

The Philosophy of Freedom

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Preface to the first edition, 1894; revised, 1918

1. How **philosophy as an art is related to human freedom, what freedom is, and whether we do, or can, participate in it — this is the main theme of my book.** All other scientific discussions are included only because they ultimately throw light on these questions, which are, in my opinion, the most immediate concern of mankind. These pages offer a “*Philosophy of Freedom*”.

Preface to the revised edition of 1918

2. There are two fundamental questions in the life of the human soul towards which everything to be discussed in this book is directed. One is: **Is it possible to find a view of the essential nature of man such as will give us a foundation for everything else that comes to meet us** — whether through life experience or through science — which we feel is otherwise not self-supporting and therefore liable to be driven by doubt and criticism into the realm of uncertainty? The other question is this: **Is man entitled to claim for himself freedom of will, or is freedom a mere illusion** begotten of his inability to recognize the threads of necessity on which his will, like any natural event, depends?
3. The book will not give a ready-made self-contained answer of this sort, but will point to a **field of experience** in which man's inner soul activity supplies a living answer to these questions at every moment that he needs one. Whoever has once discovered **the region of the soul** where these questions unfold, will find that the very contemplation of **this region** gives him all that he needs for the solution of the two problems.

PART I **Knowledge of Freedom**

CHAPTER ONE **Conscious Human Action**

4. What does it mean to have *knowledge* of the reasons for one's action? Too little attention has been paid to this question because, unfortunately, we have torn into two what is really an inseparable whole: Man. We have distinguished between the knower and the doer and have left out of account precisely the one who matters most of all — *the knowing doer*.
5. That an action in which the agent does not know why he performs it cannot be *free*, goes without saying. But what about an action where the reasons are known? This leads us to the question of the origin and meaning of thinking. If we do not recognize the activity of *thinking* within our selves it is impossible to understand knowledge *about anything*, including knowledge about an action. When we know what thinking in general means, it will be easy to get clear about the role that thinking plays in human action.

CHAPTER TWO **The Fundamental Desire for Knowledge**

6. The universe appears to us in two opposite parts: *I* and *World*.

This feeling makes us strive to bridge over this antithesis, and in this bridging lies ultimately the whole spiritual striving of mankind. The history of our spiritual life is a continuing search for the unity between our selves and the world. Religion, art and science follow, one and all, this aim.

CHAPTER THREE **Thinking in the Service of Knowledge**

7. ***Observation and thinking are the two points of departure for all the spiritual striving of man, in so far as he is conscious of such striving.***

In sequence of time, observation does in fact come before thinking. For even thinking we must get to know first through observation. It was essentially a description of an observation when, at the beginning of this chapter, we gave an account of how thinking lights up in the presence of an event and goes beyond what is merely presented. Everything that enters the circle of our experience, we first become aware of through observation. The content of sensation, perception and contemplation, all feelings, acts of will, dreams and fancies, mental pictures, concepts and ideas, all illusions and hallucinations, are given to us through *observation*.

But thinking as an *object of observation* differs essentially from all other objects. The observation of a table, or a tree, occurs in me as soon as these objects appear upon the horizon of my experience. Yet I do not, at the same time, observe my thinking about these things. I observe the table, and I carry out the thinking about the table, but I do not at the same moment observe this. I must first take up a standpoint outside my own activity if, in addition to observing the table, I want also to observe my thinking about the table. Whereas observation of things and events, and thinking about them, are everyday occurrences filling up the continuous current of my life, observation of the thinking itself is a kind of exceptional state. This fact must be properly taken into account when we come to determine the relationship of thinking to all other contents of observation. We must be quite clear about the fact that, in observing thinking, we are applying to it a procedure which constitutes the normal course of events for the study of the whole of the rest of the world-content, but which in this normal course of events is not applied to thinking itself.

The first observation that we make about thinking is therefore this: it is the unobserved element in our ordinary mental and spiritual life.

