously realized* possibilities leads to the fact that the creation strives to restore the initial state by *successive* realization of all its possibilities, which determines the temporal duration of all processes in the created world.

On the one hand, being beyond the limit of divine fullness, any human being is a "repetition" of God in the sphere of nothingness, in the form of "self-limitation" of the deity: the fullness of God is present in man, but in a "non-self" form. On the other hand, man as a repetition of God in the sphere of nothingness, despite his actual difference from the divine fullness, strives to resemble the real God as all-unity, trying to be everything, i.e. to absorb all being into himself. In the perfect state, in the state of the infinitely rapid alternation of the tendencies of separation and union in God, this desire was realized instantaneously, as was the reverse desire for the self-giving of the self to all being: "In the divine life, the self sought to enjoy God and other selves by pleasing them with itself. Knowing no limits and no measure, for there are none in God, it poured itself into everything, flowed into the Unity, not losing itself, but finding itself in everything. It enjoyed all things, abiding in all things and possessing all things in itself; and it delighted in all things, for all things abided in it and all things possessed it"³⁵⁵. In the created world these two processes cease to coincide and cannot, even in relative completeness, be satisfied. Now each created "I" is separated from other "I's" in space-time relation. The creaturely (in Karsavin's terminology - the "second") "I" has lost its connection with everything in its separation from the fullness of the absolute divine omnipresence, and therefore its natural aspiration to "spread" in everything and simultaneously absorb everything into itself has turned into the realization of its egoistic inclinations, reduced to the aspiration to dominate over all existence. At the level of the imperfect world, the ideal distinction between personalities turns into spatial and temporal fragmentation: both of separate personalities from each other and of separately taken moments and qualities within one personality. The above-mentioned *slowness of* movement of the created sphere towards divine fullness is the ontological basis of the creature's

³⁵⁵ Ibid. C. 59.

independence and freedom: "The slowness of movement is the incompleteness of the created life itself, the insufficiency of the creature's being, which does not respond to the call of its Creator. Through our fault, we move lazily and slowly, but surely and inevitably into God, fulfilling our purpose, and we will be in motion until we overcome our sluggishness and God will be all in all, when our motion becomes infinitely fast, i.e. perfect peace."³⁵⁶ .

On the empirical level, the duality of separation and unity unfolds in the dialectic of love and self-giving, in which there is a desire to give oneself to the other components of the unity and at the same time to absorb all these components, making them oneself, which is very difficult to do in spatio-temporal existence: "In time-spatial extrapolation, touching everything and possessing everything is possible only through disintegration, life through death, giving oneself to everything only through self-creation, attraction of everything to oneself and into oneself; death through life. All life is the disintegration, rupture and death of the other; all death is the creation of the other by the other. <...>But the world is not fully, as we are, a partaker of Love; it does not have its perfect unity, in it life is separated from death, eternally at enmity with it. Neither life nor death achieves its goal in the world, encountering the obliquity and compression of the atom of matter, the self-assertion of the solitary spirit"³⁵⁷ .

Recognition of the fundamental significance of both processes - separation and connection - is inextricably linked to the fact that Karsavin considers the principle of imperfection to be no less significant in comparison with the principle of perfection: perfection within the framework of this understanding contains within itself imperfection, and the perfection of imperfection does not mean the destruction of imperfection in the end. Imperfection retains its "boundary" even within perfection. In this context, one cannot speak of the primacy of perfection, but rather of their intersubjectivity. Imperfection enriches absolute oneness. In this respect, Christ suffered so that the imperfect cosmos, precisely in the aspect of its spatial and

³⁵⁶ Ibid. C. 56.

³⁵⁷ Karsavin L. P. *Noctes Petropolitanae*. C. 151-152.

temporal imperfection, would acquire absolute significance and would never be overcome in its entirety.

It is noteworthy that, according to the philosopher, the negative and evil components must remain even in the state of complete transformation of the world in the Absolute, of becoming the Absolute. Man in all his manifestations, including unpredictable freedom and its negative consequences, is not "removed" in the absolute or dissolved in it. In this idea, Karsavin once again converges with Eriugena, who argued that every person will return to God at the end of time and will abide in "paradise," but at the same time will not change his character and will keep in memory all his evil deeds, experiencing hellish torments for them (in paradise!).

The problem of the correlation between perfection and imperfection in Karsavin's philosophy coincides with the question of the correlation between God and man, since man is the "imperfect God" (as the repetition of God in nothingness): "The correlation of perfection and imperfection obviously means the correlation of God and empirical man, the impossibility of recognizing God as ontologically primary in relation to man and independent of him"³⁵⁸. The Russian thinker gives this idea an original form when he says that the correlation between God and creation is realized through a succession of their dying and resurrection: "In God's perishing the creature comes into being, in His resurrection it perishes: it is in His non-existence. God is not in relation to Him the creature, for its sake He humiliates, exhausts Himself, so that it may arise and be deified. In this is His All-goodness"³⁵⁹. It turns out that creation lives by the dying of God, and God lives by the dying of creation, and these processes eternally replace each other and will never cease.

According to Karsavin, the naturalness of the tendency toward separation in the Absolute testifies to the universal value of *suffering*, which is an achievement of the Christian worldview. Suffering in itself is not yet evil; evil in the Russian philosopher's understanding is undue suffering, i.e., that suffering which has become

³⁵⁸ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 212.

³⁵⁹ Karsavin L. P. On Personality. C. 185.

self-sufficient, closed in on itself, and severed its unity with pleasure, which acts as an empirical expression of the principle of unity: "At their core, both pleasure and suffering are not evil, but necessary moments of the unity built on love, i.e., the duality of self-giving and self-affirmation. Suffering is evil as incompleteness (compulsion) of self-giving and incompleteness (limitation) of self-affirmation. But incompleteness or limitation is not being, but lack of being, deprivation of fullness. Suffering is evil only in its separation from pleasure: in unity with it, i.e. in its fullness, it is not evil, but good. And the same should be said about pleasure. And even not suffering or pleasure are evil in themselves, but only their limitation, i.e. nothingness"³⁶⁰ .

