Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone

Source: Steve Palmquist's web site;
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Preface to the First Edition

So far as morality is based upon the conception of man as a free agent who, just because he is free, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it stands in need neither of the idea of another Being over him, for him to apprehend his duty, nor of an incentive other than the law itself, for him to do his duty. At least it is man's own fault if he is subject to such a need; and if he is, this need can be relieved through nothing outside himself: for whatever does not originate in himself and his own freedom in no way compensates for the deficiency of his morality. Hence for its own sake morality does not need religion at all (whether objectively, as regards willing, or subjectively, as regards ability [to act]); by virtue of pure practical reason it is self-sufficient. For since its laws are binding, as the highest condition (itself unconditioned) of all ends, through the bare form of universal legality of the maxims, which must be chosen accordingly, morality requires absolutely no material determining ground of free choice,* that is, no end, in order either to know what duty is or to impel the performance of duty. On the contrary, when it is a question of duty, morality is perfectly able to ignore all ends, and it ought to do so. Thus, for example, in order to know whether I should (or indeed can) be truthful in my testimony before a court, or whether I should be faithful in accounting for another man's property entrusted to me, it is not

at all necessary for me to search for an end which I might perhaps propose to achieve with my declaration, since it matters not at all what sort of end this is; indeed, the man who finds it needful, when his avowal is lawfully demanded, to look about him for some kind of [ulterior] end, is, by this very fact, already contemptible.

But although for its own sake morality needs no representation of an end which must precede the determining of the will, it is quite possible that it is necessarily related to such an end, taken not as the ground but as the [sum of] inevitable consequences of maxims adopted as conformable to that end. For in the absence of all reference to an end no determination of the will can take place in man, since such determination cannot be followed by no effect whatever; and the representation of the effect must be capable of being accepted, not, indeed, as the basis for the determination of the will and as an end antecedently aimed at, but yet as an end conceived of as the result ensuing from the will's determination through the law (*finis in consequentiam veniens*). Without an end of this sort a will, envisaging to itself no definite goal for a contemplated act, either objective or subjective (which it has, or ought to have, in view), is indeed informed as to how it ought to act, but not whither, and so can achieve no satisfaction. It is true, therefore, that morality requires no end for right conduct; the law, which contains the formal condition of the use of freedom in general, suffices. Yet an end does arise out of morality; for how the question, What is to result from this right conduct of ours? is to be answered, and towards what, as an end – even granted it may not be wholly subject to our control – we might direct our actions and abstentions so as at least to be in harmony with that end: these cannot possibly be matters of indifference to reason. Hence the end is no more than an idea of an object which takes the formal condition of all such ends as we ought to have (duty) and combines it with whatever is conditioned, and in harmony with duty, in all the ends which we do have (happiness

proportioned to obedience to duty) – that is to say, the idea of a highest good in the world for whose possibility we must postulate a higher, moral, most holy, and omnipotent Being which alone can unite the two elements of this highest good. Yet (viewed practically) this idea is not an empty one, for it does meet our natural need to conceive of some sort of final end for all our actions and abstentions, taken as a whole, an end which can be justified by reason and the absence of which would be a hindrance to moral decision. Most important of all, however, this idea arises out of morality and is not its basis; it is an end the adoption of which as one's own presupposes basic ethical principles. Therefore it cannot be a matter of unconcern to morality as to whether or not it forms for itself the concept of a final end of all things (harmony with which, while not multiplying men's duties, yet provides them with a special point of focus for the unification of all ends); for only thereby can objective, practical reality be given to the union of the purposiveness arising from freedom with the purposiveness of nature, a union with which we cannot possibly dispense. Take a man who, honoring the moral law, allows the thought to occur to him (he can scarcely avoid doing so) of what sort of world he would create, under the guidance of practical reason, were such a thing in his power, a world into which, moreover, he would place himself as a member. He would not merely make the very choice which is determined by that moral idea of the highest good, were he vouchsafed solely the right to choose; he would also will that [such] a world should by all means come into existence (because the moral law demands that the highest good possible through our agency should be realized) and he would so will even though, in accordance with this idea, he saw himself in danger of paying in his own person a heavy price in happiness – it being possible that he might not be adequate to the [moral] demands of the idea, demands which reason lays down as conditioning happiness. Accordingly he would feel compelled by reason to avow this judgment with complete impartiality, as though it were rendered by another and yet, at the same time, as his own;

whereby man gives evidence of the need, morally effected in him, of also conceiving a final end for his duties, as their consequence.

Morality thus leads ineluctably to religion, through which it extends itself* to the idea of a powerful moral Lawgiver, outside of mankind, for Whose will that is the final end (of creation) which at the same time can and ought to be man's final end.

If morality finds in the holiness of its law an object of the greatest respect, then at the level of religion it presents the ultimate cause, which consummates those laws, as an object of adoration and thus appears in its majesty. But anything, even the most sublime, dwindles under the hands of men when they turn the idea of it to their own use. What can truly be venerated only so far as respect for it is free must adapt itself to those forms which can be rendered authoritative only by means of coercive laws; and what of its own accord exposes itself to the public criticism of everyone must submit itself to a criticism which has power, i.e., a censorship.

Meanwhile, since the command, Obey the authorities! is also moral, and since obedience to it, as to all injunctions of duty, can be drawn into religion, it is fitting that a treatise which is dedicated to the definite concept of religion should itself present an example of this obedience, which, however, can be evinced not through attention merely to law in the form of a single state regulation and blindness with respect to every other, but only through combined respect for all [regulations] taken together.

Now the theologian who passes on books can be appointed either as one who is to care for the soul's welfare alone or as one who is also to care for the welfare of the sciences; the first judge is appointed merely as a divine; the second, as a scholar also. It rests with the second, as a member of a public institution to which (under the name of a university) all the

sciences are entrusted for cultivation and defense against interference, to limit the usurpations of the first by the stipulation that his censorship shall create no disturbance in the field of the sciences. And when both judges are Biblical theologians, the superior censorship will pertain to the second as a member of the university and as belonging to the faculty which has been charged with the treatment of this theology: for, as regards the first concern (the welfare of souls), both have a mandate alike; but, as regards the second (the welfare of the sciences), the theologian in his capacity as university scholar has, in addition, a special function to perform. If we depart from this rule things must finally come to the pass to which they came of yore (for example, at the time of Galileo), where the Biblical theologian, in order to humble the pride of the sciences and to spare himself labor in connection with them, might actually venture an invasion into astronomy, or some other science, as for example the ancient history of the earth, and – like those tribes who, finding that they do not have either the means or the resolution sufficient to defend themselves against threatened attacks, transform all about them into a wilderness – might arrest all the endeavors of human reason.

Among the sciences, however, there is, over and against Biblical theology, a philosophical theology, which is an estate entrusted to another faculty. So long as this philosophical theology remains within the limits of reason alone, and for the confirmation and exposition of its propositions makes use of history, sayings, books of all peoples, even the Bible, but only for itself, without wishing to carry these propositions into Biblical theology or to change the latter's public doctrines – a privilege of divines – it must have complete freedom to expand as far as its science reaches. And although the right of censorship of the theologian (regarded merely as a divine) cannot be impugned when it has been shown that the philosopher has really overstepped his limits and committed trespass upon theology, yet, the instant this is in doubt and a question arises whether, in

writing or in some other public utterance of the philosopher, this trespass has indeed occurred, the superior censorship can belong only to the Biblical theologian, and to him as a member of his faculty; for he has been assigned to care for the second interest of the commonwealth, namely, the prosperity of the sciences, and has been appointed just as legally as has the other [the theologian regarded as a divine].

And under such circumstances it is indeed to this faculty and not to the philosophical that the ultimate censorship belongs; for the former alone is privileged in respect of certain doctrines, while the latter investigates its doctrines freely and openly; hence only the former can enter a complaint that its exclusive rights have been violated. But despite the approximation of the two bodies of doctrine to one another and the anxiety lest the philosophical faculty overstep its limits, doubt relating to such trespass is easily prevented if it is borne in mind that the mischief occurs not through the philosopher's borrowing something from Biblical theology, in order to use it for his purpose – even granting that the philosopher uses what he borrows from it in a meaning suited to naked reason but perhaps not pleasing to his theology – but only so far as he imports something into it and thereby seeks to direct it to ends other than those which its own economy sanctions. For Biblical theology will itself not want to deny that it contains a great deal in common with the teachings of unassisted reason and, in addition, much that belongs to historical and philological lore, and that it is subject to the censorship of these [disciplines].