8. For everyone, however, who has the ability to observe thinking — and with good will every normal man has this ability — this observation is the most important one he can possibly make. For he observes something of which he himself is the creator; he finds himself confronted, not by an apparently foreign object, but by his own activity. He knows how the thing he is observing comes into being. He sees into its connections and relationships. A firm point has now been reached from which one can, with some hope of success, seek an explanation of all other phenomena of the world.
9. The object of observation is qualitatively identical with the activity directed upon it. This is another characteristic feature of thinking. When we make it an object of observation, we are not compelled to do so with the help of something qualitatively different, but can remain within the same element.
10. **...There is no denying that *before anything else can be understood, thinking must be understood.***

CHAPTER FIVE *The Act of Knowing the World*

11. Thinking offers this content to the percept, from man's world of concepts and ideas. In contrast to the content of percept that is given to us from without, the content of thinking appears inwardly. The form in which this first makes its appearance we will call *intuition*. **Intuition is for thinking what observation is for percept.** Intuition and observation are the sources of our knowledge.

CHAPTER SEVEN **Are There Limits to Knowledge?**

12. We have established that the elements for the explanation of reality are to be found in the two spheres: perceiving and thinking. It is due, as we have seen, to our organization that the full, complete reality, including our own selves as subjects, appears at first as a duality. The act of knowing overcomes this duality by fusing the two elements of reality, the percept and the concept gained by thinking, into the complete thing. Let us call the manner in which the world presents itself to us, before it has taken on its true nature through our knowing it, "the world of appearance," in contrast to the unified whole composed of percept and concept. We can then say: The world is given to us as a duality, and knowledge transforms it into a unity. A philosophy that starts from this basic principle may be called a monistic philosophy, or *monism*. Opposed to this is the two-world theory, or *dualism*. The latter does not assume just that there are two sides of a single reality that are kept apart merely by our organization, but that there are two worlds absolutely distinct from one another. It then tries to find in one of these two worlds the principles for the explanation of the other.

Part Two **The Reality of Freedom**

CHAPTER EIGHT **The Factors of Life**

13. Let us recapitulate what we have achieved in the previous chapters. The world faces man as a multiplicity, as a mass of separate details. One of these separate things, one entity among others, is man himself. This aspect of the world we simply call the given, and inasmuch as we do not evolve it by conscious activity, but just find it, we call it percept. Within this world of percepts we perceive ourselves. This percept of self would remain merely one among many other percepts, if something did not arise from the midst of this percept of self which proves capable of connecting all percepts with one another and, therefore, the sum of all other percepts with the percept of our own self. This something that emerges is no longer merely percept; neither is it, like percepts, simply given. It is produced by our activity. To begin with, it appears to be bound up with what we perceive as our own self. In its inner significance, however, it transcends the self. To the separate percepts it adds ideally determined elements, which, however, are related to one another, and are rooted in a totality. What is obtained by perception of self is ideally determined by this something in the same way as are all other percepts, and is placed as subject, or "I", over against the objects. **This something is thinking**, and the ideally determined elements are the concepts and ideas. Thinking, therefore, first reveals itself in the percept of the self. But it is not merely subjective, for the self characterizes itself as subject only with the help of thinking.

CHAPTER NINE The Idea of Freedom

14. Those who find it necessary for the explanation of thinking as such to invoke something else, such as physical brain processes or unconscious spiritual processes lying behind the conscious thinking that they observe, fail to recognize what an unprejudiced observation of thinking yields. **When we observe our thinking, we live during this observation directly within a self-supporting, spiritual web of being. Indeed, we can even say that if we would grasp the essential nature of spirit in the form in which it presents itself *most immediately* to man, we need only look at the self-sustaining activity of thinking.**

When we are contemplating thinking itself, two things coincide which otherwise *must* always appear apart, namely, concept and percept.