In Karsavin's view, the pursuit of evil and sin represents a distortion of the natural and proper orientation of any human being to reach the state of divine fullness. Evil and sin are weakened and disconnected modes of existence of the fullness of divine life. The overcoming of these states is understood here not as their annihilation, but as the striving for the fullest and adequate realization of the respective desires , as well as the unfolding of opposite aspirations; for example, the desire to conquer otherness must be compensated by the desire to give oneself to otherness and dissolve in it: "Being sins and evils in a limited form and in isolation from each other, they bear the divine good, which, when revealed and when all divided things are united, completely embraces the creation, removing all signs of evil."³⁶¹ .

The Russian philosopher denies substantive notions of evil: "Concrete evil, when examined closely, is decomposed into something existent and therefore good, and into the limitation, incompleteness, insufficiency of the all-unified good expressed in this essence, and insufficiency simply and absolutely does not exist, no, we, with the help of "illegitimate reasoning" make it, in abstraction from the concrete-entity, a certain existence"³⁶² . Evil appears in his system as some

³⁶⁰ Karsavin L. P. On Good and Evil. C. 272.

³⁶¹ Evlampiev I. I. Philosophy of L. P. Karsavin and the mystical doctrine of Kabbalah // ΣΧΟΛΗ. Philosophical Antiquarianism and the Classical Tradition. 2022. № 16 (2). C. 640.

³⁶² Karsavin L. P. On Good and Evil. C. 261.

secondary quality of created phenomena, which in their essence have always been and remain theophanies: "Evil only seems to be different from good, but in fact it is not different from it and certainly cannot be a special element"³⁶³. The nature of evil is defined only by the incompleteness of theophanies as the limitedness and partiality of the divine phenomenon. Understanding sin as the incompleteness and separation of the good divine power in man opens us to the corresponding perspective of overcoming the sinful state: not through the "eradication" of sins from one's nature, but through the liberation and revealing of the fullness of the divine power: "Each one of them, if he could unfold all his power, would devour others and himself and become virtue, i.e. all virtues at once or their royal unity"³⁶⁴.

In the context of Karsavinian ideas about death, the sin and imperfection of man is thought of as the unwillingness and inability to die to the end. The above-mentioned tendency to disconnection, realized by the personality, in its entirety means not only the spatial distribution of its being, but also its distribution over all moments of time. Human personality, according to Karsavin, must in each of its moments realize the meaning of its being as a perfect self-giving, which deprives the next moment of life of its meaning and is "perfect" death (in the metaphysical sense). I.I. Evlampiev proposes to interpret this death in terms of existentialism as living each moment of one's life as a boundary situation, as standing on the border of being and nothingness³⁶⁵. In the most general and complete sense, death for Karsavin realizes itself as a moment of separation within the divine unity, which leads to a distinction of hypostases in God: here the act of separation is fully compensated and harmonized by the act of unity. Further, death manifests itself at the level of the all-unified man, Adam Kadmon, when the moments of unity and disunion begin to differ from each other, but without radical disunion: there is a difference of persons, but there is also their unity, since space and time have not yet arisen and do not separate these acts. Karsavin emphasizes that it is not death itself

³⁶³ Karsavin L.P. Saligia. C. 47.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. C. 61.

³⁶⁵ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 168.

that is fundamental, rooted in the Absolute, but rather the dialectical pair "death-resurrection" (expressing the inseparability of separation and unity).

Karsavin understands empirical death as an imperfect realization of the above dialectical pair: "Empirical death is not a break in personal existence, but only a deep tear in it, an imperfect limit set within the bad infinity of dying, between empirical and meta-empirical existence, 'the gates of hell', 'the veils of hell'. Apparently, empirical death is the greatest approximation of personality to nothingness: before it and after it, personality is increasingly removed from nothingness, and in this freely its imperfection"³⁶⁶. The experience of experiential death is an authentic experience of nothingness and a fundamental aspect of the process of theophany in nothingness : "The creature comes into being as a result of God's 'distribution' in nothingness, not in himself, so in this case death is an experience of nothingness, it is such an 'interruption' of being as is provided by the introduction of nothingness into the Absolute"³⁶⁷. In sum, God himself, through experiential death, receives the experience of nothingness. It is noteworthy that for Karsavin immortality is not the perfect absence of death; there will be death on the divine level, but there it will be replenished by resurrection. Evil itself will also remain eternally, but it will be nihilized accordingly. In this context, Karsavin, following his medieval predecessor Eriugena, insists on the necessity of a literal understanding of hell, in which every evil deed will be compensated by a corresponding punishment. At the same time, hell must exist in fusion with paradise and, in principle, be *in God himself*, in absolute omnipresence. For Karsavin, the elimination of hell means the disappearance of the differences between the world and God and the loss by creation of its non-divine freedom.

Overcoming evil in the context of Karsavinian philosophy means, in its metaphysical basis, overcoming the imperfection of the created world on the path of ever more complete communion with the absolute all-unity. The struggle against evil is understood here as a struggle for the fullness of good : it is necessary to

³⁶⁶ Karsavin L.P. On Personality. C. 69..

³⁶⁷ Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in XIX-XX centuries. Part 2. C. 212.

eliminate the limitation of human aspirations, only this limitation, and not the aspirations themselves, determines the evil deeds of man. Speaking of the transformation of the world, Karsavin states that this process does not consist in the act of separating good from evil or in the destruction of the cosmos, but in the act of elevating everything that exists into a state of higher being: "The transformation of the world must be understood not as its 'correction' associated with the negation and destruction of some of its aspects and sides, but primarily as its preservation in all its imperfection and limitations, and only then as its replenishment to perfection"³⁶⁸.

According to Karsavin, the most important act necessary for the metaphysical overcoming of the imperfection of the entire created world is the spiritual-bodily union of lovers. It is noteworthy that here absolute metaphysical significance is attributed to sexual, erotic love, which overcomes the imperfection of the created world as the imperfection of the all-unified man. This idea is justified in Karsavin's philosophy by the fact that the unity of all individuals is Adam Kadmon, not the Absolute Unity itself, so the fundamental act of unity is purely human love, not the ideal love for God, which should complement erotic love, but not replace it. Mystical love for God, according to Karsavin, has no meaning in itself, because without restoring unity in the form of Adam Kadmon, mankind is unable to achieve the fullness of union with God.

Thus, from the initial metaphysical model of the creation of the world as the "descent" of God into nothingness, Karsavin draws very original and unusual conclusions that turn his philosophy into a kind of philosophical version of Gnostic Christianity. All the most essential principles of Karsavin's philosophical system testify to his belonging precisely to the Gnostic tradition, which he knows very well and successfully generalizes in his teaching. However, contrary to this quite obvious conclusion, the thinker himself constantly claims that he is building a "truly Orthodox" doctrine. This strange peculiarity of the philosopher's thought requires additional explanation.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. C. 178.