Thus, for example, we cannot say that the teacher of natural rights, who borrows many a classical expression and formula for his philosophical doctrine of rights from the codex of the Romans, thereby trespasses – even if, as often happens, he does not employ them in exactly the same sense in which, according to the expositors of Roman Law, they were to be taken – so long as he does not wish jurists proper, and even the courts of law, also to use them thus. For were that not within his competence, we

could, conversely, accuse the Biblical theologian or the statutory jurist of trespassing countless times on the province of philosophy, because both must borrow from philosophy very often, though only to mutual advantage, since neither can dispense with reason, nor, where science is concerned, with philosophy. Were Biblical theology to determine, wherever possible, to have nothing to do with reason in things religious, we can easily foresee on which side would be the loss; for a religion which rashly declares war on reason will not be able to hold out in the long run against it.

I will even venture to ask whether it would not be beneficial, upon completion of the academic instruction in Biblical theology, always to add, by way of conclusion, as necessary to the complete equipment of the candidate, a special course of lectures on the purely philosophical theory of religion (which avails itself of everything, including the Bible), with such a book as this, perhaps, as the text (or any other, if a better one of the same kind can be found). For the sciences derive pure benefit from separation, so far as each first constitutes a whole by itself; and not until they are so constituted should the attempt be made to survey them in combination. Let the Biblical theologian, then, be at one with the philosopher, or let him believe himself obliged to refute him, if only he hears him. Only thus can he be forearmed against all the difficulties which the philosopher might make for him. To conceal these, or indeed to decry them as ungodly, is a paltry device which does not stand the test; while to mix the two – the Biblical theologian, for his part, casting but an occasional fleeting glance at philosophy – is to lack thoroughness, with the result that in the end no one really knows how he stands towards the theory of religion as a whole.

In order to make apparent the relation of religion to human nature (endowed in part with good, in part with evil predispositions), I represent, in the four following essays, the relationship of the good and evil

principles as that of two self-subsistent active causes influencing men. The first essay has already been printed in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of April, 1792, but could not be omitted here, because of the close coherence of the subject- matter in this work, which contains, in the three essays now added, the complete development of the first.

The reader is asked to forgive the orthography of the first sheets (which differs from mine) in view of the variety of hands which have worked on the copy and the shortness of time left me for revision.

Preface to the Second Edition

For this Edition nothing has been altered except misprints and a few expressions which have been improved. New supplementary material, indicated by a dagger (+), is placed at the foot of the text.

Regarding the title of this work (for doubts have been expressed about the intention concealed thereunder) I note: that since, after all, revelation can certainly embrace the pure religion of reason, while, conversely, the second cannot include what is historical in the first, I shall be able [experimentally] to regard the first as the wider sphere of faith, which includes within itself the second, as a narrower one (not like two circles external to one another, but like concentric circles). The philosopher, as a teacher of pure reason (from unassisted principles *a priori*), must confine himself within the narrower circle, and, in so doing, must waive consideration of all experience. From this standpoint I can also make a second experiment, namely, to start from some alleged revelation or other and, leaving out of consideration the pure religion of reason (so far as it constitutes a self-sufficient system), to examine in a fragmentary manner this revelation, as an historical system, in the light of moral concepts; and then to see whether it does not lead back to the very same pure rational system of religion. The latter, though not from the theoretical point of view (and the technico-practical point of view of pedagogical method, as a

technology, must also be reckoned under this head) may yet, from the morally practical standpoint, be self-sufficient and adequate for genuine religion, which, indeed, as a rational concept *a priori* (remaining over after everything empirical has been taken away), obtains only in this [morally practical] relation. If this experiment is successful we shall be able to say that reason can be found to be not only compatible with Scripture but also at one with it, so that he who follows one (under guidance of moral concepts) will not fail to conform to the other. Were this not so, we should have either two religions in one individual, which is absurd, or else one religion and one cult, in which case, since the second is not (like religion) an end in itself but only possesses value as a means, they would often have to be shaken up together that they might, for a short while, be united; though directly, like oil and water, they must needs separate from one another, and the purely moral (the religion of reason) be allowed to float on top.

I noted in the first Preface that this unification, or the attempt at it, is a task to which the philosophical investigator of religion has every right, and is not a trespass upon the exclusive rights of the Biblical theologian. Since then I have found this assertion made in the Moral (Part I, pp. 5-11) of the late Michaelis, a man well versed in both departments, and applied throughout his entire work; and the higher faculty did not find therein anything prejudicial to their rights.

In this Second Edition I have not been able, as I should have liked, to take cognizance of the judgments passed upon this book by worthy men, named and unnamed, since (as with all foreign literary intelligence) these arrive in our parts very late. This is particularly true of the *Annotationes quaedam theologicae, etc.* of the renowned Hr. D. Storrë in Tübingen, who has examined my book with his accustomed sagacity and with an industry and fairness deserving the greatest thanks. I have it in mind to answer him, but cannot venture to promise to do so because of the

peculiar difficulties which age sets in the way of working with abstract ideas. But there is a review in Number 29 of the *Neueste Kritische Nachrichten*, of Greifswald, which I can despatch as briefly as the reviewer did the book itself. For the book, in his judgment, is nothing but an answer to the question which I myself posed: "How is the ecclesiastical system of dogmatics, in its concepts and doctrines, possible according to pure (theoretical and practical) reason?" This essay [he claims] does not concern those who have no knowledge and understanding of his (Kant's) system and have no desire to be able to understand it – by them it may be looked upon as non-existent. I answer thus: To understand this book in its essential content, only common morality is needed, without meddling with the *Critique of Practical Reason*, still less with the theoretical *Critique*. When, for example, virtue as skill in actions conforming to duty (according to their legality) is called *virtus phänomenon*, and the same virtue as an enduring disposition towards such actions from duty (because of their morality) is called *virtus noumenon*, these expressions are used only because of the schools; while the matter itself is contained, though in other words, in the most popular children's instruction and sermons, and is easily understood. Would that as much could be said for the mysteries concerning the divine nature which are numbered among religious teachings, mysteries introduced into the catechism as though they were wholly popular, but which, ultimately, must first be transformed into moral concepts if they are to become comprehensible to everyone!

Königsberg, 26 January, 1794.

NOTES

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* Those who, in the conception of duty, are not satisfied with the merely formal determining ground as such (conformity to law) as the basis of determination, do indeed admit that such a basis cannot be discovered in self-love directed to one's own comfort. Hence there

remain but two determining grounds: one, which is rational, namely, one's own perfection, and another, which is empirical, the happiness of others. Now if they do not conceive of the first of these as the moral determining ground (a will, namely, unconditionally obedient to the law) which is necessarily unique – and if they so interpreted it they would be expounding in a circle – they would have to have in mind man's natural perfection, so far as it is capable of enhancement, and this can be of many kinds, such as skill in the arts and sciences, taste, bodily adroitness, etc. But these are always good only on the condition that their use does not conflict with the moral law (which alone commands unconditionally); set up as an end, therefore, perfection cannot be the principle of concepts of duty. The same holds for the end which aims at the happiness of other men. For an act must, first of all, itself be weighed according to the moral law before it is directed to the happiness of others. The requirement laid down by this end, therefore, is a duty only conditionally and cannot serve as the supreme principle of moral maxims.

* If the proposition, There is a God, hence there is a highest good in the world, is to arise (as a dogma) from morality alone, it is a synthetic a priori proposition: for even thought accepted only for practical reference, it does yet pass beyond the concept of duty which morality contains (and which presupposes merely the formal laws, and not the matter, of choice), and hence cannot analytically be evolved out of morality. But how is such a proposition a priori possible? Agreement with the bare idea of a moral Lawgiver for all men is, indeed, identical with the general moral concept of duty, and so far the proposition commanding this agreement would be analytic. But the acknowledgment of His existence asserts more than the bare possibility of such a thing. The key to the solution of this problem, so far as I believe myself to understand it, I can only indicate here and not develop.