15. An important question, however, emerges here. If the human organization has no part in the *essential nature* of thinking, what is the significance of this organization within the whole nature of man? Now, what happens in this organization through the thinking has indeed nothing to do with the essence of thinking, but it has a great deal to do with the arising of the ego-consciousness out of this thinking. Thinking, in its own essential nature, certainly contains the real I or ego, but it does not contain the ego-consciousness. To see this we have but to observe thinking with an open mind. The "I" is to be found within the thinking; the **"ego-consciousness" arises through the traces that the activity of thinking engraves upon our general consciousness**, in the sense explained above. (The ego-consciousness thus arises through the bodily organization. However, this must not be taken to imply that the ego-consciousness, once it has arisen, remains dependent on the bodily organization. Once arisen, it is taken up into thinking and shares henceforth in thinking's spiritual being.)

The "ego-consciousness" is built upon the human organization. Out of the latter flow our acts of will. Following the lines of the preceding argument, we can gain insight into the connections between thinking, conscious I, and act of will, only by observing first how an act of will issues from the human organization.

In any particular act of will we must take into account the **motive** and the **driving force**. The motive is a factor with the character of a concept or a mental picture; the driving force is the will-factor belonging to the human organization and directly conditioned by it. **The conceptual factor, or motive, is the momentary determining factor of the will; the driving force is the permanent determining factor of the individual.** A motive for the will may be a pure concept, or else a concept with a particular reference to a percept, that is, a mental picture. Both general concepts and individual ones (mental pictures) become motives of will by affecting the human individual and determining him to action in a particular direction. But one and the same concept, or one and the same mental picture, affects different individuals differently. They stimulate different men to different actions. An act of will is therefore not merely the outcome of the concept or the mental picture but also of the individual make-up of the person. Here we may well follow the example of Eduard von Hartmann and call this individual make-up the characterological disposition. **The manner in which concept and mental picture affect the characterological disposition of a man gives his life a definite moral or ethical stamp.**

The characterological disposition is formed by the more or less permanent content of our subjective life, that is, by the content of our mental pictures and feelings. Whether a mental picture which enters my mind at this moment stimulates me to an act of will or not, depends on how it relates itself to the content of all my other mental pictures and also to my idiosyncrasies of feeling. But after all, the general content of my mental pictures is itself conditioned by the sum total of those concepts that have, in the course of my individual life, come into contact with percepts, that is, have become mental pictures. This sum, again, depends on my greater or lesser capacity for intuition and on the range of my observations, that is, on the subjective and objective factors of experience, on my inner nature and situation in life. My characterological

disposition is determined especially by my life of feeling. Whether I shall make a particular mental picture or concept into a motive of action or not, will depend on whether it gives me joy or pain.

These are the elements that we have to consider in an act of will. The immediately present mental picture or concept, which becomes the motive, determines the aim or the purpose of my will; my characterological disposition determines me to direct my activity towards this aim. The mental picture of taking a walk in the next half-hour determines the aim of my action. But this mental picture is raised to the level of a motive for my will only if it meets with a suitable characterological disposition, that is, if during my past life I have formed the mental pictures of the sense and purpose of taking a walk, of the value of health, and further, if the mental picture of taking a walk is accompanied in me by a feeling of pleasure.

16. The purely conceptual content of an action is to be regarded as yet another kind of motive. This content refers not to the particular action only, as with the mental picture of one's own pleasures, but to the derivation of an action from a system of moral principles. These moral principles, in the form of abstract concepts, may regulate the individual's moral life without his worrying himself about the origin of the concepts. In that case, we simply feel that submitting to a moral concept in the form of a commandment overshadowing our actions is a moral necessity. The establishment of this necessity we leave to those who demand moral subjection from us, that is, to the moral authority that we acknowledge (the head of the family, the state, social custom, the authority of the church, divine revelation). It is a special kind of these moral principles when the commandment is made known to us not through an external authority but through our own inner life (moral autonomy). In this case we hear the voice to which we have to submit ourselves, in our own souls. This voice expresses itself as *conscience*.