2.3 L.P.Karsavin's Cosmology in the Context of Orthodox Dogmatics and Alternative Worldview Traditions

The question of the correlation between the Karsavinian concept and Christian dogmatics is part of a similar problem concerning the whole of Russian philosophy³⁶⁹. Within the framework of Russian philosophy of all-unity, philosophical and religious contexts are intertwined in a special way. Two main ways of understanding the relationship between the religious and the philosophical proper in Russian metaphysics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are the most common. On the one hand, there is the aspiration of Orthodox church authors to rigidly oppose official dogmatics to the metaphysics of omniscience. This is achieved, for example, by demonstrating the difference between the principles of "all-singularity" and "sobornost"³⁷⁰. Traditionally Orthodox authors point out the weaknesses of pantheistic tendencies in the teachings of Russian thinkers and the unacceptability of this tendency for Orthodox dogmatic consciousness. Thus, Fr. Vasily Zenkovsky, noting the great creative influence of V. S. Soloviev's ideas on Russian thought, speaks of the fallacy of the cosmology of all-singularity: "...the inevitability of failure in the construction of the system of all-singularity becomes clear. The very idea of this system grew out of an insufficient philosophical evaluation of the idea of creation and the consequent doctrine of the fundamental dualism of God and the world, of the fundamental transcendence of the world and the Godhead. <...> the system of omniscience is correct insofar as it does not transcend the cosmos, but it is wrong from the moment it teaches the homogeneity of God and the world"³⁷¹. Also, Orthodox evaluation inevitably includes criticism of the Gnostic-mystical origins of the metaphysics of omniscience and the sophiological doctrine. Thus, Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) criticizes the

³⁶⁹ See: Nadeina D. A., Mezentsev I. V. To the question of the correlation between the cosmology of L.P. Karsavin and the Orthodox tradition // Humanitarian Studies in Eastern Siberia and the Far East. 2024. №1. C. 107-117.

³⁷⁰ Anisin A. L. L. To the distinction of "Unity" and "Sobornost" as ontological principles // Omsk Scientific Bulletin. 2007. № 2 (54). C. 93.

³⁷¹ Zenkovsky V., Fr. Orthodox thought // Vladimir Soloviev's Idea of Unity. 1955. Vyp. 10. C. 58-59.

"sophianic heresy" of Prot. S. Bulgakov, including for its Platonic, Gnostic and Kabbalistic origins³⁷².

On the other hand, there is a tendency to bring the metaphysics of universality and the Church tradition closer together. First, Russian philosophers themselves could identify their cosmology as "Orthodox" and support it with references to ancient church authorities. Second, church authors may have perceived the idea of omniscience as "an anticipation and intuitive search for sobornic unity"³⁷³. Researchers may bring the concepts of "sobornost" and "omniscience" closer together: "In its philosophical content, the theme of sobornost acts as one of the themes and lines within the metaphysics of all-unity"³⁷⁴. Sometimes there are statements about the Orthodox origins of the concept of the All-Unity: "The concept of the All-Unity is a fruitful line of philosophizing developed within the framework of early Slavophilism on the basis of Orthodoxy"³⁷⁵.

Thus, to this day, the question remains open as to how the Gnostic-mystical, religious-church and philosophical beginnings in the Russian metaphysics of universality are correlated. It can be thought of both as a philosophical tendency alien to the Orthodox tradition and as a periphery, a heterodox modification of it, which has drifted away from the church-dogmatic core. The complexity we have noted can be demonstrated by the example of one of the statements of a church publicist about V. S. Soloviev: "For "fighters for the purity of Orthodoxy" he is an "ecumenist" and in general a "cryptocatholic". And for intellectuals he is 'too religious in the traditional sense'" .³⁷⁶

The relationship of L.P.Karsavin's philosophy to the Orthodox tradition is understood differently in the research literature. For example, D. Ruben does not believe that Karsavin's study of the Holy Fathers and his metaphysical reflections

³⁷² Seraphim (Sobolev), Archbishop. Defense of the Sophian heresy by Archpriest S. Bulgakov before the Council of Bishops of the Russian Foreign Church. Sofia: B. i., 1937. C. 122.

³⁷³ Anisin A. L. Toward the Distinction of "Unity" and "Sobornost" as Ontological Principles. C. 93.

³⁷⁴ Horuzhiy S.S. After the break. Ways of Russian philosophy. SPb.: Aletheia, 1994. C. 25.

³⁷⁵ Gorodneva M. S. Spiritual experience of Russian philosophy: the dream of the all-unified // Vestnik of the Russian Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2015. T. 16. Vyp. 4. C. 110.

³⁷⁶ Tsyplakov D., diak. "Prodigal son" of Russian philosophy // Pravoslaviye.ru. 2011. URL: <https://pravoslavie.ru/48086.html> (date of address: 30.08.2023)

contradict each other³⁷⁷. M. S. Gorodneva notes the ambivalent attitude of Karsavinian metaphysics to traditional Orthodox theology: "The doctrine of L.P.Karsavin completes the line of the metaphysics of Unity in Russian religious philosophy. Turning to the heritage of the thinker, it should be understood that L.P.Karsavin consciously based his judgments on Christian ontology, but a bright individual search takes the philosopher's thought beyond the dogmatic framework of the Eastern patristic tradition, sometimes leading to a dispute with it"³⁷⁸. N. V. Tsepeleva makes a similar statement, emphasizing only partial coincidence of Karsavin's doctrine of personality with the dogmatic foundations of Christian anthropology: "As we see, Karsavin's doctrine of personality is contradictory. Somewhere Karsavin's ideas are consonant with Christian ideas, and somewhere they are directly opposite"³⁷⁹. S.I. Skorokhodova comes to the radical conclusion that "Karsavin's ideas about death diverge from the tradition of holy theological thought and in some points are closer to the Buddhist tradition, which absolutizes Nothing"³⁸⁰.

In the context of the problem under consideration, it is important to take into account the way L.P.Karsavin understood dogma: "In his understanding of dogma there is neither the cold abstractness nor the arrogance of reason that characterizes V. Soloviev's attitude to it, nor the symbolism of N. Berdyaev that denies the last reality of dogma, nor the fideistic tendency of S. Frank to see it as the "beyond reason" truth of religion completely inaccessible to thought. Frank's tendency to see in it the "beyond reason" truth of religion, completely inaccessible to thought"³⁸¹. It can be said that the Russian philosopher in this respect was characterized neither by a radical rejection of church dogma, nor by a slavish adherence to it.