An end is always the object of an inclination, that is, of an immediate craving for possession of a thing through one's action, just as the law (which commands practically) is an object of respect. An objective end (i.e., the end which we ought to have) is that which is proposed to us as such by reason alone. The end which embraces the unavoidable and at the same time sufficient condition of all other ends is the final end. The subjective final end of rational worldly beings is their own happiness (each of them has this end by virtue of having a nature

dependent upon sensuous objects, and hence it would be absurd to say that anyone ought to have it) and all practical propositions which are based on this final end are synthetic, and at the same time empirical. But that everyone ought to make the highest good possible in the world a final end is a synthetic practical proposition a priori (and indeed objectively practical) given by pure reason; for it is a proposition which goes beyond the concept of duties in this world and adds a consequence (an effect) thereof which is not contained in the moral laws and therefore cannot be evolved out of them analytically. For these laws command absolutely, be the consequence what it will; indeed, they even require that the consideration of such consequence be completely waived when a particular act is concerned; and thereby they make duty an object of highest respect without offering or proposing to us an end (or a final end) such as would have to constitute duty's recommendation and the incentive to the fulfilment of our duty. All men could have sufficient incentive if (as they should) they adhered solely to the dictation of pure reason in the law. What need have they to know the outcome of their moral actions and abstentions, an outcome which the world's course will bring about? It suffices for them that they do their duty; even though all things end with earthly life and though, in this life, happiness and desert may never meet. And yet it is one of the inescapable limitations of man and of his faculty of practical reason (a limitation, perhaps, of all other worldly beings as well) to have regard, in every action, to the consequence thereof, in order to discover therein what could serve him as an end and also prove the purity of his intention – which consequence, though last in practice (*nexu effectivo*) is yet first in representation and intention (*nexu finali*). In this end, if directly presented to him by reason alone, man seeks something that he can love; therefore the law, which merely arouses his respect, even though it does not acknowledge this object of love as a necessity does yet extend itself on its behalf by including the moral goal of reason among its determining grounds. That is, the proposition: Make the highest good possible in the world your own final end! is a synthetic proposition a priori, which is introduced by the moral law itself; although practical reason does, indeed, extend itself therein beyond the law. This extension is possible because of the moral law's being taken in relation to the natural characteristic of man, that for all his actions he must conceive of an end over and above the law (a characteristic which makes man an object of experience). And further, this extension (as with theoretical propositions a priori which are

> synthetic) is possible only because this end embraces the a priori principle of the knowledge of the determining grounds in experience of a free will, so far as this experience, by exhibiting the effects of morality in its ends, gives objective though merely practical reality to the concept of morality as causal in the world. But if, now, the strictest obedience to moral laws is to be considered the cause of the ushering in of the highest good (as end), then, since human capacity does not suffice for bringing about happiness in the world proportionate to worthiness to be happy, an omnipotent moral Being must be postulated as ruler of the world, under whose care this [balance] occurs. That is, morality leads inevitably to religion.

Book One

CONCERNING THE INDWELLING OF THE EVIL PRINCIPLE WITH THE GOOD, OR, ON THE RADICAL EVIL IN HUMAN NATURE

That “the world lieth in evil” is a plaint as old as history, old even as the older art, poetry; indeed, as old as that oldest of all fictions, the religion of priest-craft. All agree that the world began in a good estate, whether in a Golden Age, a life in Eden, or a yet more happy community with celestial beings. But they represent that this happiness vanished like a dream and that a Fall into evil (moral evil, with which physical evil ever went hand in hand) presently hurried mankind from bad to worse with accelerated descent;* so that now (this “now” is also as old as history) we live in the final age, with the Last Day and the destruction of the world at hand. In some parts of India the Judge and Destroyer of the world, Rudra (sometimes called Siwa or Siva), already is worshipped as the reigning God – Vishnu, the Sustainer of the world, having some centuries ago grown weary and renounced the supreme authority which he inherited

from Brahma, the Creator. More modern, though far less prevalent, is the contrasted optimistic belief, which indeed has gained a following solely among philosophers and, of late, especially among those interested in education – the belief that the world steadily (though almost imperceptibly) forges in the other direction, to wit, from bad to better; at least that the predisposition to such a movement is discoverable in human nature. If this belief, however, is meant to apply to moral goodness and badness (not simply to the process of civilization), it has certainly not been deduced from experience; the history of all times cries too loudly against it. The belief, we may presume, is a well-intentioned assumption of the moralist, from Seneca to Rousseau, designed to encourage the sedulous cultivation of that seed of goodness which perhaps lies in us – if, indeed, we can count on any such natural basis of goodness in man. We may note that since we take for granted that man is by nature sound of body (as at birth he usually is), no reason appears why, by nature, his soul should not be deemed similarly healthy and free from evil. Is not nature herself, then, inclined to lend her aid to developing in us this moral predisposition to goodness? In the words of Seneca: *Sanabilibus grotamus malis, nosque in rectum genitos natura, si sanari velimus, adiuvat*.

But since it well may be that both sides have erred in their reading of experience, the question arises whether a middle ground may not at least be possible, namely, that man as a species is neither good nor bad, or at all events that he is as much the one as the other, partly good, partly bad. We call a man evil, however, not because he performs actions that are evil (contrary to law) but because these actions are of such a nature that we may infer from them the presence in him of evil maxims. In and through experience we can observe actions contrary to law, and we can observe (at least in ourselves) that they are performed in the consciousness that they are unlawful; but a man’s maxims, sometimes even his own, are not thus observable; consequently the judgment that the agent is an evil man

cannot be made with certainty if grounded on experience. In order, then, to call a man evil, it would have to be possible a priori to infer from several evil acts done with consciousness of their evil, or from one such act, an underlying evil maxim; and further, from this maxim to infer the presence in the agent of an underlying common ground, itself a maxim, of all particular morally- evil maxims.

Lest difficulty at once be encountered in the expression nature, which, if it meant (as it usually does) the opposite of freedom as a basis of action, would flatly contradict the predicates morally good or evil, let it be noted that by "nature of man" we here intend only the subjective ground of the exercise (under objective moral laws) of man's freedom in general; this ground – whatever is its character – is the necessary antecedent of every act apparent to the senses. But this subjective ground, again, must itself always be an expression of freedom (for otherwise the use or abuse of man's power of choice in respect of the moral law could not be imputed to him nor could the good or bad in him be called moral). Hence the source of evil cannot lie in an object determining the will through inclination, nor yet in a natural impulse; it can lie only in a rule made by the will for the use of its freedom, that is, in a maxim. But now it must not be considered permissible to inquire into the subjective ground in man of the adoption of this maxim rather than of its opposite. If this ground itself were not ultimately a maxim, but a mere natural impulse, it would be possible to trace the use of our freedom wholly to determination by natural causes; this, however, is contradictory to the very notion of freedom. When we say, then, Man is by nature good, or, Man is by nature evil, this means only that there is in him an ultimate ground (inscrutable to us)* of the adoption of good maxims or of evil maxims (i.e., those contrary to law), and this he has, being a man; and hence he thereby expresses the character of his species.

We shall say, therefore, of the character (good or evil) distinguishing man from other possible rational beings, that it is innate in him. Yet in doing so we shall ever take the position that nature is not to bear the blame (if it is evil) or take the credit (if it is good), but that man himself is its author. But since the ultimate ground of the adoption of our maxims, which must itself lie in free choice, cannot be a fact revealed in experience, it follows that the good or evil in man (as the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of this or that maxim with reference to the moral law) is termed innate only in this sense, that it is posited as the ground antecedent to every use of freedom in experience (in earliest youth as far back as birth) and is thus conceived of as present in man at birth – though birth need not be the cause of it. Observation

The conflict between the two hypotheses presented above is based on a disjunctive proposition: Man is (by nature) either morally good or morally evil. It might easily occur to any one, however, to ask whether this disjunction is valid, and whether some might not assert that man is by nature neither of the two, others, that man is at once both, in some respects good, in other respects evil. Experience actually seems to substantiate the middle ground between the two extremes.