It is a moral advance when a man no longer simply accepts the commands of an outer or inner authority as the motive of his action, but tries to understand the reason why a particular maxim of behaviour should act as a motive in him. This is the advance from morality based on authority to action out of moral insight. At this level of morality a man will try to find out the requirements of the moral life and will let his actions be determined by the knowledge of them.

17. The principle of the progress of civilization, like that of the general good, is based on a mental picture, that is, on the way we relate the content of our moral ideas to particular experiences (percepts). The highest conceivable moral principle, however, is one that from the start contains no such reference to particular experiences, but springs from the source of pure intuition and only later seeks any reference to percepts, that is, to life.

18. **Among the levels of characterological disposition, we have singled out as the highest the one that works as *pure thinking or practical reason*. Among the motives, we have just singled out *conceptual intuition* as the highest. On closer inspection it will at once be seen that at this level of morality *driving force* and *motive* coincide; that is, neither a predetermined characterological disposition nor the external authority of an accepted moral principle influences our conduct. The action is therefore neither a stereotyped one which merely follows certain rules, nor is it one which we automatically perform in response to an external impulse, but it is an action determined purely and simply by its own ideal content.**

Such an action presupposes the capacity for moral intuitions. Whoever lacks the capacity to experience for himself the particular moral principle for each single situation, will never achieve truly individual willing.

19. Men vary greatly in their capacity for intuition. In one, ideas just bubble up; another acquires them with much labour. The situations in which men live and which provide the scenes of their actions are no less varied. The conduct of a man will therefore depend on the manner in which his faculty of intuition works in a given situation. The sum of ideas that are effective in us, the concrete

content of our intuitions, constitutes what is individual in each of us, notwithstanding the universality of the world of ideas. In so far as this intuitive content applies to action, it constitutes the moral content of the individual. To let this content express itself in life is both the highest moral driving force and the highest motive a man can have, who sees that in this content all other moral principles are in the end united. We may call this point of view **ethical individualism**.

20. Only when I follow my love for my objective is it I myself who act. I act, at this level of morality, not because I acknowledge a lord over me, or an external authority, or a so-called inner voice; I acknowledge no external principle for my action, because I have found in myself the ground for my action, namely, my love of the action. I do not work out mentally whether my action is good or bad; I carry it out because I *love* it. My action will be “good” if my intuition, steeped in love, finds its right place within the intuitively experienceable world continuum; it will be “bad” if this is not the case. Again, I do not ask myself, “How would another man act in my position?” — but I act as I, this particular individuality, find I have occasion to do. No general usage, no common custom, no maxim applying to all men, no moral standard is my immediate guide, but my love for the deed. I feel no compulsion, neither the compulsion of nature that guides me by my instincts, nor the compulsion of the moral commandments, but I want simply to carry out what lies within me.
21. **An action is felt to be free in so far as the reasons for it spring from the ideal part of my individual being; every other part of an action, irrespective of whether it is carried out under the compulsion of nature or under the obligation of a moral standard, is felt to be *unfree*.**

Man is free in so far as he is able to obey himself in every moment of his life. A moral deed is my deed only if it can be called a free one in this sense. We have here considered what conditions are required for an intentional action to be felt as a free one; how this purely ethically understood idea of freedom comes to realization in the being of man will be shown in what follows.

Acting out of freedom does not exclude the moral laws; it includes them, but shows itself to be on a higher level than those actions that are merely dictated by such laws. **Why should my action be of less service to the public good when I have done it out of love than when I have done it *only* because I consider serving the public good to be my duty?** The mere concept of duty excludes *freedom* because it does not acknowledge the individual element but demands that this be subject to a general standard. Freedom of action is conceivable only from the standpoint of ethical individualism.

