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The Doctrine of Three Types of Being in the Russian Theological-Academic Philosophy in the 19th Century

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of the theological-academic ontological doctrine of the three types of being formulated within the framework of the Russian theological-academic philosophy of the 19th century. The study of this problem in the context of the general analysis of the phenomenon of theological-academic philosophy allows expanding our understanding of the genesis of Russian philosophy and its religious-philosophical component. The main aim of the article is the historical-philosophical analysis (on the material of philosophical courses of Russian theological academies and original works of professors of academies) of the doctrine about three types of being, which was developed within the framework of the theological-academic philosophy in Russia in the 19th century. The set goal is achieved by means of textual and religious analysis methods, as well as historical-functional, historical-genetic, and comparative research methods. The authors conclude that the specificity of theological-academic philosophizing was determined by confessional affiliation and consisted in its theistic form: the transversal theme of all theological-academic interpretations was the problem of being. Thus, theological-academic ontology took the form of the doctrine of God as an absolute being and the world as its derivative. The theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being and the synthesizing function of the absolute in relation to theological and material being cannot be characterized as quite logical and consistent. The notion of God as an absolute being is conditioned by the aspiration of theological-academic philosophers not to go beyond traditional orthodoxy and is one of the main specific features of theological-academic philosophical interpretations of religious consciousness. At the same time, the historical and philosophical analysis of the works of professors from Russian theological academies allows tracing how the powerful ideological and theoretical potential accumulated in Russian theological academies after their reforms in the 19th century contributed to the development of professional philosophy in Russia, the development of a philosophical categorical apparatus and the systematic formation of Russian philosophical thought. The development of this theme responds to the urgent research tasks of the history of philosophy. Further, this topic is very interesting not only for historians of philosophy but also for historians of religion, historians of orthodoxy, and culturologists.

Keywords: theological-academic philosophy; philosophical theism; epistemological realism; ontology; materialism; idealism; absolute being; God; absolute true; transcendental monism

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Citation: Tsvyk, I.; Kvon, D. The Doctrine of Three Types of Being in the Russian Theological-Academic Philosophy in the 19th Century. *Philosophies* **2023**, *8*, 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies8040053

Academic Editor: Marcin J. Schroeder

Received: 25 May 2023
Revised: 20 June 2023
Accepted: 20 June 2023
Published: 23 June 2023

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1. Introduction

Rationalistic justification of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul traditionally constituted one of the problems of fundamental theology, but within the framework of theological-academic philosophical thought it became an integral part of academic philosophical interpretations of religious consciousness. Fundamental theology, or Christian apologetics, is a theological discipline that presents in a coherent form the most general questions of dogma, morality, the origin of religion, and its essence. In other words, fundamental theology is a general introduction to a system of theological interpretations. In contrast to dogmatic theology, fundamental theology is concerned with substantiating questions of a worldview rather than a dogmatic nature, so its subject matter

overlaps with religious-philosophical interpretations in many ways. In the works of some religious thinkers, the justification of problems of fundamental theology is carried out mainly by philosophical methods, which allows referring their interpretations of religious consciousness to philosophical rather than theological ones. This evolution from traditional apologetics to the creation of systems of speculative interpretation of religious consciousness can be seen in the example of the 19th-century theological-academic philosophy.

In the works of F.A. Golubinsky (p. 67, [1]), V.D. Kudryavtsev–Platonov (p. 184, [2]), S.S. Gogotsky (p. 329, [3]) the existence of infinite spirit, absolute being, i.e., using philosophical predicates to designate the divine reality is substantiated based on theoretical evidence and logical conclusions. The weakness and logical inconsistency of traditional rationalistic proofs of the existence of God determined the representatives of theological-academic philosophy to deduce the divine being from the general picture of the world. To solve the main problems faced by theological-academic philosophy, it was necessary to present its own vision of the world order. It was necessary not only to interpret the existence of God philosophically but also to incorporate it into the general picture of the world. Thus, the theological-academic system of philosophical interpretation of religious consciousness had to include cosmology as an "orthodox-philosophical" doctrine of the world.

2. Theoretical Basis

Appeal to the study of theological-academic philosophy opens for the researcher the history of teaching philosophical disciplines in theological academies in the 19th century and, at the same time, shows how deeply the Russian philosophical thought of that time used Western European philosophical ideas and comprehended rationalistic and materialistic settings of Western society, independently and creatively transforming them into the peculiar phenomena of Russian philosophical consciousness. These processes are reflected in the works of modern researchers of Russian philosophy of the 18th–19th centuries: V.I. Kotsyuba, N.A. Kutsenko, M.A. Maslin, S.V. Pishun, V.V. Serbinenko, and I.V. Tsvyk; foreign researchers: V. Goerdt, A. Fritzsche, A. Berlage, C.C.E. Schmid, C.H. Weisse, and C. Wolff [4–16].

