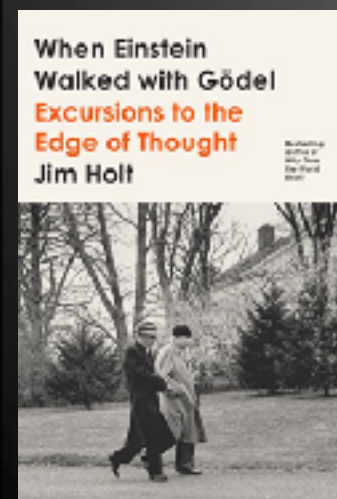
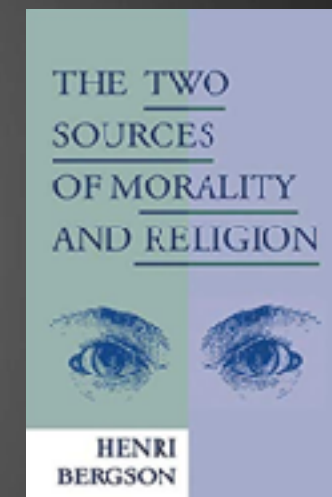
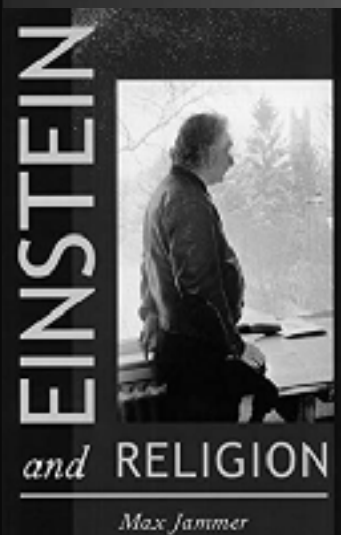
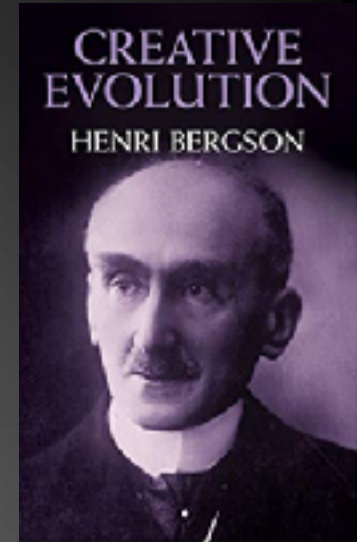
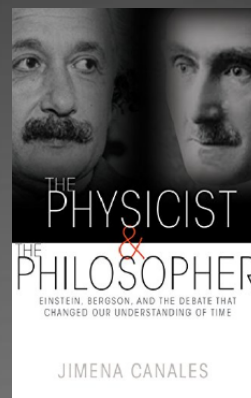
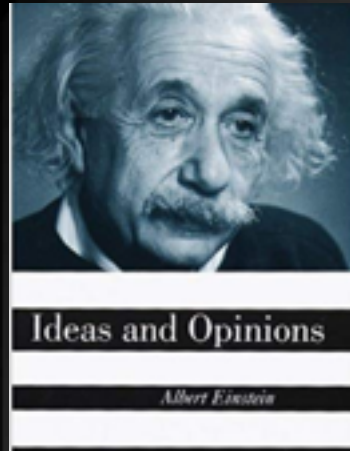