But how is a social life possible for man if each one is only striving to assert his own individuality? This objection is characteristic of a false understanding of moralism. Such a moralist believes that a social community is possible only if all men are united by a communally fixed moral order. What this kind of moralist does not understand is just the unity of the world of ideas. He does not see that the world of ideas working in *me* is no other than the one working in my fellow man. Admittedly, this unity is but an outcome of practical experience. But in fact it *cannot* be anything else. For if it could be known in any other way than by observation, then in its own sphere universal standards rather than individual experience would be the rule. Individuality is possible only if every individual being knows of others through individual observation alone. I differ from my fellow man, not at all because we are living in two entirely different spiritual worlds, but because from the world of ideas common to us both we receive different intuitions. He wants to live out *his* intuitions, I *mine*. If we both really conceive out of the idea, and do not obey any external impulses (physical or spiritual), then we cannot but meet one another in like striving, in common intent. **A moral misunderstanding, a clash, is impossible between men who are morally free. Only the morally unfree who follow their natural instincts or the accepted commands of duty come into conflict with their neighbours if these do not obey the same instincts and the same commands as themselves. To *live* in love towards our actions, and to *let live* in the understanding of the other person's will, is the fundamental maxim of *free men*.** They know no other *obligation* than what their will puts itself in unison with intuitively; how they will direct their *will* in a particular case, their faculty for ideas will decide.

Were the ability to get on with one another not a basic part of human nature, no external laws would be able to implant it in us. It is only because human individuals *are* one in spirit that they can live out their lives side by side. **The free man lives in confidence that he and any other free man belong to one spiritual world, and that their intentions will harmonize. The free man does not demand agreement from his fellow man, but expects to find it because it is inherent in human nature.**

22. But in the midst of all this framework of compulsion there arise men who establish themselves as *free spirits* in all the welter of customs, legal codes, religious observances, and so forth. They are *free* in so far as they obey only themselves, *unfree* in so far as they submit to control. **Which of us can say that he is really free in all his actions? Yet in each of us there dwells a deeper being in which the free man finds expression.**

Our life is made up of free and unfree actions. We cannot, however, think out the concept of man completely without coming upon the *free spirit* as the purest expression of human nature. Indeed, we are men in the true sense only in so far as we are free.

23. Man must unite his concept with the percept of man by his own activity. Concept and percept coincide in this case only if man himself makes them coincide. This he can do only if he has found the concept of the free spirit, that is, if he has found the concept of his own self. In the objective world a dividing line is drawn by our organization between percept and concept; knowledge overcomes this division. In our subjective nature this division is no less present; man overcomes it in the course of his development by bringing the concept of himself to expression in his outward existence. Hence not only man's intellectual but also his moral life leads to his twofold nature, perceiving (direct experience) and thinking. The intellectual life overcomes this two-fold nature by means of knowledge, the moral life overcomes it through the actual realization of the free spirit.
24. The perceptual object "man" has in it the possibility of transforming itself, just as the plant seed contains the possibility of becoming a complete plant. The plant transforms itself because of the objective law inherent in it; the human being remains in his incomplete state unless he takes hold of the material for transformation within him and transforms himself through his own power. **Nature makes of man merely a natural being; society makes of him a law-abiding being; only he himself can make of himself a free man.** Nature releases man from her fetters at a definite stage in his development; society carries this development a stage further; he alone can give himself the final polish.

CHAPTER TEN Freedom — Philosophy and Monism

25. Monism does not see, behind man's actions, the purposes of a supreme directorate, foreign to him and determining him according to its will, but rather sees that men, in so far as they realize their intuitive ideas, pursue only their own *human* ends. Moreover, each individual pursues his own particular ends. For the world of ideas comes to expression, not in a community of men, but only in human individuals. What appears as the common goal of a whole group of people is only the result of the separate acts of will of its individual members--usually with many following the lead of a few in positions of authority. **Each one of us has it in him to be a *free spirit*, just as every rose bud has in it a rose.**

Monism, then, in the sphere of true moral action, is a *freedom philosophy*... Since it does not consider man as a finished product, disclosing his full nature in every moment of his life, it regards the dispute as to whether man as such is *free or not*, to be of no consequence. **It sees in man a developing being, and asks whether, in the course of this development, the stage of the free spirit can be reached.**