³⁷⁷ Rubin D. Lev Karsavin. *Personality as the Fullness of Being and Orthodox thought* // *Theology of Personality*. Moscow: Izd-v. BBI, 2013.

³⁷⁸ Gorodneva M. S. Intuition of the mind about the spiritual experience of the heart in the philosophy of L. P. Karsavin // *Postgraduate Bulletin of the Volga Region*. 2015. № 3-4. C. 73.

³⁷⁹ Tsepeleva N. V. Philosophy of personality L. P. Karsavin and Christianity // *Bulletin of Volgograd State University*. 2014. № 6 (26). C. 9.

³⁸⁰ Skorokhodova S.I. To the question of life, death and immortality in the work of L.P. Karsavin and John (Maximovich) of Shanghai // *Philosophical Polylogue: Journal of the International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy*. 2018. № 3. C. 177.

³⁸¹ Mosolova S.V. Preface // *Karsavin L.P. Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church (Disclosure of Orthodoxy in their works)*. Moscow State University, 1994. C. 7.

Karsavin's interpretation of Orthodoxy as such was original. Despite the presence of Philo-Catholicism in the life of the Russian philosopher³⁸², he evaluated Orthodoxy quite highly: "I repeat only the same thought, asserting that Orthodoxy is highly characterized by the intuition of all-unity, which is inaccessible to other churches (with the exception of the ancient Eastern churches). From this intuition arises a peculiar attitude to the cosmos, akin to that of antiquity"³⁸³.

A clear element of the convergence of Karsavin's philosophy with orthodox metaphysics can be seen in the way he uses trinitarian dialectics, embedding it in the scheme of all-singularity as an indispensable component. As in church dogmatics, in the writings of the Russian thinker one encounters the notion of the distribution of cosmological functions between the hypostases of the Trinity, as well as an emphasis on the metaphysical significance of the hypostasis of the Logos. But even here there are clearly contradictory ideas to dogmatics. Thus, Karsavin, in the spirit of many Christian thinkers, understands the distinction between the hypostases of the Father and the Son in the Trinity as a distinction between God the Loving and God the Loved with the recognition of the Spirit as love itself.

But there is no doubt that Karsavin's philosophy contains a number of principles that are incompatible with dogmatic Orthodoxy and characterize his philosophical system as a form of Gnostic Christianity. First, it is the idea of the existence of nothingness, which has a certain degree of ontological independence in relation to God (taking into account all of Karsavin's attempts to show that he is not a supporter of dualism, since *nothingness* does not represent a "being" opposed to another - divine - being). Fr. S. Bulgakov's reflections on the essence of creation show that Church dogmatics does not allow for the Karsavinian interpretation of nothingness: "By creation God posits being, but in nothingness, in other words, by

³⁸² In general, "philocatholicism" is defined as "a system of philosophical, socio-political and religious views, which is characterized by the allocation of Catholicism a leading place in the cultural, socio-political and religious life of the country <...> representatives of the philocatholic direction in Russian religious and philosophical thought traditionally give a positive assessment of the spiritual experience of the Catholic Church" (Ermolin A. V. The phenomenon of philocatholicism in Russian religious philosophy : auth. V. The Phenomenon of Philocatholicism in Russian Religious Philosophy : autoref. diss. ... Candidate of Philosophy. St. Petersburg, 2014. C. 9-10). L. P. Karsavina is recognized as one of the most prominent representatives of Russian philo-Catholicism, along with V. S. Soloviev and Fr. Sergius Bulgakov. Sergius Bulgakov.

³⁸³ Karsavin L.P. The Way of Orthodoxy // Orthodoxy: pro et contra, an anthology. SPb.: NOKO, 2012. C. 280.

the same act by which He posits being, He juxtaposes nothingness as its boundary, environment, or shadow <...>. Therefore, although Parmenides is right that in the Absolute, as abiding above being, there is no non-being, but God, by positing the relative, i.e., being, indirectly gives being to non-being as well. God is the culprit not only of being, but also of non-existence; this dizzying formula of boldness and profoundness belongs to none other than the mysterious author of the *Areopagitica* and its commentator St. Maximus the Confessor, the pillars of Orthodox theology"³⁸⁴. Equally incompatible with official theology is the idea of the enrichment of the Absolute at the expense of imperfection and the experience of being in nothingness, the idea that the absolute "needs" nothingness in order to be absolute, and the idea of the existence of hell in God.

Karsavin was one of the first in Russian historical and philosophical science to speak of the philosophical uniqueness of Gnosticism. The works of church authors that had existed up to that point a priori proceeded from the assumption that Gnosticism was a malignant Christian heresy that deviated very far from the teachings of Jesus Christ, which the church faithfully preserved. In Karsavin's works appears the idea, incredibly bold for that epoch, that it is the Gnostic tendency within Christendom that expresses its true form, more in line with the ideas of the founder of this religion, while in the church and its teachings there has been a distortion of these ideas³⁸⁵. This probably explains why Karsavin insistently emphasized that in his philosophy he was developing *true Orthodoxy*. He did not want to come into sharp conflict with the larger part of the Russian emigration, which was committed to traditional Orthodoxy and had the utmost respect for the Orthodox Church, which had suffered at the hands of the Bolsheviks. While Karsavin was not reluctant to pursue his bold scientific ideas, he had to conceal the direct meaning of these ideas; this explains his strange criticism of Gnosticism and pantheism in some works (along with their very profound presentation and interpretation in other works) and his claim to be an adherent of "true Orthodoxy."

³⁸⁴ Bulgakov S., Fr. On Creativity // Questions of Philosophy and Psychology. 1915. Book 129 (IV). C. 305.

³⁸⁵ In our days this bold hypothesis receives more and more confirmations and gradually becomes a proven historical theory; for more details see: Evlampiev I.I. Neiskazhennoe Christianity and its fate in European history. C. 17-127.