Theological-academic interpretations of the origin and structure of the world were intended to develop and rationalize the traditional Orthodox doctrine of the world. In accordance with the generally accepted Leibniz-Wolfian dogmatic rationalism in the philosophy departments of Russian theological academies (Moscow Theological Academy, Saint Petersburg Theological Academy, Kiev Theological Academy, and Kazan Theological Academy), the existing world as the result of divine creation was seen as the best possible world where everything is in a state of dynamics and harmony, interrelation and proportionality. God was declared to be the prime monad, which created all other substances in accordance with preestablished harmony.

In order to creatively develop the Orthodox doctrine of the world, in the middle of the 19th century within the academic tradition, an attempt was made to create a core of theological-academic ontology, the doctrine of the three types of being, designed, according to theological-academic philosophers, to solve in a new way the basic question of philosophy, to overcome the one-sidedness of materialism and idealism (p. 5, [17]). Such a serious declaration, presented in V.N. Karpov's doctrine of transcendental synthesis [18] and in Kudryavtsev–Platonov's system of transcendental monism, was, in fact, an attempt to include absolute [2,3,19,20], unconditional [21], infinite [18,22] of being, i.e., a philosophical analog of the theistic idea of God, into the system of theological-academic ontological interpretations, presenting it as the ontological basis of the world.

3. Materials and Methods

In order to successfully accomplish these tasks, the method of complex historical and philosophical analysis of a representative body of sources (archival materials, manuscripts of lectures, and original philosophical works of professors of theological academies), which allows tracing the development of the theological-academic philosophy in Russia in the

19th century, was used as a basis for the present study. The specificity of the subject matter of the study required a combination of logical-conceptual and historical-critical approaches to the phenomenon of theological-academic philosophy and also the application of the methods. The work is based on the scientific principle of objectivity and historicism; it uses historical-functional, historical-genetic, and comparative methods of research.

The logic of the article is determined by the problem-analytical method. The philosophical problematics contained in the academic curricula and philosophical works of professors of theological academies are analyzed problem by problem rather than in historical and personality order. The principle of unity of historical and logical approach allows for reconstructing the process of teaching philosophical disciplines in the academies and investigating the regularities of the genesis of the theological-academic philosophy of the 19th century.

At the first stage of theological-academic philosophy, in the teachings of Golubinsky and Karpov and in the lectures of I.M. Skvortsov, the idea of the three types of being was only postulated but not substantiated. Lack of theoretical grounding of some ideas, in general, was typical for this stage of development of academic thought. Skvortsov, in his introductory lecture on philosophy, mentions only briefly the possibility of applying the idea of God to the question of the relation of matter and spirit. From his point of view, it is God as the absolute being who provides harmony between the material and theological. Only in the doctrine of Kudryavtsev–Platonov was there an attempt to present a philosophical justification of the Orthodox-theistic view of the world, which resulted in the theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being an absolute (infinite, unconditional) being as the original of the world.

The methodological basis of the theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being (absolute, ideal, and material) was the critique of Western European materialism and idealism. Closely related to religious consciousness and having a theistic meaning, the theological-academic notion of absolute (infinite, unconditional) being, which was central to the ontological constructions of the academicians, arose in the polemic with Western European idealism and materialism. In the polemic with the materialistic ideas that were gaining increasing popularity in Russian society in the 19th century, in the polemic with the German classical philosophy, Western European rationalism, the style of thinking of the theological-academic philosophy was born, called upon to comprehend the religious experience, to express it in theoretical, philosophical systems and thus to conform to the latest achievements of human knowledge.

The critique of materialism within theological-academic philosophy was not only designed to prove and rationally justify the existence and qualitative specificity of ideal being but also met the challenge of fighting the spread of materialistic philosophy based on natural scientific discoveries. To prevent the further spread of materialistic and closely related atheistic ideas, it was necessary for the Orthodox Church to provide rigorous, clear, and as simple as possible critiques of the fundamentals of materialism to emphasize its weaknesses and thereby prove its inconsistency.

As a part of the struggle against materialism, representatives of theological-academic philosophy took an active part in the polemics that unfolded in Russian social circles of the time around the work "The Anthropological Principle of Philosophy" by N.G. Chernyshevsky. P.D. Yurkevich, in his articles "From the Science of the Human Spirit" and "Materialism and the Tasks of Philosophy", opened this polemic. In his articles, he asserted an idea common to all academicians: the unlawfulness of deriving the theological from the material since, in his opinion, this material is revealed to man only through his interaction with spirit in experience. He did not reject the reality of the material sphere but stressed that it is wrong to deduce from it all the diversity of phenomena of the world or the theological world of man (p. 243, [23]).