...**Morality is for the monist a specifically human quality, and spiritual *freedom* the human way of being moral.**

CHAPTER TWELVE **Moral Imagination**

26. A *free spirit* acts according to his impulses, that is, according to intuitions selected from the totality of his world of ideas by thinking. For an *unfree spirit*, the reason why he singles out a particular intuition from his world of ideas in order to make it the basis of an action, lies in the world of percepts given to him, that is, in his past experiences. He recalls, before coming to a decision, what someone else has done or recommended as suitable in a comparable case, or what God has commanded to be done in such a case, and so on, and he acts accordingly. For a free spirit, these prior conditions are not the only impulses to action. He makes a completely *first-hand* decision. What others have done in such a case worries him as little as what they have decreed. He has purely ideal reasons that lead him to select from the sum of his concepts just one in particular, and then to translate it into action.
27. Man produces concrete mental pictures from the sum of his ideas chiefly by means of the imagination. Therefore what the free spirit needs in order to realize his ideas, in order to be effective, is **moral imagination**. This is the source of the free spirit's action. Therefore it is only men with moral imagination who are, strictly speaking, morally productive. Those who merely preach morality, that is, people who merely spin out moral rules without being able to condense them into concrete mental pictures, are morally unproductive. They are like those critics who can explain very intelligibly what a work of art ought to be like, but who are themselves incapable of even the slightest productive effort.
28. **Moral action**, then, presupposes, in addition to the faculty of having **moral ideas (moral intuition)** and **moral imagination**, the ability to transform the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which these are connected. This ability is **moral technique**. It can be learnt in the same sense in which any kind of knowledge can be learnt. Generally speaking, men are better able to find concepts for the existing world than to evolve productively, out of their imagination, the not-yet-existing actions of the future. **Hence it is perfectly possible for men without moral imagination to receive such mental pictures from others, and to embody them skillfully into the actual world. Conversely, it may happen that men with moral imagination lack technical skill, and must make use of other men for the realization of their mental pictures.**
29. Ethical individualism has nothing to fear from a natural science that understands itself: for observation shows that the perfect form of human action has *freedom* as its characteristic quality. This freedom must be allowed to the human will, in so far as the will realizes purely ideal intuitions. For these intuitions are not the results of a necessity acting upon them from without, but are due only to themselves. If a man finds that an action is the *image* of such an ideal intuition, then he feels it to be *free*. In this characteristic of an action lies its freedom.
30. To be free means to be able of one's own accord to determine by moral imagination those mental pictures (motives) that underlie the action. Freedom is impossible if anything other than myself (mechanical process or merely inferred extra-mundane God) determines my moral ideas. In other words, I am free only when *I myself* produce these mental pictures, not when I am merely able to carry out the motives that another being has implanted in me. **A free being is one who can want what he himself considers right. Whoever does anything other than what he wants must be impelled to it by motives that do not lie within him. Such a man is unfree in his action.** To be at liberty to want what one considers right or what one considers wrong, would therefore

mean to be at liberty to be free or unfree. This is, of course, just as absurd as to see freedom in the ability to do what one is compelled to will.

Author's addition, 1918

31. When I observe an act of will that is an image of an intuition, then from this act of will too all organically necessary activity has withdrawn. The act of will is free. This freedom of the will cannot be observed by anyone who is unable to see how the free act of will consists in the fact that, *firstly*, through the intuitive element, the activity that is necessary for the human organism is checked and repressed, and *then* replaced by the spiritual activity of the idea-filled will. Only those who cannot make *this* observation of the twofold nature of a free act of will, believe that *every* act of will is unfree. Those who can make this observation win through to the recognition that man is unfree in so far as he cannot complete the process of suppressing the organic activity; but that this unfreedom tends towards freedom, and that this freedom is by no means an abstract ideal but is a directive force inherent in human nature. **Man is free to the extent that he is able to realize in his acts of will the same mood of soul that lives in him when he becomes aware of the forming of purely ideal (spiritual) Intuitions.**