It is, however, of great consequence to ethics in general to avoid admitting, so long as it is possible, of anything morally intermediate, whether in actions (adiophora) or in human characters; for with such ambiguity all maxims are in danger of forfeiting their precision and stability. Those who are partial to this strict mode of thinking are usually called rigorists (a name which is intended to carry reproach, but which actually praises); their opposites may be called latitudinarians. These latter, again, are either latitudinarians of neutrality, whom we may call indifferentists, or else latitudinarians of coalition, whom we may call syncretists.*

According to the rigoristic diagnosis,** the answer to the question at issue rests upon the observation, of great importance to morality, that freedom of the will is of a wholly unique nature in that an incentive can determine the will to an action only so far as the individual has incorporated it into his maxim (has made it the general rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself); only thus can an incentive, whatever it may be, co-exist with the absolute spontaneity of the will (i.e., freedom). But the moral law, in the judgment of reason, is in itself an incentive, and whoever makes it his maxim is morally good. If, now, this law does not determine a person's will in the case of an action which has reference to the law, an incentive contrary to it must influence his choice; and since, by hypothesis, this can only happen when a man adopts this incentive (and thereby the deviation from the moral law) into his maxim (in which case he is an evil man) it follows that his disposition in respect to the moral law is never indifferent, never neither good nor evil.

Neither can a man be morally good in some ways and at the same time morally evil in others. His being good in one way means that he has incorporated the moral law into his maxim; were he, therefore, at the same time evil in another way, while his maxim would be universal as based on the moral law of obedience to duty, which is essentially single and universal, it would at the same time be only particular; but this is a contradiction.*

To have a good or an evil disposition as an inborn natural constitution does not here mean that it has not been acquired by the to man who harbors it, that he is not author of it, but rather, that it has not been acquired in time (that he has always been good, or evil, from his youth up). The disposition, i.e., the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of maxims, can be one only and applies universally to the whole use of freedom. Yet this disposition itself must have been adopted by free choice, for otherwise it could not be imputed. But the subjective ground or

cause of this adoption cannot further be known (though it is inevitable that we should inquire into it), since otherwise still another maxim would have to be adduced in which this disposition must have been incorporated, a maxim which itself in turn must have its ground. Since, therefore, we are unable to derive this disposition, or rather its ultimate ground, from any original act of the will in time, we call it a property of the will which belongs to it by nature (although actually the disposition is grounded in freedom). Further, the man of whom we say, "He is by nature good or evil," is to be understood not as the single individual (for then one man could be considered as good, by nature, another as evil), but as the entire race; that we are entitled so to do can only be proved when anthropological research shows that the evidence, which justifies us in attributing to a man one of these characters as innate, is such as to give no ground for excepting anyone, and that the attribution therefore holds for the race.

I. Concerning the Original Predisposition to Good in Human Nature

We may conveniently divide this predisposition, with respect to function, into three divisions, to be considered as elements in the fixed character and destiny of man:

(1) The predisposition to animality in man, taken as a living being;

(2) The predisposition to humanity in man, taken as a living and at the same time a rational being;

(3) The predisposition to personality in man, taken as a rational and at the same time an accountable being.*

1. The predisposition to animality in mankind may be brought under the general title of physical and purely mechanical self-love, wherein no reason is demanded. It is threefold: first, for self-preservation; second, for the propagation of the species, through the sexual impulse, and for the care of offspring so begotten; and third, for community with other men, i.e., the social impulse. On these three stems can be grafted all kinds of vices (which, however, do not spring from this predisposition itself as a root). They may be termed vices of the coarseness of nature, and in their greatest deviation from natural purposes are called the beastly vices of gluttony and drunkenness, lasciviousness and wild lawlessness (in relation to other men).

2. The predisposition to humanity can be brought under the general title of a self-love which is physical and yet compares (for which reason is required); that is to say, we judge ourselves happy or unhappy only by making comparison with others. Out of this self-love springs the inclination to acquire worth in the opinion of others. This is originally a desire merely for equality, to allow no one superiority above oneself, bound up with a constant care lest others strive to attain such superiority; but from this arises gradually the unjustifiable craving to win it for oneself over others. Upon this twin stem of jealousy and rivalry may be grafted the very great vices of secret and open animosity against all whom we look upon as not belonging to us – vices, however, which really do not sprout of themselves from nature as their root; rather are they inclinations, aroused in us by the anxious endeavors of others to attain a hated superiority over us, to attain for ourselves as a measure of precaution and for the sake of safety such a position over others. For nature, indeed, wanted to use the idea of such rivalry (which in itself does not exclude mutual love) only as a spur to culture. Hence the vices which are grafted upon this inclination might be their termed vices of culture; in highest degree of malignancy, as, for example, in envy, ingratitude, spitefulness,

etc. (where they are simply the idea of a maximum of evil going beyond what is human), they can be called the diabolical vices.

3. The predisposition to personality is the capacity for respect for the moral law as in itself a sufficient incentive of the will. This capacity for simple respect for the moral law within us would thus be moral feeling, which in and through itself does not constitute an end of the natural predisposition except so far as it is the motivating force of the will. Since this is possible only when the free will incorporates such moral feeling into its maxim, the property of such a will is good character. The latter, like every character of the free will, is something which can only be acquired; its possibility, however, demands the presence in our nature of a predisposition on which it is absolutely impossible to graft anything evil. We cannot rightly call the idea of the moral law, with the respect which is inseparable from it, a predisposition to personality; it is personality itself (the idea of humanity considered quite intellectually). But the subjective ground for the adoption into our maxims of this respect as a motivating force seems to be an adjunct to our personality, and thus to deserve the name of a predisposition to its furtherance.

If we consider the three predispositions named, in terms of the conditions of their possibility, we find that the first requires no reason, the second is based on practical reason, but a reason thereby subservient to other incentives, while the third alone is rooted in reason which is practical of itself, that is, reason which dictates laws unconditionally. All of these predispositions are not only good in negative fashion (in that they do not contradict the moral law); they are also predispositions toward good (they enjoin the observance of the law). They are original, for they are bound up with the possibility of human nature. Man can indeed use the first two contrary to their ends, but he can extirpate none of them. By the predispositions of a being we understand not only its constituent elements which are necessary to it, but also the forms of their combination, by

which the being is what it is. They are original if they are involved necessarily in the possibility of such a being, but contingent if it is possible for the being to exist of itself without them. Finally, let it be noted that here we treat only those predispositions which have immediate reference to the faculty of desire and the exercise of the will.

II. Concerning the Propensity to Evil in Human Nature

By propensity (propensio) I understand the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination (habitual craving, *concupiscentia*) so far as mankind in general is liable to it. A propensity is distinguished from a predisposition by the fact that although it can indeed be innate, it ought not to be represented merely thus; for it can also be regarded as having been acquired (if it is good), or brought by man upon himself (if it is evil). Here, however, we are speaking only of the propensity to genuine, that is, moral evil; for since such evil is possible only as a determination of the free will, and since the will can be appraised as good or evil only by means of its maxims, this propensity to evil must consist in the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law. If, then, this propensity can be considered as belonging universally to mankind (and hence as part of the character of the race), it may be called a natural propensity in man to evil. We may add further that the will's capacity or incapacity, arising from this natural propensity, to adopt or not to adopt the moral law into its maxim, may be called a good or an evil heart.

In this capacity for evil there can be distinguished three distinct degrees. First, there is the weakness of the human heart in the general observance of adopted maxims, or in other words, the frailty of human nature; second, the propensity for mixing unmoral with moral motivating causes (even when it is done with good intent and under maxims of the

good), that is, impurity; third, the propensity to adopt evil maxims, that is, the wickedness of human nature or of the human heart.

First: the frailty (fragilitas) of human nature is expressed even in the complaint of an Apostle, “What I would, that I do not!” In other words, I adopt the good (the law) into the maxim of my will, but this good, which objectively, in its ideal conception (*in thesi*), is an irresistible incentive, is subjectively (*in hypothesi*), when the maxim is to be followed, the weaker (in comparison with inclination).

Second: the impurity *(impuritas, improbitas*) of the human heart consists in this, that although the maxim is indeed good in respect of its object (the intended observance of the law) and perhaps even strong enough for practice, it is yet not purely moral; that is, it has not, as it should have, adopted the law alone as its all-sufficient incentive: instead, it usually (perhaps, every time) stands in need of other incentives beyond this, in determining the will to do what duty demands; in other words, actions called for by duty are done not purely for duty’s sake.

Third: the wickedness (*vitiositas, pravitas*) or, if you like, the corruption (*corruptio*) of the human heart is the propensity of the will to maxims which neglect the incentives springing from the moral law in favor of others which are not moral. It may also be called the perversity (*perversitas*) of the human heart, for it reverses the ethical order [of priority] among the incentives of a free will; and although conduct which is lawfully good (i.e., legal) may be found with it, yet the cast of mind is thereby corrupted at its root (so far as the moral disposition is concerned), and the man is hence designated as evil.