The recognition of the reality of the material world was one of the fundamental points in theological-academic ontology. The theistic view of the world order demanded recognition of the reality of the material by virtue of its creation by God. The positions of

"gnoseological realism" were held by virtually all academic thinkers: according to Golubinsky, the theological world "requires matter" as the material in which its activity would be "imprinted"; Karpov did not doubt the existence of the "physical" which "necessarily reveals its being"; the objective existence of the empirical world was also claimed by Kudryavtsev–Platonov and A. Vvedensky.

However, all representatives of the theological-academic tradition constantly stressed the inappropriateness of deriving the ideal from the material. The reality of the existence of mental phenomena and, at the same time, their apparent immateriality, in their opinion, is proof not only of the existence of a qualitatively different being than the material but also of the impossibility of deriving the spirit from the matter. The main criticism of the academicians is thus not the certainty of materialism about the existence of the material world but the fact that materialism " . . . considers this reality to be so obvious and true that it asserts it as an absolute sign of any real being to the exclusion of any other . . . " (p. 127, [2]).

It should be noted that among all the materialistic systems and ideas that existed in the middle of the 19th century, the representatives of the theological-academic tradition were particularly eager to choose natural-scientific materialism as an object of their criticism since the problem of the relation between the physical and the mental was not practically developed and often allowed a rather crude reduction of the mental to physical and even mechanical processes. The so-called natural-scientific or "vulgar" materialism was not philosophical in the full sense [24]. In S.S. Gogotsky's Philosophical Dictionary, he defines materialism, in contrast to idealism, very briefly as "the branch of some doctrine where it is asserted that only substance exists, that everything comes from substance" (p. 42, [3]).

Almost all contemporary scholars note that the views of the natural-scientific materialists were characterized by an incorrect conceptual apparatus, mechanism, reductionism, and frequent inappropriate extrapolations of limited natural-scientific provisions to the realm of knowledge. All this made their views very fertile ground for theological-academic criticism and demonstration of the inconsistency and one-sidedness of materialism.

Thus, taking advantage of the lack of a clear definition of the concept of matter in natural scientific materialism (Moleschott and Vogt, for example, understood matter only as types of substance), Kudryavtsev–Platonov sought to prove that this concept is untenable, and, therefore, " . . . the entire enormous building of materialism is actually built not on solid rock, but on sand . . . " (p. 12, [2]). In the understanding of the theological-academic philosophers, matter is an inert mass, absolutely passive, possessing no internal sources of motion; it is a "building material" for God, who is the creator of matter and form.

At the basis of the theological-academic critique of the materialist theory of the origin of the world, there was the thesis of the opposition of matter and force. With mechanisticism as the general attitude, natural-scientific materialists could not resolve the question of the origin of the world (p. 1187, [25]). Vogt, for example, put forward the theoretically weak idea of the "accidental meeting of the elements. Only Büchner approached a philosophical materialist position in his views. For him, matter is a philosophical category, denoting heat, electricity, light, and substance. Matter and force are immortal and infinite in his view (p. 43, [24]). However, inert matter, from Kudryavtsev–Platonov's point of view, cannot be a source of active force, which is qualitatively opposite to matter itself and, therefore, is not a property of matter. Because of its passivity, matter is not in motion and cannot change its position without the action of intelligent, free, and active force. Yurkevich also considered a delusion of materialism "the notion of an unconditional mechanism and causal relations, as if capable of starting the existence of the world in general and not only of determining changes in the system of the already existing world of phenomena" (p. 243, [23]).

Darwin's evolutionary theory was also criticized within the framework of theological-academic thought in the second half of the 19th century. The theological-academic philosophers accused Darwin of not giving sufficient importance to the external conditions of life, overestimating the role of chance in the change of species. From Kudryavtsev–Platonov's

point of view, Darwin's theory can only be seen as an interesting hypothesis and not as a theoretical basis for materialism.

In the theological-academic critique of materialism, there was also the well-known thesis that the materialist view of the world with the idea that human actions are determined by the external conditions of life. Accusing philosophical materialism of promoting immorality, Kudryavtsev–Platonov argued that when good and evil cease to be a matter of free self-determination and become the result of necessary physical and social conditions, all human responsibility for his actions disappears, leading to disastrous consequences for human life and society.

Western European idealism has also been criticized by theological-academic thought. According to the academicians, materialism and idealism, despite their apparent opposition, are not so far from each other. They are united in their one-sided view of the world. The absence in both directions of the concept of the absolute as a perfect and all-powerful person makes the transition from idealism to materialism possible. Zenkovsky noted in his historical and philosophical research that the starting point of the theological-academic critique of idealism is the inexplicability of the idealism of representations of concrete-sensible being (p. 484, [26]).