In his search for this "true Orthodoxy," Karsavin was assisted by the whole of Russian religious philosophy, which, beginning with P.Y. Chaadaev, was dissatisfied with ecclesiastical Christianity and sought some "true" form of it. Karsavin understood very well the continuity between the Gnostic-mystical tradition and Russian religious philosophy at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and he attempted, on the basis of his excellent knowledge of the history of the Gnostic tradition, to show that the basic principles of this tradition received an original development in Russian philosophy, especially manifested in the philosophical outlook of F.M. Dostoevsky, L.N. Tolstoy, and V.S. Soloviev. His first philosophical works stylistically, as we have already said, resemble ancient and medieval gnostic-mystical literature and at the same time are very "Russian" in their belonging to the tradition of the search for "true Christianity".

By locating Karsavin on the line of development of the Gnostic-mystical tradition, we can and should record a great number of coincidences between his ideas and those of the prominent representatives of Gnostic thought in the history of philosophy, as discussed in Chapter 1. Karsavin himself, in many of his works, points out thinkers who are especially interesting and dear to him: these are Basilides, whom he considers the originator of the most correct and profound version of the concept of the creation of the world, Origen, John Scotus Eriugena, Meister Eckhart, and Nicholas of Cusa. To this list can be added an outstanding monument of Gnostic thought, the Gospel of Truth (which Karsavin did not know), most likely created in the circle of Valentinus' disciples³⁸⁶.

We can identify the following points of coincidence between the great Gnostic teachings and Karsavin's philosophy. 1) God "in himself" is the Absolute-Unity, comprehended only in an apophatic way, he is not a person and surpasses the dichotomy of being and non-being; 2) the act of creation is understood as a spontaneous and unmotivated act, in which some "other" in relation to God is discovered, although this "other" originally belongs to God himself; 3) the emergence of the world and man in its essence is God's loss of the fullness of divine

³⁸⁶ See: Evlampiev I.I. Undistorted Christianity and its Fate in European History. C. 347-361.

perfection through the establishment of a relationship with his "other" (in most cases it is nothing); 4) man in his divine, ideal form is the most complete embodiment of God in the sphere of imperfect being, empirical persons appear in the act of secondary limitation of divine being, which causes the emergence of the sphere of spatio-temporal being; 5) the purpose of the existence of the world is the restoration of the fullness of God in it, the return of all beings to God, this process is entirely determined by the efforts of human persons, aimed at denying their isolation from the whole and returning to the integrity of the divine, ideal man;

Speaking about the alternative sources of Karsavin's metaphysics to orthodoxy, it is necessary to pay special attention to the Kabbalistic doctrine, which can be interpreted as a later form of Jewish Gnosticism that emerged under the influence of Christian Gnosticism (more specifically under the influence of the teachings of the Cathars)³⁸⁷. It is obvious that the interpretation of evil in Karsavin's philosophy coincides with the Kabbalistic doctrine, while the most famous Gnostic version of the explanation of evil goes the other way - by opposing good and evil, as well as giving evil a relatively independent existence from good (the source of evil in this case is recognized as the inferior God-Demiurge). Kabbalistic pantheistic metaphysics understands God as infinite and absolute light, which fills everything, being apophatic and non-anthropomorphic. The most characteristic feature of the Kabbalistic model of creation is the concept of *tzimtzum*, according to which God brought forth the world by limiting himself, by removing himself from a certain "point" (compared to divine infinity) where nothingness arose. In this "point" sphere of nothingness, the world comes into being through the new entry of divine light into it. Evil in the Kabbalistic tradition is a necessary aspect and even the essence of the creative act, which is determined by the beginning of nothingness, which divides and limits the divine light entering this sphere.

We should also note the closeness of the anthropological views of Christian Gnosticism, Kabbalah (Jewish Gnosticism) and Karsavin's philosophy within the concept of Adam Kadmon, which represents the first form in which God enters the

³⁸⁷ See: *ibid.* C. 563-581.

sphere of nothingness. In all forms of Gnostic metaphysics, it is the human person (in her divine form) who appears as the first and universal form of God's incarnation in the sphere of lower being. At the same time, it is unable to retain its ideal, divine integrity and disintegrates into various "countenances". The result is the earthly Adam divided into a multitude of human individuals. The accomplished fragmentation requires a reverse process - the salvation of the world through the restoration of the integrity of the divine theophany.

In his concept of Adam Kadmon, however, Karsavin is extremely original; he gives an interpretation of this concept that is difficult to find in the versions of Gnostic philosophy that have taken place in history. Adam Kadmon, Karsavin argues, lives in each individual in an imperfect form, but nevertheless real; the individual must strive to overcome his ontological isolation in the prospect of giving himself completely to the whole (the collective, the people, and, in the limit, all of humanity). In this context, Karsavin emphasizes the importance of the act of love in its direct earthly expression as a way of restoring Adam Kadmon in created individuals. It is noteworthy that the Russian philosopher, in contrast to the orthodox tradition of Christianity and Judaism, proposes to understand the biblical book of Song of Songs with its pathos of love literally rather than allegorically (however, this is characteristic of the Kabbalistic tradition as well). Love for God in this understanding does not oppose sexual love, but complements it, only in such a combination love for God is truly fruitful: "Solitary love for God is not complete. It denies God in His created world, rejects all earthly life and makes our mind "passionless for things and thoughts about them". It rejects other people and does not give comprehension of them; it also rejects the body, seeing in its desires only the abomination of lust. And he who loves with this love cannot comprehend himself. How will he comprehend himself when he loves only God in darkness? How will he keep himself in love, if he does not seek his beloved, if he does not know his twofoldness?"³⁸⁸ .

³⁸⁸ Karsavin L. P. *Noctes Petropolitanae*. C. 161-162.

Kabbalah emerged and actively developed in the XIII-XVI centuries as a religious trend that took the most valuable of all previous forms of Gnostic teachings; it is not by chance that it was very quickly used by Christian thinkers (the first popularizer of Kabbalah was Pico della Mirandola) who belonged to the Gnostic tradition. In Russian philosophy, Vladimir Soloviev was the first to see the significance of the Kabbalah as a very important stage in mankind's movement towards final and absolute religiosity (Gnostic in its essence). Karsavin uses the key concepts and concepts of Kabbalah to an even greater extent to express the final and exemplary form of Gnostic Christianity ("true Orthodoxy")³⁸⁹.