It will be remarked that this propensity to evil is here ascribed (as regards conduct) to men in general, even to the best of them; this must be the case if it is to be proved that the propensity to evil in mankind is

universal, or, what here comes to the same thing, that it is woven into human nature.

There is no difference, however, as regards conformity of conduct to the moral law, between a man of good morals (*bene moratus*) and a morally good man (*moraliter bonus*) – at least there ought to be no difference, save that the conduct of the one has not always, perhaps has never, the law as its sole and supreme incentive while the conduct of the other has it always. Of the former it can be said: He obeys the law according to the letter (that is, his conduct conforms to what the law commands); but of the second: He obeys the law according to the spirit (the spirit of the moral law consisting in this, that the law is sufficient in itself as an incentive). Whatever is not of this faith is sin as regards cast of mind). For when incentives other than the law itself (such as ambition, self-love in general, yes, even a kindly instinct such as sympathy) are necessary to determine the will to conduct conformable to the law, it is merely accidental that these causes coincide with the law, for they could equally well incite its violation. The maxim, then, in terms of whose goodness all moral worth of the individual must be appraised, is thus contrary to the law, and the man, despite all his good deeds, is nevertheless evil.

The following explanation is also necessary in order to define the concept of this propensity. Every propensity is either physical, i.e., pertaining to the will of man as a natural being, or moral, i.e., pertaining to his will as a moral being. In the first sense there is no propensity to moral evil, for such a propensity must spring from freedom; and a physical propensity (grounded in sensuous impulses) towards any use of freedom whatsoever – whether for good or bad – is a contradiction. Hence a propensity to evil can inhere only in the moral capacity of the will. But nothing is morally evil (i.e., capable of being imputed) but that which is our own act. On the other hand, by the concept of a propensity we

understand a subjective determining ground of the will which precedes all acts and which, therefore, is itself not an act. Hence in the concept of a simple propensity to evil there would be a contradiction were it not possible to take the word “act” in two meanings, both of which are reconcilable with the concept of freedom. The term “act” can apply in general to that exercise of freedom whereby the supreme maxim (in harmony with the law or contrary to it) it is adopted by the will, but also to the exercise of freedom whereby the actions themselves (considered materially, i.e., with reference to the objects of volition) are performed in accordance with that maxim. The propensity to evil, then, is an act in the first sense (*peccatum originarium*), and at the same time the formal ground of all unlawful conduct in the second sense, which latter, considered materially, violates the law and is termed vice (*peccatum derivatum*); and the first offense remains, even though the second (from incentives which do not subsist in the law itself) may be repeatedly avoided. The former is intelligible action, cognizable by means of pure reason alone, apart from every temporal condition; the latter is sensible action, empirical, given in time (*factum phänomenon*). The former, particularly when compared with the latter, is entitled a simple propensity and innate, [first] because it cannot be eradicated (since for such eradication the highest maxim would have to be that of the good – whereas in this propensity it already has been postulated as evil), but chiefly because we can no more assign a further cause for the corruption in us by evil of just this highest maxim, although this is our own action, than we can assign a cause for any fundamental attribute belonging to our nature. Now it can be understood, from what has just been said, why it was that in this section we sought, at the very first, the three sources of the morally evil solely in what, according to laws of freedom, touches the ultimate ground of the adoption or the observance of our maxims, and not in what touches sensibility (regarded as receptivity).

III. Man is Evil by Nature Vitiis nemo sine nascitur. – Horace

In view of what has been said above, the proposition, Man is evil, can mean only, He is conscious of the moral law but has nevertheless adopted into his maxim the (occasional) deviation therefrom. He is evil by nature, means but this, that evil can be predicated of man as a species; not that such a quality can be inferred from the concept of his species (that is, of man in general) – for then it would be necessary; but rather that from what we know of man through experience we cannot judge otherwise of him, or, that we may presuppose evil to be subjectively necessary to every man, even to the best. Now this propensity must itself be considered as morally evil, yet not as a natural predisposition but rather as something that can be imputed to man, and consequently it must consist in maxims of the will which are contrary to the law. Further, for the sake of freedom, these maxims must in themselves be considered contingent, a circumstance which, on the other hand, will not tally with the universality of this evil unless the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims somehow or other is entwined with and, as it were, rooted in humanity itself. Hence we can call this a natural propensity to evil, and as we must, after all, ever hold man himself responsible for it, we can further call it a radical innate evil in human nature (yet none the less brought upon us by ourselves).

That such a corrupt propensity must indeed be rooted in man need not be formally proved in view of the multitude of crying examples which experience of the actions of men puts before our eyes. If we wish to draw our examples from that state in which various philosophers hoped preeminently to discover the natural goodliness of human nature, namely, from the so-called state of nature, we need but compare with this hypothesis the scenes of unprovoked cruelty in the murder-dramas enacted in Tofoa, New Zealand, and in the Navigator Islands, and the unending cruelty (of which Captain Hearne tells) in the wide wastes of

northwestern America, cruelty from which, indeed, not a soul reaps the smallest benefit;* and we have vices of barbarity more than sufficient to draw us from such an opinion. If, however, we incline to the opinion that human nature can better be known in the civilized state (in which its predispositions can more completely develop), we must listen to a long melancholy litany of indictments against humanity: of secret falsity even in the closest friendship, so that a limit upon trust in the mutual confidences of even the best friends is reckoned a universal maxim of prudence in intercourse; of a propensity to hate him to whom one is indebted, for which a benefactor must always be prepared; of a hearty well-wishing which yet allows of the remark that “in the misfortunes of our best friends there is something which is not altogether displeasing to us” ; and of many other vices still concealed under the appearance of virtue, to say nothing of the vices of those who do not conceal them, for we are content to call him good who is a man bad in a way common to all; and we shall have enough of the vices of culture and civilization (which are the most offensive of all) to make us rather turn away our eyes from the conduct of men lest we ourselves contract another vice, misanthropy. But if we are not yet content, we need but contemplate a state which is compounded in strange fashion of both the others, that is, the international situation, where civilized nations stand towards each other in the relation obtaining in the barbarous state of nature (a state of continuous readiness for war), a state, moreover, from which they have taken fixedly into their heads never to depart. We then become aware of the fundamental principles of the great societies called states – principles which flatly contradict their public pronouncements but can never be laid aside, and which no philosopher has yet been able to bring into agreement with morality. Nor (sad to say) has any philosopher been able to propose better principles which at the same time can be brought into harmony with human nature. The result is that the philosophical millenium, which hopes for a state of perpetual peace based on a league of peoples, a world-

republic, even as the theological millennium, which tarries for the completed moral improvement of the entire human race, is universally ridiculed as a wild fantasy.

Now the ground of this evil (1) cannot be placed, as is so commonly done, in man's sensuous nature and the natural inclinations arising therefrom. For not only are these not directly related to evil (rather do they afford the occasion for what the moral disposition in its power can manifest, namely, virtue); we must not even be considered responsible for their existence (we cannot be, for since they are implanted in us we are not their authors). We are accountable, however, for the propensity to evil, which, as it affects the morality of the subject, is to be found in him as a free-acting being and for which it must be possible to hold him accountable as the offender – this, too, despite the fact that this propensity is so deeply rooted in the will that we are forced to say that it is to be found in man by nature. Neither can the ground of this evil (2) be placed in a corruption of the morally legislative reason – as if reason could destroy the authority of the very law which is its own, or deny the obligation arising therefrom; this is absolutely impossible. To conceive of oneself as a freely acting being and yet as exempt from the law which is appropriate to such a being (the moral law) would be tantamount to conceiving a cause operating without any laws whatsoever (for determination according to natural laws is excluded by the fact of freedom); this is a self-contradiction. In seeking, therefore, a ground of the morally-evil in man, [we find that] sensuous nature comprises too little, for when the incentives which can spring from freedom are taken away, man is reduced to a merely animal being. On the other hand, a reason exempt from the moral law, a malignant reason as it were (a thoroughly evil will), comprises too much, for thereby opposition to the law would itself be set up as an incentive (since in the absence of all incentives the

will cannot be determined), and thus the subject would be made a devilish being. Neither of these designations is applicable to man.