Classical idealist systems in Western European philosophy developed the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the human mind, believing that the mind is capable of giving laws for all soul activity on its own, out of its own strength and means. According to Yurkevich, this is the basic fallacy of all Western European idealism. The law of mental activity is not assumed by the power of the mind as its own invention but belongs to man as a ready and unchangeable order of the moral and theological life of man and mankind. Yurkevich also asserted the contradictory nature of both one-sided materialism, which absolutizes external experience, and one-sided idealism, which, although it recognizes the internal experience of man, relies on consciousness and takes little interest in the private laws and forms of human mental life.

Theological-academic criticisms have been made of the systems of subjective and objective idealism: this distinction has been traced quite clearly. In the Philosophical Dictionary, Gogotsky noted that the concept of idealism was used in two senses: Kantian idealism, which was "very close to realism", and the idealism of Schelling and Hegel. If "Kant called his philosophy idealism . . . in the sense that our knowledge is only subjective, only what we think and concerns only those phenomena or the action of things on our senses and perceptions and not the essence of them", then in the sense of the philosophical systems of Schelling and Hegel "observation, experience, individual investigation of exact science only the causality of phenomena and their laws understood in the sense of their unchangeable sequence; but their meaning and sense are only determined by understanding their relation to the moral world . . . Only the consideration of phenomena in connection with the moral or theological self-consciousness of man makes it possible to understand the essential side of the whole world and of all that lives" (p. 23, [3]).

In spite of the closeness of the objective-idealist attitude to the theological-academic understanding of being, Kudryavtsev–Platonov, whose critique of idealism was highly appreciated by Zenkovsky, was convinced that no idealist system could explain the presence of an idea of the external world in the human soul, and in this, as well as in the "dilution" of the absolute, he saw a radical flaw in idealism in general. However, for his critique of idealist positions, the thinker chose the doctrine of subjective idealism on the sensuous world or, rather, the thesis that the sensuous external world does not really exist. Additionally, objective idealism, from Kudryavtsev–Platonov's point of view, although it does not deny the existence of the external world, still either denies the validity of its cognition or denies it any independent development.

In this connection, Kudryavtsev–Platonov's critique is interesting not so much of Berkeley's views that God is the source of man's ideas about external reality in the absence of reality ("Why does God present to our spirit an incomprehensible phantasmagoria of the material world if there is nothing real in it?") as much as the idealistic conceptions of

Kant and Hegel, because both the Kantian doctrine of the thing-in-itself and the Hegelian otherness of the absolute idea, its alienation into nature seemed to Kudryavtsev–Platonov equivalent in terms of downplaying the role of the external world in the general ontological picture (p. 155, [19]).

Kudryavtsev–Platonov insisted that in Hegel's philosophy, the external world has, in fact, no more independence and reality than in Berkeley's one. Understanding the world as a positive moment in the development of the absolute idea, in his opinion, does not correct the situation: the external world still remains only a transient and non-true moment of this development.

In Kant's philosophical system, the declaration of complete closure to the knowledge of things-in-themselves leads to the restriction of reason in the possibility of approaching the essence through the knowledge of phenomena and, thus, to the narrowing of the unity of the Creator and the creation. Kudryavtsev–Platonov opposed the denial of the possibility of cognizing the essence of things in the external world, which mainly bears the stamp of the divine presence. By insisting on the reality of the external world and the possibility of its cognition, Kudryavtsev–Platonov justified the general theological-academic position of gnoseological realism.

Despite their criticism of idealist ideas, theological-academic thinkers were much more sympathetic to idealism than to materialism. The theological substance of idealism, though devoid of signs of consciousness and freedom, nevertheless remained immeasurably closer to the absolute supra-worldly theological substance of theism than the qualitatively opposite substance of materialism. The critique of Western European idealist systems in theological-academic thought was intended to affirm and interpret philosophically not only the idea of the reality of theological and material worlds but also the notion of their independence and certain parallelism.

The critique of idealism and materialism and the discourse on the relation between the "real" and the "ideal" based on it constituted an important part of the "speculative ontology" in the lectures on Metaphysics (middle of the 19th century). The subject of speculative ontology declared the supersensible in it and in its relation to the world and disclosed these problems through the assertion of the existence and connection of the three types of being: real, ideal, and infinite.

A manuscript written in various handwritings and entitled "Metaphysics. Lectures delivered at the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy", undated and without authorship, was found by one of the authors of the article (Tsvyk I.V.) in the Archives of the Moscow Theological Academy (OR RSL 173/IV. No. 203). At the end of individual chapters is the signature "Pevnitsky". The Russian language of the manuscript does not allow us to conclude that it belongs to a time earlier than the 1930s since only from that time did philosophical courses in the academies begin to be taught in Russian (before that time, Latin was the philosophical language in the academies). I.M. Pevnitsky taught philosophical disciplines at SPbDA in the period from 1818 to 1835. See (Tsvyk, 2002, pp. 60–63) for the circumstance of the discovery of the manuscript and the assumption of its authorship.

Criticizing idealism (deducing the real from the ideal) and realism (deducing the ideal from the real), the course authors insisted on the objectivity of the existence of two qualitatively different and distinctive types of being in the world: sensual and supersensible, material and ideal.