To summarize, we can say that Karsavin in his concept of creation, which explains the relationship between the Absolute and the world, refracts and combines various intellectual traditions in an original way, with the basis of his philosophical concept being the gnostic-mystical tendency of European thought, primarily in its late antique, medieval and revivalist expression (from the school of Valentinus to Nicholas of Cusa). The understanding of the act of creation in Karsavin's philosophy corresponds neither to the "classical" emanation model (Neoplatonism) nor to the orthodox understanding of the emergence of the world from nothing with the affirmation of the ontological gap between Creator and creation. Karsavin's philosophical work shows with all conviction the conformity of the main line of development of Russian religious philosophy to the Gnostic-mystical tradition.

³⁸⁹ See: Evlampiev I.I. Philosophy of L.P. Karsavin and the mystical doctrine of the Kabbalah // *ΣΧΟΛΗ. Philosophical Antiquarianism and the Classical Tradition*. 2022. № 2. С. 634-643.

Conclusion

In classical philosophy, the One, in one form or another, was necessary for making sense of the world and even for justifying thinking itself. The problematic of the One has been an invariably important part of philosophy throughout its history, because of the inherent desire of thinking man to transcend his finitude. The orientation towards the absolute and the infinite is natural to man, unfolding in the realm of philosophy and religion.

An equally important theme of philosophy in history has been the origin of the world. In the arsenal of modern historians of philosophy there are several model answers to this question. Each of the creation models is inextricably linked to the answer to the question of the relationship between the Absolute and the non-absolute. Usually distinguished are: 1) the biblical-creationist model, in which the Absolute is separated from the world of things and phenomena by an insurmountable ontological boundary, which is created by the Creator in the act of creation of the world (God is here thought transcendent to the world in the sense of perfect otherness to it); 2) the pantheistic model, in which God and the world are recognized in one or another sense as having the same essence; 3) the dualistic model, when the structure of the universe is based on two opposing ontological principles, the interaction of which is necessary for the emergence and existence of the world. In this case, dualism can be "strong", when both beginnings are equal and eternally exist in position to each other, and "weak", when an additional beginning in relation to the Absolute spontaneously, but inevitably arises from the Absolute itself. History shows that sometimes there were attempts to combine some elements of the above concepts within one scheme, i.e. there were intermediate variants; for example, the "middle" between biblical theism and pantheism could be considered "panentheism" - everything abides in God, but not everything is God.

Another criterion for the classification of cosmogonic concepts is traditionally the fundamental characteristic of the Absolute: 1) theistic creationism will correspond to the model of God the Person, i.e., a self-conscious and consciously

free being; 2) pantheistic understanding will correspond to the idea of the Absolute as an infinite, incomprehensibly rational and impersonal beginning; 3) pantheistic understanding will correspond to the idea of the Absolute as an infinite, incomprehensible and rationally impersonal beginning. 2) pantheistic understanding will correspond to the idea of the Absolute as an infinite, rationally incomprehensible and impersonal beginning; 3) dualistic scheme may include both the impersonal apophatic Absolute and the confrontation of the superpersonal good divine Pleroma and anthropomorphic Demiurge with a pleiad of other humanoid deities³⁹⁰. The above typology also allows for some variation. For example, the orthodox Christian understanding of God the Creator includes both the cataphatic affirmation of God's personhood and its apophatic overcoming within the same concept. It is also necessary to add that the New European concept of "personality" should be very carefully applied to characterize the ancient and medieval concepts that formed without using it in its modern meaning (A. F. Losev emphasizes that there is no analogue of the modern concept of "personality" in ancient Greek³⁹¹).

Focusing only on the act of creating the world, all related concepts can be divided into creationism and emanationism. In the first case, the Absolute produces things beyond its own essence in accordance with the eternal designs of the universe (either without any ontological support outside itself, or using some eternally existing beginning, matter). In the second case, the universe appears as "pouring out" from the Origin into the sphere of the emptying out of its fullness. Here we also find some intermediate variants, for example, the conjugation of the creationist scheme with elements of emanationism in the Areopagitics, when God is understood not only as a Creator separated from the world, but also as a self-extending Good. Platonism includes both the notion of an "impersonal" One, who generates the world

³⁹⁰ Nadeina D. A. Mystical and gnostic tradition in the context of the main classifications of philosophical cosmogonies // "Russian science in the modern world": LVII International Scientific and Practical Conference. Moscow: Scientific-Publishing Center "Actuality.RF", 2023. C. 172-173.

³⁹¹ "The human in antiquity is bodily human, but by no means personally human. Man here is by no means a free spiritual individuality, not a unique personality; he is, according to ancient ideas, naturally repeatable in all his individuality" (Losev A.F. History of Ancient Aesthetics. Vol. 1.M.: AST, 2000. P. 70); "...Plato's "soul" does not possess any personal content (in Greek there is not even such a term as "personality"), and in it only self-movement, eternal self-movement is important" (Losev A.F. History of Ancient Aesthetics. Vol. 2. M.: AST, 2000. P. 344).

from its Fullness, and the doctrine of an anthropomorphic Demiurge. Both the Platonic tradition and Gnosticism are characterized by the bifurcation of the divine realm into two origins - the "fatherly" and the demiurgic.

In antiquity, we meet both the natural philosophical concept of emanation and the emanative model of the self-distributing Good, which is depleted in this self-distribution. At the turn of the millennium there was a conjugation of ancient pantheism with biblical creationism. Philo of Alexandria played an important role in this respect.

During the first millennium A.D., several directions in solving the cosmogonic question coexisted in European philosophy. Quite early Christian orthodoxy began to profess the concept of creation from nothing by a transcendent God and to oppose itself to ancient pantheism and Gnostic cosmogonies. In the fourth century, in the context of the Arian controversy, Christian dogmatics established a clear distinction between the concepts of "begetting" and "creating." God creates the world outside of himself by his action, whereas the act of birth by God the Father is accomplished only in the Trinity in relation to the Son. At the same time, the Church's cosmogonic scheme was significantly influenced by Neoplatonic thought, which is vividly expressed in the synthesis of creationist and emanative approaches in the *Areopagitica*. At the same time, the criticism of pantheism in any of its forms acquired a stable form in Church thought over time.