But even if the existence of this propensity to evil in human nature can be demonstrated by experiential proofs of the real opposition, in time, of man's will to the law, such proofs do not teach us the essential character of that propensity or the ground of this opposition. Rather, because this character concerns a relation of the will, which is free (and the concept of which is therefore not empirical), to the moral law as an incentive (the concept of which, likewise, is purely intellectual), it must be apprehended a priori through the concept of evil, so far as evil is possible under the laws of freedom (of obligation and accountability). This concept may be developed in the following manner.

Man (even the most wicked) does not, under any maxim whatsoever, repudiate the moral law in the manner of a rebel (renouncing obedience to it). The law, rather, forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral predisposition; and were no other incentive working in opposition, he would adopt the law into his supreme maxim as the sufficient determining ground of his will; that is, he would be morally good. But by virtue of an equally innocent natural predisposition he depends upon the incentives of his sensuous nature and adopts them also (in accordance with the subjective principle of self-love) into his maxim. If he took the latter into his maxim as in themselves wholly adequate to the determination of the will, without troubling himself about the moral law (which, after all, he does have in him), he would be morally evil. Now, since he naturally adopts both into his maxim, and since, further, he would find either, if it were alone, adequate in itself for the determining of the will, it follows that if the difference between the maxims amounted merely to the difference between the two incentives (the content of the maxims), that is, if it were merely a question as to whether the law or the sensuous impulse were to furnish the incentive, man would be at once

good and evil: this, however, (as we saw in the Introduction) is a contradiction. Hence the distinction between a good man and one who is evil cannot lie in the difference between the incentives which they adopt into their maxim (not in the content of the maxim), but rather must depend upon subordination (the form of the maxim), i.e., which of the two incentives he makes the condition of the other. Consequently man (even the best) is evil only in that he reverses the moral order of the incentives when he adopts them into his maxim. He adopts, indeed, the moral law along with the law of self-love; yet when he becomes aware that they cannot remain on a par with each other but that one must be subordinated to the other as its supreme condition, he makes the incentive of self-love and its inclinations the condition of obedience to the moral law; whereas, on the contrary, the latter, as the supreme condition of the satisfaction of the former, ought to have been adopted into the universal maxim of the will as the sole incentive.

Yet, even with this reversal of the ethical order of the incentives in and through his maxim, a man's actions still may prove to be as much in conformity to the law as if they sprang from true basic principles. This happens when reason employs the unity of the maxims in general, a unity which is inherent in the moral law, merely to bestow upon the incentives of inclination, under the name of happiness, a unity of maxims which otherwise they cannot have. (For example, truthfulness, if adopted as a basic principle, delivers us from the anxiety of making our lies agree with one another and of not being entangled by their serpent coils.) The empirical character is then good, but the intelligible character is still evil.

Now if a propensity to this does lie in human nature, there is in man a natural propensity to evil; and since this very propensity must in the end be sought in a will which is free, and can therefore be imputed, it is morally evil. This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is, moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human

powers, since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free.

We are not, then, to call the depravity of human nature wickedness taking the word in its strict sense as a disposition (the subjective principle of the maxims) to adopt evil as evil into our maxim as our incentives (for that is diabolical); we should rather term it the perversity of the heart, which, then, because of what follows from it, is also called an evil heart. Such a heart may coexist with a will which in general is good: it arises from the frailty of human nature, the lack of sufficient strength to follow out the principles it has chosen for itself, joined with its impurity, the failure to distinguish the incentives (even of well-intentioned actions) from each other by the gauge of morality; and so at last, if the extreme is reached, [it results] from looking only to the squaring of these actions with the law and not to the derivation of them from the law as the sole motivating spring. Now even though there does not always follow therefrom an unlawful act and a propensity thereto, namely, vice, yet the mode of thought which sets down the absence of such vice as being conformity of the disposition to the law of duty (as being virtue) – since in this case no attention whatever is paid to the motivating forces in the maxim but only to the observance of the letter of the law – itself deserves to be called a radical perversity in the human heart.

This innate guilt (reatus), which is so denominated because it may be discerned in man as early as the first manifestations of the exercise of freedom, but which, none the less, must have originated in freedom and hence can be imputed, – this guilt may be judged in its first two stages (those of frailty and impurity) to be unintentional guilt (culpa), but in the third to be deliberate guilt (dolus) and to display in its character a certain insidiousness of the human heart (dolus malus), which deceives itself in

regard to its own good and evil dispositions, and, if only its conduct has not evil consequences – which it might well have, with such maxims – does not trouble itself about its disposition but rather considers itself justified before the law. Thence arises the peace of conscience of so many men (conscientious in their own esteem) when, in the course of conduct concerning which they did not take the law into their counsel, or at least in which the law was not the supreme consideration, they merely elude evil consequences by good fortune. They may even picture themselves as meritorious, feeling themselves guilty of no such offenses as they see others burdened with; nor do they ever inquire whether good luck should not have the credit, or whether by reason of the cast of mind which they could discover, if they only would, in their own inmost nature, they would not have practised similar vices, had not inability, temperament, training, and circumstances of time and place which serve to tempt one (matters which are not imputable), kept them out of the way of those vices. This dishonesty, by which we humbug ourselves and which thwarts the establishing of a true moral disposition in us, extends itself outwardly also to falsehood and deception of others. If this is not to be termed wickedness, it at least deserves the name of worthlessness, and is an element in the radical evil of human nature, which (inasmuch as it puts out of tune the moral capacity to judge what a man is to be taken for, and renders wholly uncertain both internal and external attribution of responsibility) constitutes the foul taint in our race. So long as we do not eradicate it, it prevents the seed of goodness from developing as it otherwise would.

A member of the British Parliament once exclaimed, in the heat of debate, “Every man has his price, for which he sells himself.” If this is true (a question to which each must make his own answer), if there is no virtue for which some temptation cannot be found capable of overthrowing it, and if whether the good or evil spirit wins us over to his

party depends merely on which bids the most and pays us most promptly, then certainly it holds true of men universally, as the apostle said: “They are all under sin, – there is none righteous (in the spirit of the law), no, not one."*

IV. Concerning the Origin of Evil in Human Nature

An origin (a first origin) is the derivation of an effect from its first cause, that is, from that cause which is not in turn the effect of another cause of the same kind. It can be considered either as an origin in reason or as an origin in time. In the former sense, regard is had only to the existence of the effect; in the latter, to its occurrence, and hence it is related as an event to its first cause in time. If an effect is referred to a cause to which it is bound under the laws of freedom, as is true in the case of moral evil, then the determination of the will to the production of this effect is conceived of as bound up with its determining ground not in time but merely in rational representation; such an effect cannot be derived from any preceding state whatsoever. Yet derivation of this sort is always necessary when an evil action, as an event in the world, is referred to its natural cause. To seek the temporal origin of free acts as such (as though they were natural effects) is thus a contradiction. Hence it is also a contradiction to seek the temporal origin of man’s moral character, so far as it is considered as contingent, since this character signifies the ground of the exercise of freedom; this ground (like the determining ground of the free will generally) must be sought in purely rational representations.

However the origin of moral evil in man is constituted, surely of all the explanations of the spread and propagation of this evil through all members and generations of our race, the most inept is that which describes it as descending to us as an inheritance from our first parents; for one can say of moral evil precisely what the poet said of good: genus

et proavos, et quae non fecimus ipsi, vix ea nostra puto.* Yet we should note that, in our search for the origin of this evil, we do not deal first of all with the propensity thereto (as peccatum in potentia); rather do we direct our attention to the actual evil of given actions with respect to its inner possibility – to what must take place within the will if evil is to be performed.

In the search for the rational origin of evil actions, every such action must be regarded as though the individual had fallen into it directly from a state of innocence. For whatever his previous deportment may have been, whatever natural causes may have been influencing him, and whether these causes were to be found within him or outside him, his action is yet free and determined by none of these causes; hence it can and must always be judged as an original use of his will. He should have refrained from that action, whatever his temporal circumstances and entanglements; for through no cause in the world can he cease to be a freely acting being. Rightly is it said that to a man's account are set down the consequences arising from his former free acts which were contrary to the law; but this merely amounts to saying that man need not involve himself in the evasion of seeking to establish whether or not these consequences are free, since there exists in the admittedly free action, which was their cause, ground sufficient for holding him accountable. However evil a man has been up to the very moment of an impending free act (so that evil has actually become custom or second nature) it was not only his duty to have been better [in the past], it is now still his duty to better himself. To do so must be within his power, and if he does not do so, he is susceptible of, and subjected to, imputability in the very moment of that action, just as much as though, endowed with a predisposition to good (which is inseparable from freedom), he had stepped out of a state of innocence into evil. Hence we cannot inquire into the temporal origin of this deed, but solely into its rational origin, if we are thereby to determine and, wherever

possible, to elucidate the propensity, if it exists, i.e., the general subjective ground of the adoption of transgression into our maxim.