The authors' argumentation in support of the thesis on the qualitative difference between sensual being from supersensual being is interesting: (1) sensual-real is revealed as something spatial, as a body, or as a complex; supersensual is as something non-spatial, simple and immaterial; (2) sensual is as objective-activity or unconscious, not capable of consciousness; supersensual, on the contrary, is subjective and all its activity is directed to consciousness; (3) activity of the sensually real is revealed as a spatiotemporal activity, as a result of an attractive and repulsive force, as movement or rest; the supersensible manifests itself only as a temporary activity, which is not characterized by movement or rest; and (4) sensuous acts as a result of determining extraneous influences, necessarily, not freely;

supersensible: acts as a result of representation, due to motivating reasons, therefore freely, determines itself to activity, etc.

The sensual-real and the supersensible are so different that the question of the possibility of their coexistence arises. This problem was solved by the authors of the course through an appeal to the supramental infinite being: the sensual real and the supersensible ideal exist and are connected with each other through the infinite, which is their source.

The notion of the reality, independence, and autonomy of material and theological being, which became the result of the polemic of theological-academic thinkers with Western European philosophical thought, formed the basis of the theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being. "The theological and material sides of existence are to such an extent related to each other as a part of a common world-existence, to such an extent condition the mutual connection and relation of the various objects of the world, forming from them single, integral and harmonious universe, that it is impossible to allow that at the basis of world existence there are two certainly distinct, independent of each other, opposite principles" (p. 184, [19]). From the criticism of materialist and idealist doctrines, the dualism of spirit and matter must be reconciled with the supreme being, which provides the basis for spirit and matter.

Responding to the spread of positivist ideas in society, theological-academic thought reoriented itself toward a critique of positivism. Although the theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being used one of A. Comte's ideas about the need to rise above the opposition between idealism and materialism, the general positivist ideas about the essence of the world, in no way, met the theistic aspirations of the academicians. We find the most consistent assessment of positivism in Linitsky. "They say: there is neither spirit nor matter in the sense of objective, self-existing essences, but there are two classes of phenomena: theological and material. However, it is impossible for man to treat both indifferently, to recognize both as equivalent values". Therefore, from Linitsky's point of view, there must be a concept of an absolute beginning, not a negative one, which would be inactive, but a positive one: "Without a certain concept of an absolute beginning, the philosophical outlook cannot have completeness, finality and unity" (p. 102, [22]).

From a logical point of view, the theological-academic ontological interpretations are quite simple and rely on the idea of transcendentalism, which derives from the synthesizing function of the supreme being in relation to spirit and matter. In the work "Introduction to Philosophy", Karpov postulated the existence in the world of two equal and equivalent substances: ideal (metaphysical) and material, which are reconciled and united by the absolute substance, God, rising above the world.

Karpov distinguished three ways of man's relationship with the world: first, external sensations of objects and phenomena of the material world; second, "ideas" of metaphysical reality inherent in the human mind; third, theological contemplation, which connects man with the Godhead. Consequently, the world must be distinguished into three spheres: physical (sensual, material), metaphysical (ideal), and theological (absolute) being.

Karpov's physical being "is that which, however it exists in itself, necessarily reveals its being by an external, obligatory physiognomy, and as a phenomenon can be naturally or artificially subsumed at least for one of the five senses" (p. 128, [18]). Karpov considered the second most important type of being to be "metaphysical" or ideal, which is higher than the physical, but lower than the theological. Metaphysical being is "not accessible to the sense and not spirit, but it enters the field of human being and reality from both beginnings and reproduces in a new series of being, reflects in itself the very beginnings from which it developed" (p. 130, [18]). The highest type of being, according to Karpov, was theological being: absolute, unconditional and infinite, representing "the fullness of the highest perfections, from which nothing can be taken away and to which nothing can be added.

Karpov's three types of being correspond to three types of cognition. In this plan of transcendental syntheticism, the world itself, the sensual and the conceivable, should appear in the unity of its material and ideal sides, as a single whole, in which case the law of the harmonious existence of the world will be found (p. 46, [12]).

Based on Karpov's position on the synthesizing function of the supreme being in relation to its derivatives, spirit, and matter, Kudryavtsev–Platonov developed in his works a system of transcendental monism: the unifying principle that reconciles spirit and matter and provides unity of the world, rises above the world: this is absolute being. Kudryavtsev–Platonov's system of transcendental monism as a doctrine of the harmonious unity of the three types of being is the most consistent theological-academic interpretation of the world.