*Is Time Illusory?*

Alexey Burov, FSP, Feb 1, 2019



*Is Time Illusory?*

*Is the Universe Mathematical?*

*Is God Omniscient?*

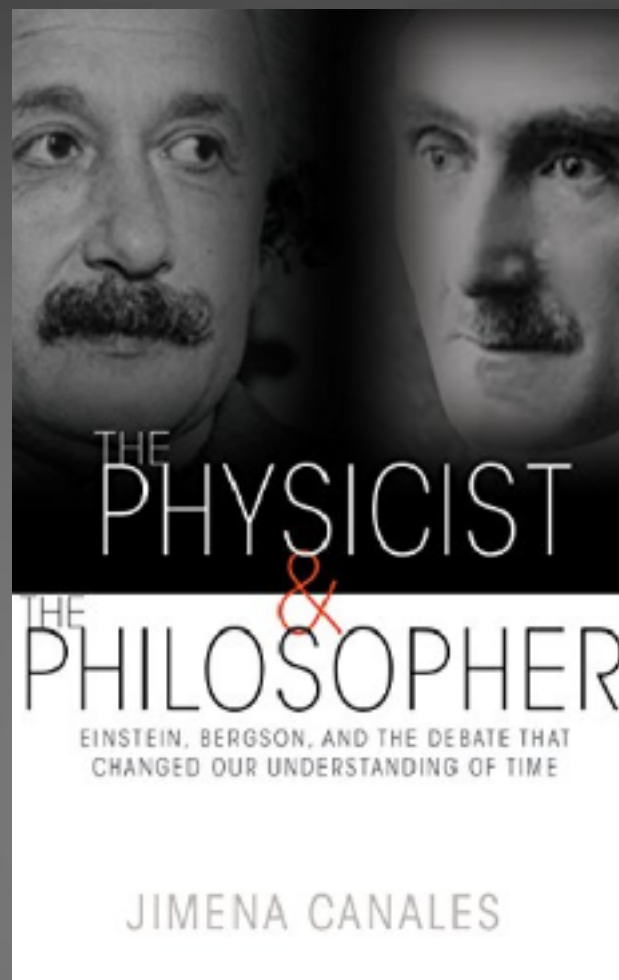
*God in Time or Time in God?*

*Does God intervene?*

*Can God change His Mind?*

*Can Man surprise God?*

*Why did God bother Creation?*



Each of them was a mystic in the conventional as well as Bergsonian sense.

Each was a Jew by origin, each loved Jesus. For both, music played a great role.

Each was a good mathematician and powerful philosopher.

And yet they did not see each other well...

Why?



<https://fermisocietyofphilosophy.wordpress.com/>

[philosophysociety@fnal.gov](mailto:philosophysociety@fnal.gov)

<https://www.meetup.com/Fermi-Society-of-Philosophy>

[burov@fnal.gov](mailto:burov@fnal.gov)

# What was at stake?

What was at stake? “Before God, a thousand years are as one day,” went a common saying. Common understandings of God often attributed to him immense powers in his perception of time. In Christian theology, an eternity was defined as a mere instant for God... The astronomer Charles Nordmann succinctly explained the deity’s power when it came to time: “For an infinitely perfect being equal to a God, past sensations would be as actual as the present ones and time would not exist.”

“Even atheists themselves,” according to Poincaré, “place themselves in the place of an omnipresent God when they discuss time.”

(The Physicist and the Philosopher)



# Time, Space and God

Since its inception, the idea of universal time was tightly coupled with that of God. Newton famously described time in both theological and scientific terms. For him, and for many thinkers after him, absolute time was defined by recourse to an absolute observer—an omniscient consciousness—which he attributed directly to God. The “sensorium of God” guaranteed the existence of absolute time: Because he “endures forever and is everywhere present; and, by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes duration and space.”<sup>54</sup> Newton’s association of absolute time and an omniscient consciousness was widely shared.

But even when direct references to God were absent, allusions to godlike perspectives continued to appear well into the twentieth century. Even Laplace, who was rumored to have answered “Sir, I have no need of that hypothesis” when Napoleon asked him if God had to intervene to keep the universe stable, could not help but talk about “an intellect who at any given moment knew all of the forces that animate nature and the mutual positions of the beings that compose it.” Laplace speculated that “if this intellect were vast enough to submit the data to analysis,” then “for such an intellect nothing could be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes.”