CHAPTER FOURTEEN **Individuality and Genus**

32. It is impossible to understand a human being completely if one takes the concept of genus as the basis of one's judgment. The tendency to judge according to the genus is at its most stubborn where we are concerned with differences of sex. Almost invariably man sees in woman, and woman in man, too much of the general character of the other sex and too little of what is individual. In practical life this does less harm to men than to women. The social position of women is for the most part such an unworthy one because in so many respects it is determined not as it should be by the particular characteristics of the individual woman, but by the general picture one has of woman's natural tasks and needs. A man's activity in life is governed by his individual capacities and inclinations, whereas a woman's is supposed to be determined solely by the mere fact that she is a woman. She is supposed to be a slave to what is generic, to womanhood in general. As long as men continue to debate whether a woman is suited to this or that profession "according to her natural disposition", the so-called woman's question cannot advance beyond its most elementary stage. What a woman, within her natural limitations, wants to become had better be left to the woman herself to decide. If it is true that women are suited only to that profession which is theirs at present, then they will hardly have it in them to attain any other. But they must be allowed to decide for themselves what is in accordance with their nature. **To all who fear an upheaval of our social structure through accepting women as individuals and not as females, we must reply that a social structure in which the status of one half of humanity is unworthy of a human being is itself in great need of improvement.**
33. **Only to the extent that a man has emancipated himself in this way from all that is generic, does he count as a free spirit within a human community. No man is all genus, none is all individuality. But every man gradually emancipates a greater or lesser sphere of his being, both from the generic characteristics of animal life and from domination by the decrees of human authorities.**

...But only that part of his conduct that springs from his intuitions can have ethical value in the true sense. And those moral instincts that he possesses through the inheritance of social instincts acquire ethical value through being taken up into his intuitions. It is from individual ethical intuitions and their acceptance by human communities that all moral activity of mankind originates. In other words, **the moral life of mankind is the sum total of the products of the moral imagination of free human individuals.** This is the conclusion reached by monism.

Ultimate Questions

The Consequences of Monism

34. But the second part of this book finds its natural support in the first part. This presents intuitive thinking as man's inwardly experienced **spiritual activity**. To understand this nature of thinking by *experiencing* it amounts to a knowledge of the *freedom* of intuitive thinking. **And once we know that this thinking is free, we can also see to what region of the will freedom may be ascribed. We shall regard man as a free agent if, on the basis of inner experience, we may attribute a self-sustaining essence to the life of intuitive thinking.**
35. This book aims at presenting no more than can be surveyed through the experience of intuitive thinking. But we must also emphasize what kind of thought formation this experience of thinking demands. It demands that we shall not deny that intuitive thinking is a self-sustaining experience within the process of knowledge.
36. **In intuitively experienced thinking man is carried into a spiritual world as perceiver. Experiencing the spiritual in his own intuitive thinking prepares man for the perception of the spiritual world.** *This* world of spiritual perception could be seen as having the same relationship to thinking that the world of sense perception has on the side of the senses. Once experienced, the world of spiritual perception cannot appear to man as something foreign to him, because in his intuitive thinking he already has an experience that is purely spiritual in character. Such a world of spiritual perception is discussed in a number of writings which I have published since this book first appeared. *The Philosophy of Freedom* forms the philosophical foundation for these later writings. For it tries to show that the experience of thinking, when rightly understood, is in fact an experience of spirit. Therefore it appears to the author that no one who can in all seriousness adopt the point of view of *The Philosophy of Freedom* will stop short before entering the world of spiritual perception. It is certainly not possible to deduce what is described in the author's later books by logical inference from the contents of this one. **But a living comprehension of what is meant in this book by intuitive thinking will lead quite naturally to a living entry into the world of spiritual perception.**