The origins of Kudryavtsev–Platonov's idea of absolute being as the ontological basis of the world also lie in the teachings of Golubinsky. The central idea of Golubinsky's theoretical constructions was the concept of infinite being as a being infinite in being and theological perfection, the "culprit" and manager of the physical and theological world. Golubinsky's notion of the infinite being is genetically connected to religious consciousness, but "once risen" to the form of rationality, it became the initial basis for his philosophical analyses. The idea of the infinite, according to Golubinsky, is innate to man; it is neither a sensation of sensual objects nor a general concept of reason made up of sensual notions. Man assumes the idea of the infinite not from outside but united with the human being himself. It is this idea that is the starting point of man's cognitive quest; on the basis of its presence in consciousness, we can conclude that the original and primary basis of the world is contained in the infinite being. "To the human spirit belongs essentially the idea of the infinite in being and perfections, and in consequence of this, the original law of the mind is to seek for everything determined by being and perfections the initial, the original image, and the end in the infinite" (p. 67, [1]).

The ontologization of the infinite or the absolute, in theological-academic tradition, was a necessary condition for the philosophical justification of religious consciousness: God as a transcendental essence, due to its closeness to cognition, could not act as a subject of religious reflection, so, philosophical conceptual analogies of the divine essence were actively used in theological-academic philosophical interpretations. The methodological basis for the ontologization of the idea of the infinite in theological-academic philosophy was most often Platonism. Therefore, Golubinsky, like later Kudryavtsev–Platonov, interpreted the idea of the infinite in the platonic sense: as a theological reality, not as an abstraction.

For Golubinsky, the infinite being is elevated above the world and is the guarantee of its existence: the theological world and the physical world, the ideal, and the material, are consequences of the infinite being. Moreover, the theological, "intelligent" world is much closer to the infinite than the material world. Theological reality is not only the closest expression of the infinite's properties, the cause of expediency, wisdom, and meaningfulness of all natural processes but also something independent. While the theological world derives directly from the infinite, the material world is mediated in its relation to the infinite by theological reality: "The theological world, having freedom of thought and volition for its manifestation and disclosure, requires a matter in which its activity is imprinted, which, by binding the spirit, would make its own action tangible, would serve as a conductor of its actions on objects and the actions of objects on it; otherwise it would be lost in itself, dissipated in the infinity, having nothing to attach itself to" (p. 76, [1]). Such an understanding of the essence of the theological and material worlds allowed Golubinsky to conclude that the theological and the material are closely connected.

Representatives of the Kiev Theological Academy also discussed the possibility of relying on philosophical methodology in justifying the idea of God and creating a system of Orthodox ontology. Novitsky's theoretical constructions were based, for example, on the Christian-theistic category of infinite or unconditional being and on the a priori nature of religious feelings and philosophical ideas.

4. Results

The starting point of Gogotsky's theoretical constructions, as well as those of other representatives of academic thought, was his religious-philosophical interpretation of the category of the absolute or the unconditioned. In his system, the absolute appears as an absolute being that is above all restrictions and conditions, comprising the fullness of perfection and affirming itself in itself. In The Dictionary of Philosophy, he defined absolute being as an ever-evolving creative force, which through reason and will, creates external nature, man, and human history.

However, Kudryavtsev–Platonov most consistently developed the doctrine of the absolute in his system. The methodological basis of Kudryavtsev–Platonov's doctrine of absolute being, which is the central concept in his system of philosophical interpretation of religious consciousness, was, on the one hand, his critique of Western European idealism and materialism and, on the other hand, his theory of ideas developed in the framework of Christian Platonism.

As it was noted above, Kudryavtsev–Platonov's philosophical reasoning about ideas is based on the notion of the duality of any cognizable object: it is possible to distinguish the idea of the object and its phenomenon. Kudryavtsev–Platonov's understanding of the idea, as well as that of Golubinsky, is close to Plato's theory of ideas. While appreciating Plato, the thinker at the same time believed that the main mistake of the great Greek philosopher was that he separated the essence of things from the things themselves and personified this essence in the form of ideas, which have an independent existence.

Kudryavtsev–Platonov believed (rather in line with the Aristotelian rather than Platonic interpretation of essence) that the idea of an object is inseparable from it; it is contained in the object itself as its ideal side, as its constant and unchanging essence. The idea is constant and unchanging; therefore, it is something original in relation to changing phenomena. The ideal world, according to Kudryavtsev–Platonov, is a coexistence of different ideas, each of which, due to its relativity, cannot possess the absolute truth of being. The hierarchy of ideas is crowned by the absolute idea possessing the absolute truth of being. Thus Kudryavtsev–Platonov tried to carry out a logical justification of the concept of the absolute as the primary basis and purpose of all existing things. "In virtue of this absolute idea, all other ideas are not a series of disparate and independent of one another beginnings, but form one harmonious whole, an ideal world ascending in steps of development and culminating in the idea of the absolute, which is at the same time the foundation and the crown of existence, the absolute beginning and last purpose of existence" (p. 154, [2]). Modern theologians claim that Kudryavtsev–Platonov's doctrine of the ideal world and the absolute idea which harmonizes theological and material reality was the theoretical basis for Vladimir Soloviev's philosophy of omnification, in particular his analysis of the relation between the universal idea and its particular manifestations (p. 129, [27]). In our opinion, this assessment can be considered quite fair. A more detailed discussion of this influence is presented in the monograph by I.V. Tsvyk (p. 220, [9]). Moreover, it is legitimate to talk about the influence of not only Kudryavtsev–Platonov's ideas but also the influence of the Moscow School of Theological Academia on Soloviev as a whole.