The foregoing agrees well with that manner of presentation which the Scriptures use, whereby the origin of evil in the human race is depicted as having a [temporal] beginning, this beginning being presented in a narrative, wherein what in its essence must be considered as primary (without regard to the element of time) appears as coming first in time. According to this account, evil does not start from a propensity thereto as its underlying basis, for otherwise the beginning of evil would not have its source in freedom; rather does it start from sin (by which is meant the transgressing of the moral law as a divine command). The state of man prior to all propensity to evil is called the state of innocence. The moral law became known to mankind, as it must to any being not pure but tempted by desires, in the form of a prohibition (Genesis II, 16-17). Now instead of straightway following this law as an adequate incentive (the only incentive which is unconditionally good and regarding which there is no further doubt), man looked about for other incentives (Genesis III, 6) such as can be good only conditionally (namely, so far as they involve no infringement of the law). He then made it his maxim – if one thinks of his action as consciously springing from freedom – to follow the law of duty, not as duty, but, if need be, with regard to other aims. Thereupon he began to call in question the severity of the commandment which excludes the influence of all other incentives; then by sophistry he reduced* obedience to the law to the merely conditional character of a means (subject to the principle of self- love); and finally he adopted into his maxim of conduct the ascendancy of the sensuous impulse over the incentive which springs from the law – and thus occurred sin (Genesis III, 6). Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur. From all this it is clear that we daily act in the same way, and that therefore “in Adam all have sinned” and still sin; except that in us there is presupposed an innate propensity to transgression, whereas in the

first man, from the point of view of time, there is presupposed no such propensity but rather innocence; hence transgression on his part is called a fall into sin; but with us sin is represented as resulting from an already innate wickedness in our nature. This propensity, however, signifies no more than this, that if we wish to address ourselves to the explanation of evil in terms of its beginning in time, we must search for the causes of each deliberate transgression in a previous period of our lives, far back to that period wherein the use of reason had not yet developed, and thus back to a propensity to evil (as a natural ground) which is therefore called innate – the source of evil. But to trace the causes of evil in the instance of the first man, who is depicted as already in full command of the use of his reason, is neither necessary nor feasible, since otherwise this basis (the evil propensity) would have had to be created in him; therefore his sin is set forth as engendered directly from innocence. We must not, however, look for an origin in time of a moral character for which we are to be held responsible; though to do so is inevitable if we wish to explain the contingent existence of this character (and perhaps it is for this reason that Scripture, in conformity with this weakness of ours, has thus pictured the temporal origin of evil).

But the rational origin of this perversion of our will whereby it makes lower incentives supreme among its maxims, that is, of the propensity to evil, remains inscrutable to us, because this propensity itself must be set down to our account and because, as a result, that ultimate ground of all maxims would in turn involve the adoption of an evil maxim [as its basis]. Evil could have sprung only from the morally-evil (not from mere limitations in our nature); and yet the original predisposition (which no one other than man himself could have corrupted, if he is to be held responsible for this corruption) is a predisposition to good; there is then for us no conceivable ground from which the moral evil in us could originally have come. This inconceivability, together with a more accurate

specification of the wickedness of our race, the Bible expresses in the historical narrative as follows.* It finds a place for evil at the creation of the world, yet not in man, but in a spirit of an originally loftier destiny. Thus is the first beginning of all evil represented as inconceivable by us (for whence came evil to that spirit?); but man is represented as having fallen into evil only through seduction, and hence as being not basically corrupt (even as regards his original predisposition to good) but rather as still capable of an improvement, in contrast to a seducing spirit, that is, a being for whom temptation of the flesh cannot be accounted as an alleviation of guilt. For man, therefore, who despite a corrupted heart yet possesses a good will, there remains hope of a return to the good from which he has strayed.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

Concerning the Restoration to its Power of the Original Predisposition to Good

Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and could therefore be morally neither good nor evil. When it is said, Man is created good, this can mean nothing more than: He is created for good and the original predisposition in man is good; not that, thereby, he is already actually good, but rather that he brings it about that he becomes good or evil, according to whether he adopts or does not adopt into his maxim the incentives which this predisposition carries with it ([an act] which must be left wholly to his own free choice). Granted that some supernatural cooperation may be necessary to his becoming good, or to his becoming better, yet, whether this cooperation consists merely in the abatement of hindrances or indeed in positive assistance, man must first make himself worthy to receive it, and must lay hold of this aid

(which is no small matter) – that is, he must adopt this positive increase of power into his maxim, for only thus can good be imputed to him and he be known as a good man.

How it is possible for a naturally evil man to make himself a good man wholly surpasses our comprehension; for how can a bad tree bring forth good fruit? But since, by our previous acknowledgment, an originally good tree (good in predisposition) did bring forth evil fruit,* and since the lapse from good into evil (when one remembers that this originates in freedom) is no more comprehensible than the re-ascent from evil to good, the possibility of this last cannot be impugned. For despite the fall, the injunction that we ought to become better men resounds unabatedly in our souls; hence this must be within our power, even though what we are able to do is in itself inadequate and though we thereby only render ourselves susceptible of higher, and for us inscrutable, assistance. It must indeed be presupposed throughout that a seed of goodness still remains in its entire purity, incapable of being extirpated or corrupted; and this seed certainly cannot be self-love* which, when taken as the principle of all our maxims, is the very source of evil.

The restoration of the original predisposition to good in us is therefore not the acquiring of a lost incentive for good, for the incentive which consists in respect for the moral law we have never been able to lose, and were such a thing possible, we could never get it again. Hence the restoration is but the establishment of the purity of this law as the supreme ground of all our maxims, whereby it is not merely associated with other incentives, and certainly is not subordinated to any such (to inclinations) as its conditions, but instead must be adopted, in its entire purity, as an incentive adequate in itself for the determination of the will. Original goodness is the holiness of maxims in doing one’s duty, merely for duty’s sake. The man who adopts this purity into his maxim is indeed not yet holy by reason of this act (for there is a great gap between the maxim and

the deed). Still he is upon the road of endless progress towards holiness. When the firm resolve to do one's duty has become habitual, it is also called the virtue of conformity to law; such conformity is virtue's empirical character (virtus phÏnomenon). Virtue here has as its steadfast maxim conduct conforming to law; and it matters not whence come the incentives required by the will for such conduct. Virtue in this sense is won little by little and, for some men, requires long practice (in observance of the law) during which the individual passes from a tendency to vice, through gradual reformation of his conduct and strengthening of his maxims, to an opposite tendency. For this to come to pass a change of heart is not necessary, but only a change of practices. A man accounts himself virtuous if he feels that he is confirmed in maxims of obedience to his duty, though these do not spring from the highest ground of all maxims, namely, from duty itself. The immoderate person, for instance, turns to temperance for the sake of health, the liar to honesty for the sake of reputation, the unjust man to civic righteousness for the sake of peace or profit, and so on – all in conformity with the precious principle of happiness. But if a man is to become not merely legally, but morally, a good man (pleasing to God), that is, a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character (virtus noumenon) and one who, knowing something to be his duty, requires no incentive other than this representation of duty itself, this cannot be brought about through gradual reformation so long as the basis of the maxims remains impure, but must be effected through a revolution in the man's disposition (a going over to the maxim of holiness of the disposition). He can become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation (John III, 5; compare also Genesis I, 2), and a change of heart.

But if a man is corrupt in the very ground of his maxims, how can he possibly bring about this revolution by his own powers and of himself become a good man? Yet duty bids us do this, and duty demands nothing

of us which we cannot do. There is no reconciliation possible here except by saying that man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of, a revolution in his cast of mind, but only of a gradual reform in his sensuous nature (which places obstacles in the way of the former). That is, if a man reverses, by a single unchangeable decision, that highest ground of his maxims whereby he was an evil man (and thus puts on the new man), he is, so far as his principle and cast of mind are concerned, a subject susceptible of goodness, but only in continuous labor and growth is he a good man. That is, he can hope in the light of that purity of the principle which he has adopted as the supreme maxim of his will, and of its stability, to find himself upon the good (though strait) path of continual progress from bad to better. For Him who penetrates to the intelligible ground of the heart (the ground of all maxims of the will) and for whom this unending progress is a unity, i.e., for God, this amounts to his being actually a good man (pleasing to Him); and, thus viewed, this change can be regarded as a revolution. But in the judgment of men, who can appraise themselves and the strength of their maxims only by the ascendancy which they win over their sensuous nature in time, this change must be regarded as nothing but an ever-during struggle toward the better, hence as a gradual reformation of the propensity to evil, the perverted cast of mind.