Neoplatonic thought actively developed the concept of "descending" emanationism. The One-Good extends itself beyond its essence, gradually weakening. In parallel with this, Gnostic cosmogonies developed, which were criticized not only by the Church orthodoxy, but also by Neoplatonic thought (Plotinus' treatise "Against the Gnostics" also had the title "Against those who claim that the world is evil and its Creator is evil"). Christians and Platonists were not satisfied with the Gnostic dualism (mainly in its "weak" form, assuming the origin of the second metaphysical beginning from the Absolute). It was the dualistic cosmology that became the characteristic feature of Gnosticism. Dualism repeatedly made itself known in the person of various heretical movements in opposition to the

Christian Church (for example, the Paulicians and Bogomils professed "weak" dualism, and the Manichaeans - "strong"). However, it should be taken into account that Gnosticism is a diverse movement in which dualism can be intertwined with pantheistic motifs. A characteristic difference between Gnostic cosmogony and Christian and Platonic cosmogony is the active use of mythological language of presentation (in Christian and Platonic cosmogony there are elements of mythology, but not to such a significant extent).

Naturally, the thinkers who adhered to the Gnostic doctrine were either openly recognized as heretics or were on the verge of falling under church condemnation. There is every reason to believe that this doctrine, rather than the concept of creation out of nothing, assimilated by the orthodoxy as a dogma, corresponds to a greater extent to the early Christian worldview, which had not yet been philosophized by Platonic and generally ancient thought.

The universal problem of cosmogonic concepts is the ratio of absolute and relative being. The Absolute as an all-perfect being must "cover" the whole volume of being. The question arises how to think relative in this context. It turns out that the absolute in a certain sense needs the relative in order to distinguish itself from the relative, but this does not correspond to the concept of the Absolute as a self-sufficient being.

Christian apologists point to the uniqueness of the dogmatic doctrine of creation, due, according to them, to the divinely revealed character of the dogma, as well as to its superiority over all other variants of cosmogonies in the sense that it is devoid of the problems encountered by the alternative doctrines. However, our analysis shows that the orthodox conception of the creation of the world out of nothing has quite serious problematic aspects.

Influenced by the Platonic tradition, the concept of creation out of nothing has utilized both demiurgic and emanative schemes of cosmogonies in the history of Christian theology. Orthodoxy made significant modifications to the Platonic concept of the Demiurge and the Neoplatonic concept of the self-extending Good, uniting them under a single dogmatic doctrine of an intelligent Creator who

conceived the world and out of an excess of goodness decided to realize his pre-eternal good ideas beyond his divine essence.

Extreme forms of pantheism, in which God and the world are identified according to a primitive scheme, do not solve this problem, but rather "blur" the answer. The emanative model also leaves unresolved the question of the reason for the Origin beyond itself, as well as the question of whether the Origin needs something else, and if so, how this can be reconciled with its perfect freedom.

The cosmogony presented in the Gnostic-mystical tradition provides the most natural solution to all such questions: "The scheme according to which the world arises as a dynamic self-limitation of God in himself (in the sphere of nothingness manifested in him), first, holds the Absolute as a self-sufficient being, since the world arises in a special 'space' which has no autonomous ontology of its own, representing precisely nothingness in relation to the Absolute itself. Second, this concept prevents us from slipping into the subtle dualism of the creationist model, where God and the world appear as otherworldly. Third, we avoid the negativization of the world, which is played out in its own way in emanationism, orthodoxy, and dualistic Gnosticism."³⁹² . In the concept we are considering, the creature appears as a "stage" or "moment" in the process of God's revealing a special sphere of nothingness in himself and then integrating this sphere into his divine fullness. The created world is conceived here as a kind of "slowing down" and "stopping" of this divine process. Thus creation has no essence of its own, distinct from God, in opposition to the Absolute nature, and we get a convincing resolution of the question of how to think of the Absolute as self-sufficient in the presence of relative being. Creation here is distinct from God and yet cannot be separated from him, allowing us to pass between the Scylla of pantheism, which dissolves the world in the Absolute, and the Charybdis of dualism, in which the Absolute ceases to be self-sufficient and independent of relative beginnings.

³⁹² Nadeina D. A. Mystic-gnostic tradition in the context of cosmogonic problems of European philosophy // LXXXI International Scientific and Practical Conference "Scientific Forum: Jurisprudence, History, Sociology, Political Science and Philosophy". № 10 (81). Moscow: Izd. "ICNO", 2023. C. 8.

The originality of Karsavin's philosophical system in the context of Russian religious thought lies in the fact that he combined the most modern trends of philosophy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries with the most important traditions of European theological and philosophical thought. Not everything in this heritage is relevant and necessary for modernity, but Karsavin shows well that such important concepts as the concept of creation (the origin of the world) certainly remains relevant, being an eternal problem of philosophy, only changing its formulation.

The problem of creation was developed by L.P.Karsavin on the basis of a thorough analysis of the peculiarities of the medieval worldview, including its heretical trends. According to the philosopher, everything that exists differs from the Absolute, but not according to the principle of substantive opposition to it. At the same time, Karsavin is not satisfied with the version of the pantheistic system in which the differences between the absolute and the relative are simply leveled. The main drawback of this form of pantheism is, in the philosopher's opinion, the denial of the independent significance of nothingness, from which and in which God creates the world. The immanence of all things to God does not cancel the aspect of transcendence of the Absolute to the world. By distinguishing three versions of understanding the cosmogonic question - dualistic, pantheistic, and Orthodox Christian - Karsavin in his cosmological reasoning shows his belonging not to the dogmatic-Christian, but to the Gnostic-mystical tradition, affirming the independent existence of nothingness "next to" God (despite his own statements in the "Orthodox Christian" character of his cosmogony).

Nothingness in a certain sense opposes God, through its union with God God becomes the world, but God himself reveals in himself the nothingness that shows his independence, and creates himself in the "space" of nothingness that he has revealed within himself. God's self-limitation in the act of creation represents at the same time the self-reflection of the Absolute like the creation of a living mirror. The movements of created beings in this context are understood as the movements of God himself, distinct in some aspect from him. By limiting himself to give space to

something, God repeats himself in the specified space, creating a complete copy of himself in the world he has created. Creation is the result of God's self-limitation and self-termination, which overcomes the difficulties of both the emanationist model (where God creates a perfect likeness of himself beyond his being) and the creationist scheme (creation of the world through the establishment of a substantive boundary between the Absolute and creation). What is important here is the introduction of a dynamic component to the cosmogonic process: the Absolute is constantly moving into nothingness and back into itself. This makes it possible to retain the simultaneous transcendence of the absolute to the world and its immanence to the world; it provides a quite satisfactory scheme for combining these opposite definitions (in comparison with the unsatisfactory orthodox version of combining these aspects).