Aware of the importance of a theoretical definition of the idea of the absolute, Kudryavtsev–Platonov tried to implement its logical conclusion also through the concept of perfection. He argued that it is in the idea of perfection that there is a common attribute that unites the three fundamental ideas: truth, goodness, and beauty in human consciousness. All of these ideas, in his view, are perceived by man as something to strive for, i.e., as something perfect. However, perfection is forbidden to empirical reality and hence has an absolute character. Therefore, the thinker considered the idea of the absolute and not an imaginary, abstract ideal, but an absolutely perfect being, an absolutely perfect reality, or the absolute being as the embodiment of the idea of perfection.

5. Discussion

Obviously, the concept of absolute or unconditional being as a perfect and omnipotent person was at the center of theological-academic ontological interpretations of the second half of the 19th century. In this connection, the question of the relation of this concept to the theistic idea of God should be considered in more detail. The use of the concept "absolute" rather than "God" in his philosophical constructions by Kudryavtsev–Platonov, for example, was explained by his desire to expand the framework of the system by admitting the possibility of other points of view along with the theistic one.

In Gogotsky's Philosophical Dictionary article about God, the idea of infinite and unconditional being coincides with the idea of God. Yurkevich, who did not consider such a mixing of concepts possible, reproached Gogotsky for the fact that "in the whole article he mixes this clear concept (about God) with the indefinite thought of philosophers about the positive and essential content of the world of phenomena" (p. 269, [23]). However, according to Gogotsky's logic, "the conclusion from finite being to the infinite is the conclusion from the world to God" (p. 112, [3]).

In our opinion, the need for a philosophical analog of the theistic concept of God is explained by the desire of theological-academic philosophers to present a philosophical interpretation of basic religious ideas, including the idea of God. In setting themselves the task of "churchifying" (in the words of V.V. Zenkovsky) [26] modern European philosophy and incorporating its ideas into a renewed and rationally grounded Orthodox doctrine of the world and man, some theological-academic philosophers have attempted to justify the need for rational comprehension of God.

At the same time, according to the Orthodox tradition, one could not allow for an excessive "openness" of the divine or a "blurring" of the absolute, which occurred, according to Kudryavtsev–Platonov, in Hegel's philosophy. The absolute in Hegel's system turned out to be completely exhausted and cognized; there was no place for mystery in it—it ceased to be a transcendental essence. The theological-academic thinkers were faced with a fundamentally different task: preserving God intact as a perfect, transcendent being who is the subject of theology, to present a philosophical vision and rational basis for the possibility of knowing the absolute as one facet of Deity.

For this purpose, the concept of the absolute idea, derived from the philosophical reasoning of Kudryavtsev–Platonov's theory of ideas, was not quite suitable either because of its impersonality and the meaning fixed on it in Hegelian philosophy. On the one hand, it was necessary to present the absolute as a spirit-personal reality transcendent in relation to the world and, on the other hand, to show that due to its transcendence, the absolute does not become open for cognition to the end, but only insofar as it is accessible to the human mind which is limited in comparison to the infinite absolute. This function in theological-academic ontology is performed by the concept of absolute (infinite, unconditional) being, and the ontological picture implies the recognition of absolute being as the final criterion and supreme goal of all that exists, rising above the opposites of spirit and matter.

The recognition by representatives of the moderate-rationalist strand of theological-academic thought of the possibility of human comprehension of one facet of Deity does not at all mean that philosophical rationalism in its purest form is admitted into the structure of religious consciousness. In theological-academic epistemology, absolute being, although it appears as the object of religious reflection, nevertheless becomes the subject of a specific kind of cognition that relies on the non-rational capacities of man.

Absolute being, by definition, is outside the world; at the same time, it actively influences the world, determining its existence and development. Vvedensky, in solidarity with Kudryavtsev–Platonov, argued that absolute being is the totality of all perfections—the "world being" is transcendent to the world but immanently present in the world through providence.

Justification of the being of the absolute was pursued in theological-academic philosophical thought in the late 19th century as well, although, at that time, the rationalistic justification of divine being was not as topical as it had been in the middle of the century.