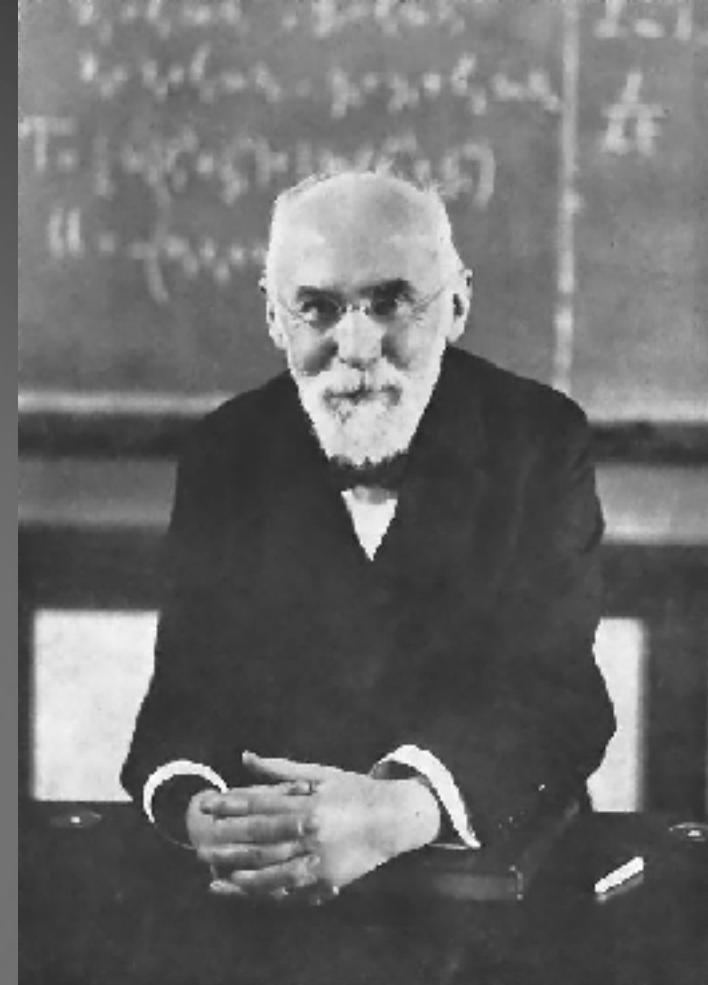
(The Physicist and the Philosopher)



# Time, Space and God

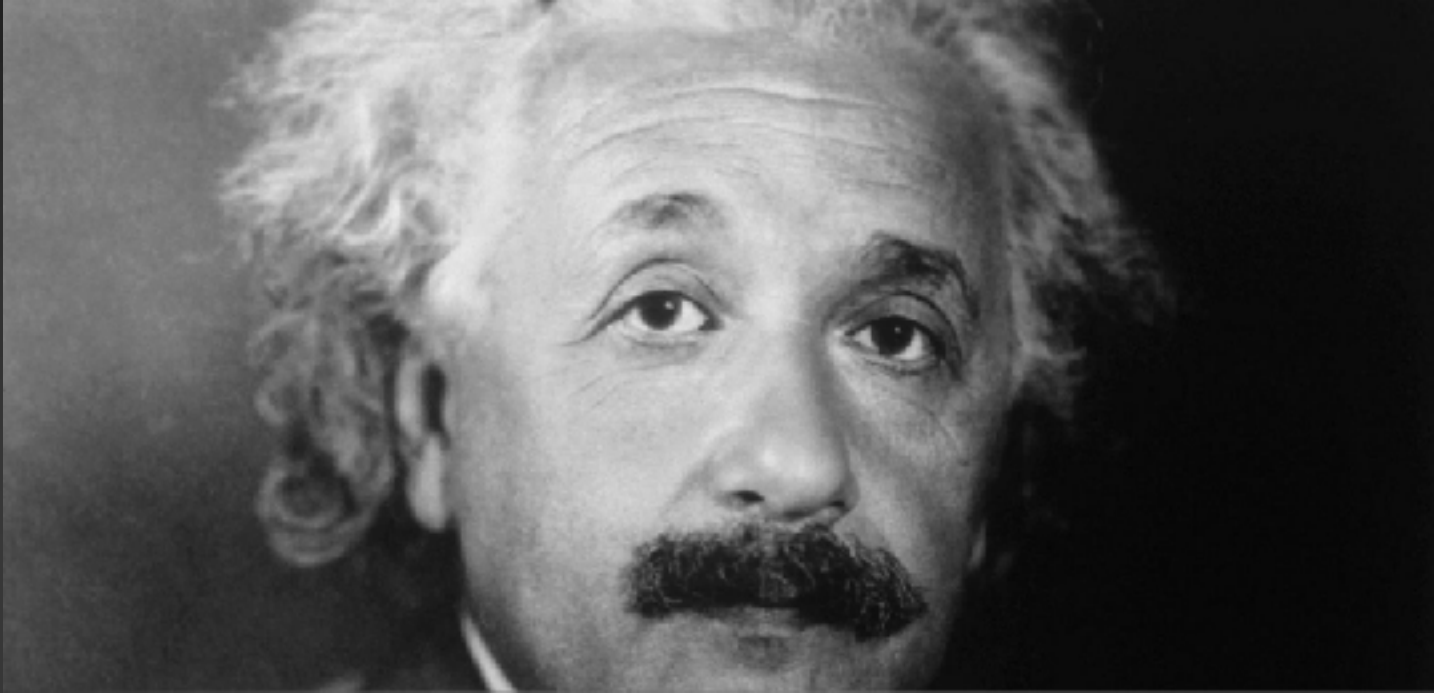
The physicist **Hendrik Lorentz** also invoked a “universal spirit” when he disagreed with Einstein. Although he did not argue for the existence of this entity, he did argue that humans were most likely similar to it. Lorentz was ready to concede that imperfect spirits like us, at this moment in time, could not determine a difference in kind between  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ , but he argued that a “universal spirit” could. And he could be sure of another thing: that “surely we are not so vastly different” from this “universal spirit.”<sup>60</sup> Striving to place himself in its perspective, Lorentz felt justified in his search for something that would help scientists find a better reference for time. Lorentz, working within a Christian view in which humans were made in the image of God, argued that we were built like this universal spirit. For this reason, we should be allowed to think in the same way it would.