The original idea of Karsavinian metaphysics is the assertion that the Absolute in principle can have its status of "absoluteness" only through correlation with non-absolute being; the latter is required by the Absolute both logically and ontologically. Imperfection, multiplicity, separateness here become no less important and ontologically valuable characteristics than unity and perfection. In this context, Karsavin asserts the principle of the coincidence of the whole and any of its parts, when the distinction between unity "vertical" and unity "horizontal" is eliminated. Karsavin thus provides a natural metaphysical foundation for the key principle of Gnostic religiosity - the recognition that each person is a manifestation in observable being of the apophatic Absolute.

Karsavin substantiates the independent meaning of imperfect being through the image of Jesus Christ as an exponent of the absolute meaning of imperfection, which not only complements but even enriches absolute being. Here the dispensation of absolute being is proposed to be understood through the metaphysics of man. The system of empirical persons appears in Karsavinian cosmology as the "real" Absolute. The all-temporal being of man is an aspect of his absoluteness, i.e., in essence, the being of God himself, who lives empirical life through the individual. The human soul in this context becomes the image of the Absolute in nothingness.

At the same time, the Absolute can become a person only in the aspect of confrontation with the other, and thus in the act of indulgence in the realm of the relative. Karsavin's shift of emphasis within religious metaphysics from God to man corresponds precisely to the main tendency of Gnostic religiosity. In this context, the model of the divine All-Man, which represents the theophany of God in the sphere of nothingness and from which all the multitude of human individuals we observe arises, acquires an important significance. Here the figure of Adam Kadmon from the Kabbalistic tradition comes to the fore, who acts as the divine personification of all humanity and whose task is to return to the fullness of divine perfection. Kadmon's lack of effort on this path led to his disintegration into a plurality of human persons - mortal and imperfect. Interestingly, the incompleteness of God's perception of the All-Man (Adam Kadmon) has not only a negative, but also a positive moment: thus man has the gift of freedom, for the existence of which incomplete acceptance of divine perfection is necessary. At the same time, in Adam Kadmon and after his "fall", the unity of human beings with each other at the deep level (in the aspect of their all-temporality) is realized. The actual task of man in this regard is to overcome individualistic fragmentation. The sin and "guilt" of man are thought in the context of the second "ending" of God, connected with Adam Kadmon's "laziness" in his aspiration to God.

The tendency to disintegration into a multitude of elements is thought by Karsavin to be present in the Absolute itself as an ontologically necessary phenomenon. The tendency to decomposition is instantly compensated by the opposite action, for which reason the Absolute does not experience any diminution. If in the aspect of the absolute the tendencies to unity and decomposition are identical, in the aspect of the non-absolute there is a perceptible gap between them: there is no instantaneous compensation of one by the other. It is this "retardation" that leads to the transformation of God, when he enters into nothingness, into the imperfection of the world, and not the fact of separation, which is present in the empirical sphere of being. Separation here cannot reach its limit, after which it would instantly turn into unity (this "frozenness" of the desire for separation is found in the

phenomenon of space). Time in this context represents the slowness (non-instantaneousness) of the movement toward oneness for God, who is in nothingness. Time duration is also conditioned by the aspiration of imperfect being to restore its initial state through the successive realization of all its possibilities. The freedom of the creature is thus conditioned by this slowness of the divine movement in the created world.

Karsavin emphasizes the reciprocity of the processes of dying and resurrection in the cosmogonic context: the death of God is the beginning of creation, the death of creation is connected with the resurrection of the Absolute. In other words, there is an eternal process: creation lives by the death of God, and God lives by the death of creation. In this context, the category of suffering, which is ontologically necessary, takes on an important meaning; evil here is the suffering closed to itself, detached from pleasure. Evil and sin in the light of Karsavin's cosmology appear as a perversion of man's natural orientation toward the attainment of the fullness of divine life. Instead of a model for eradicating sinful beginnings, Karsavin's metaphysics offers an adequate realization of the corresponding desires, an emancipation of the divine power contained in man. The nature of evil is explained here from the incompleteness of the realization of divine theophanies in the context of the negation of the substantive understanding of evil.

Death is understood by the Russian philosopher in the context of the dialectical pair "death - resurrection" rooted in God, which determines the cosmogonic process. In this case, the imperfect realization of this dialectical pair is death in its empirical version. Empirical death is Karsavin's fundamental aspect of the process of theophany in nothingness, the real experience of nothingness. If unity exists in interaction with separation, God's death with His resurrection, suffering ontologically requires the aspect of pleasure, then paradise also requires its actual coexistence with hell: hell in its fusion with paradise must be in God Himself. The presence of hell is an important sign of the existence of non-divine freedom in the creature.

The struggle against evil in Karsavinian metaphysics is understood as a struggle for the fullness of good. The transformation of the world is not in the destruction of evil, not in its separation from good, but in the ultimate elevation of all things, eliminating the separation of good and evil. Overcoming the imperfection of the universe requires the elevation of the metaphysical status of human and sexual love. It is human love, and not the "ideal" mystical love for God detached from it, which despises human manifestations of love, that is the key to achieving the fullness of union with God.

The outlined aspects of Karsavinian cosmogony overcome the problematics of two opposing concepts - pantheistic and creationist: "It is important to emphasize that the Russian thinker's concept does not coincide with those pantheistic ideas of creation that we find in emanative cosmogony. The emanative model assumes that absolute being, overflowing the boundary of its inner fullness, unconsciously creates something similar to itself beyond its limits. A striking example in this regard is the Neoplatonic concept of the origin of the world. The understanding of the act of creation as self-limitation and revealing of God in the realm of nothingness excludes the notion of God's "doubling" in the creative process, as well as the desire to negativize the created world as a defective likeness of the Absolute"³⁹³.

We can conclude that Karsavin's philosophical system provides an original development of the tradition of Gnostic Christianity; he conceptualizes all the themes characteristic of the Gnostic tradition in a new way, using the achievements of the latest philosophy (primarily the systems of E. Husserl and A. Bergson). The undoubted metaphysical center of Karsavin's system is the concept of the emergence of the world from the Absolute, and here he most clearly and fully uses the centuries-old achievements of the Gnostic tradition, showing that it is the most fruitful direction for understanding the Absolute, the world, and man.

³⁹³ Nadeina D. A. The concept of creation by L. P. Karsavin in the context of the philosophical tradition of explaining the origin of the world // *Scientific Opinion*. 2023. №9. C. 68.

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