Linitsky's article with the characteristic title "Is the Absolute an Idea or an Actual Being?" published in 1890, shows that the problem of ontologizing the absolute did not lose its importance under the general crisis of the rationalist trend in theological-academic philosophy, associated with the gradual decline of interest in the rationalistic justifications of religious ideas and the coming to the fore of ethical and anthropological issues (p. 49, [9]). In this work, Linitsky tried to present a philosophical, logical justification for the relationship between the absolute and the world. The starting point of his reasoning was the idea that the recognition of the existence of the absolute was necessary to affirm the reality of the world (p. 340, [10,11]).

The affirmation of the absolute as the cause of all things in the world led Linitsky to the recognition and justification of the connection between the absolute and the world. He saw the possibility and reality of this connection in the absolute's capacity for self-limitation into the finite while preserving its own identity. Thus, in his view, the mode of activity of the absolute consists of the fact that through self-limitation, it produces from itself the finite, but having produced one finite phenomenon, the absolute does not remain in it but denies it in order to produce a new finite phenomenon, etc. In this case, the finite acts as a means of discovering the absolute, although in no finite phenomenon can the absolute be fully revealed, and so it passes from one finite to another. The infinity of the chain of finite phenomena determines the impossibility of full disclosure of the absolute.

P. Miloslavsky also wrote about the impossibility of fully comprehending the absolute in his work "Fundamentals of Philosophy as the Special Science", written under the influence of positivistic philosophy. Miloslavsky's interpretation of the absolute shows that at the end of the 19th century, despite their continuing interest in the problem of the absolute, many theological-academic thinkers preferred to look for a different interpretation of this category than the traditional theistic one. In Miloslavsky's work, the absolute is presented in the form of the absolute truth, about the possibility of cognizing which the thinker was speculating. Rather in the spirit of positivism than in the rationalistic direction of theological-academic thought, Miloslavsky understood the absolute as "the ideal that is one with the final ideal of every science, and obviously the highest of all scientific ideals. The thinker noted that to cognize reality, the philosopher must proceed not from the absolute to the phenomena, as the "old" philosophy pointed out, but from the phenomena to the absolute, since "the striving to the absolute is conditioned by the natural human striving to the higher ideals of existence and knowledge in comparison with what is and what is known at any given time to a better and happier life and activity, to a better, more beautiful and elegant environment, to the best, greatest and most reliable knowledge" (p. 425, [20]).

6. Conclusions

Thus, theological-academic ontology is an attempt at philosophical justification of the theistic view of the world. According to this view, the dualism of spirit and matter actually existing in the world is reconciled in the underlying world beginning, the absolute being, which gives the basis for spirit and matter: the unifying beginning, which provides the unity of the world, rises above the world. B. Yakovenko, characterizing theological-academic thought, wrote: "Having once found itself, standing on its own feet and beginning to reflect independently and systematically on the most important speculative problems, Russian philosophical thought declared itself as creative idealism: the absolute creative spirit was recognized and taken by it in one form or another as the basis and explanation of all things. At the same time, an unconditional characteristic feature of this worldview was an obvious inclination toward theism, as opposed to all possible reformulations of pantheism. That is, recognizing the absolute spirit as the basis and justification of all existing, Russian philosophical thought refused to identify all existing with the divine absolute and tried to put them in a relation of a kind of transcendence" (p. 78, [26]).

The theological-academic doctrine of the three types of being, the synthesizing function of the absolute in relation to theological and material being cannot be characterized as quite logical and consistent (p. 176, [28,29]). Neither Golubinsky nor Karpov nor Kudryavtsev–

Platonov gave a clear, logical justification for the formula "God is absolute. This judgment, intended to be the sum total of the philosophical justification of religion, is genetically linked to religious consciousness itself" (p. 32, [30]). This close connection with religious consciousness, the desire not to go beyond traditional orthodoxy, is one of the main specific features of theological-academic philosophical interpretations of religious consciousness.

In our opinion, we can agree with Yu. A. Kimelev, who argued that systematic theology will always gravitate either toward using some philosophical system or toward unfolding itself into a metaphysical theory. "The bottom line is that Christian theology must present God as an absolute, as the highest ontological principle of cumulative reality, respectively, as a comprehensive explanatory principle. At the same time, such a principle must also appear as the basis of intelligible reality, including individual-life reality" (p. 118, [31,32]). Thus, the theological-academic doctrine of absolute being as the fundamental beginning of the world, reconciling theological and material being and being their primary cause, was a consequence of the philosophical interpretation of the Orthodox-theistic view of the world.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, I.T. and D.K.; methodology, I.T. and D.K.; software, I.T. and D.K.; validation, I.T. and D.K.; formal analysis, I.T. and D.K.; investigation, I.T. and D.K.; resources, I.T. and D.K.; data curation, I.T. and D.K.; writing—original draft preparation, I.T. and D.K.; writing—review and editing, I.T. and D.K.; visualization, I.T. and D.K.; supervision, I.T. and D.K.; project administration, I.T. and D.K.; funding acquisition, I.T. and D.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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