(The Physicist and the Philosopher)



1853–1928

# Cosmic Religion and its Amor Dei Intellectualis



1879–1955

The interpretation of religion, as here advanced, implies a dependence of science on the religious attitude, a relation which, in our predominantly materialistic age, is only too easily overlooked. While it is true that scientific results are entirely independent from religious or moral considerations, those individuals to whom we owe the great creative achievements of science were all of them imbued with the truly religious conviction that this universe of ours is something perfect and susceptible to the rational striving for knowledge. If this conviction had not been a strongly emotional one and if those searching for knowledge had not been inspired by Spinoza's *Amor Dei Intellectualis*, they would hardly have been capable of that untiring devotion which alone enables man to attain his greatest achievements.

... This firm belief, a belief bound up with deep feeling, in a superior mind that reveals itself in the world of experience, represents my conception of God. (*Ideas and Opinions*)



# Machine for the making of gods

...the ultimate end of *mysticism* is the establishment of a contact, consequently, of a partial coincidence, with the creative effort of which life is the manifestation. This effort is of God, if not God himself. The great mystic is to be conceived as an individual being, capable of transcending the limitations imposed on the species by its material nature, thus continuing and extending the divine action.

As a matter of fact, the mystics unanimously bear witness that God needs us, just as we need God. Why should He need us unless it be to love us? And it is to this very conclusion that the philosopher who holds to the mystical experience must come. Creation will appear to him as God undertaking to create creators, that he may have, besides himself, beings worthy of his love.

Beings have been called into existence who were destined to love and be loved, since creative energy is to be defined as love. Distinct from God, Who is this energy itself, they could only spring into being in a universe, and therefore the universe sprang into being...

Theirs [human] the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on their refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods." (The Two Sources Of Morality And Religion, 1932)

duration... as it really is,—unceasing creation, the uninterrupted up-surge of novelty. (The Creative Mind)



Henri Bergson

1859–1941



Each of them was a mystic in the conventional as well as Bergsonian sense.  
Each was a Jew by origin, each loved Jesus. For both, music played a great role.  
Each was a good mathematician and powerful philosopher.  
And yet they did not see each other well... Why?

One of them focused on eternal and atemporal, on Being, or Substance.  
Another — on creative, or new, on Becoming.  
They were both theologians, although none called himself such.  
But — their theologies were complementary...

*Many Thanks!*