From this it follows that man's moral growth of necessity begins not in the improvement of his practices but rather in the transforming of his cast of mind and in the grounding of a character; though customarily man goes about the matter otherwise and fights against vices one by one, leaving undisturbed their common root. And yet even the man of greatest limitations is capable of being impressed by respect for an action conforming to duty – a respect which is the greater the more he isolates it, in thought, from other incentives which, through self-love, might influence the maxim of conduct. Even children are capable of detecting

the smallest trace of admixture of improper incentives; for an action thus motivated at once loses, in their eyes, all moral worth. This predisposition to goodness is cultivated in no better way than by adducing the actual example of good men (of that which concerns their conformity to law) and by allowing young students of morals to judge the impurity of various maxims on the basis of the actual incentives motivating the conduct of these good men. The predisposition is thus gradually transformed into a cast of mind, and duty, for its own sake, begins to have a noticeable importance in their hearts. But to teach a pupil to admire virtuous actions, however great the sacrifice these may have entailed, is not in harmony with preserving his feeling for moral goodness. For be a man never so virtuous, all the goodness he can ever perform is still his simple duty; and to do his duty is nothing more than to do what is in the common moral order and hence in no way deserving of wonder. Such wonder is rather a lowering of our feeling for duty, as if to act in obedience to it were something extraordinary and meritorious.

Yet there is one thing in our soul which we cannot cease from regarding with the highest wonder, when we view it properly, and for which admiration is not only legitimate but even exalting, and that is the original moral predisposition itself in us. What is it in us (we can ask ourselves) whereby we, beings ever dependent upon nature through so many needs, are at the same time raised so far above these needs by the idea of an original predisposition (in us) that we count them all as nothing, and ourselves as unworthy of existence, if we cater to their satisfaction (though this alone can make life worth desiring) in opposition to the law – a law by virtue of which our reason commands us potently, yet without making either promises or threats? The force of this question every man, even one of the meanest capacity, must feel most deeply – every man, that is, who previously has been taught the holiness which inheres in the idea of duty but who has not yet advanced to an inquiry into the concept of

freedom, which first and foremost emerges from this law:* and the very incomprehensibility of this predisposition, which announces a divine origin, acts perforce upon the spirit even to the point of exaltation, and strengthens it for whatever sacrifice a man's respect for his duty may demand of him. More frequently to excite in man this feeling of the sublimity of his moral destiny is especially commendable as a method of awakening moral sentiments. For to do so works directly against the innate propensity to invert the incentives in the maxims of our will and toward the re-establishment in the human heart, in the form of an unconditioned respect for the law as the ultimate condition upon which maxims are to be adopted, of the original moral order among the incentives, and so of the predisposition to good in all its purity.

But does not this restoration through one's own exertions directly contradict the postulate of the innate corruption of man which unfits him for all good? Yes, to be sure, as far as the conceivability, i.e., our insight into the possibility, of such a restoration is concerned. This is true of everything which is to be regarded as an event in time (as change), and to that extent as necessary under the laws of nature, while at the same time its opposite is to be represented as possible through freedom under moral laws. Yet the postulate in question is not opposed to the possibility of this restoration itself. For when the moral law commands that we ought now to be better men, it follows inevitably that we must be able to be better men. The postulate of innate evil is of no use whatever in moral dogmatics, for the precepts of the latter carry with them the same duties and continue in identical force whether or not there is in us an innate tendency toward transgression. But in moral discipline this postulate has more to say, though no more than this: that in the moral development of the predisposition to good implanted in us, we cannot start from an innocence natural to us but must begin with the assumption of a wickedness of the will in adopting its maxims contrary to the original moral predisposition;

and, since this propensity [to evil] is inextirpable, we must begin with the incessant counteraction against it. Since this leads only to a progress, endlessly continuing, from bad to better, it follows that the conversion of the disposition of a bad man into that of a good one is to be found in the change of the highest inward ground of the adoption of all his maxims, conformable to the moral law, so far as this new ground (the new heart) is now itself unchangeable. Man cannot attain naturally to assurance concerning such a revolution, however, either by immediate consciousness or through the evidence furnished by the life which he has hitherto led; for the deeps of the heart (the subjective first ground of his maxims) are inscrutable to him. Yet he must be able to hope through his own efforts to reach the road which leads thither, and which is pointed out to him by a fundamentally improved disposition, because he ought to become a good man and is to be adjudged morally good only by virtue of that which can be imputed to him as performed by himself.

Against this expectation of self-improvement, reason, which is by nature averse to the labor of moral reconstruction, now summons, under the pretext of natural incapacity, all sorts of ignoble religious ideas (among which belongs the false ascription to God Himself of the principle of happiness as the chief condition of His commandments). All religions, however, can be divided into those which are endeavors to win favor (mere worship) and moral religions, i.e., religions of good life-conduct. In the first, man flatters himself by believing either that God can make him eternally happy (through remission of his sins) without his having to become a better man, or else, if this seems to him impossible, that God can certainly make him a better man without his having to do anything more than to ask for it. Yet since, in the eyes of a Being who sees all, to ask is no more than to wish, this would really involve doing nothing at all; for were improvement to be achieved simply by a wish, every man would be good. But in the moral religion (and of all the public religions which

have ever existed, the Christian alone is moral) it is a basic principle that each must do as much as lies in his power to become a better man, and that only when he has not buried his inborn talent (Luke XIX, 12-16) but has made use of his original predisposition to good in order to become a better man, can he hope that what is not within his power will be supplied through cooperation from above. Nor is it absolutely necessary for a man to know wherein this cooperation consists; indeed, it is perhaps inevitable that, were the way it occurs revealed at a given time, different people would at some other time form different conceptions of it, and that with entire sincerity. Even here the principle is valid: “It is not essential, and hence not necessary, for every one to know what God does or has done for his salvation;” but it is essential to know what man himself must do in order to become worthy of this assistance.

This General Observation is the first of four which are appended, one to each Book of this work, and which might bear the titles, (l) Works of Grace, (2) Miracles, (3) Mysteries, and (4) Means of Grace. These matters are, as it were, parerga to religion within the limits of pure reason; they do not belong within it but border upon it. Reason, conscious of her inability to satisfy her moral need, extends herself to high-flown ideas capable of supplying this lack, without, however, appropriating these ideas as an extension of her domain. Reason does not dispute the possibility or the reality of the objects of these ideas; she simply cannot adopt them into her maxims of thought and action. She even holds that, if in the inscrutable realm of the supernatural there is something more than she can explain to herself, which may yet be necessary as a complement to her moral insufficiency, this will be, even though unknown, available to her good will. Reason believes this with a faith which (with respect to the possibility of this supernatural complement) might be called reflective; for dogmatic faith, which proclaims itself as a form of knowledge, appears to her dishonest or presumptuous. To remove the difficulties, then, in the

way of that which (for moral practice) stands firm in and for itself, is merely a by-work (*parergon*), when these difficulties have reference to transcendent questions. As regards the damage resulting from these morally-transcendent ideas, when we seek to introduce them into religion, the consequences, listed in the order of the four classes named above, are: (1) [corresponding] to imagined inward experience (works of grace), [the consequence is] fanaticism; (2) to alleged external experience (miracles), superstition; (3) to a supposed enlightening of the understanding with regard to the supernatural (mysteries), illumination, the illusion of the "adepts"; (4) to hazardous attempts to operate upon the supernatural (means of grace), thaumaturgy – sheer aberrations of a reason going beyond its proper limits and that too for a purpose fancied to be moral (pleasing to God).

But touching that which especially concerns this General Observation to Book One of the present treatise, the calling to our assistance of works of grace is one of these aberrations and cannot be adopted into the maxims of reason, if she is to remain within her limits; as indeed can nothing of the supernatural, simply because in this realm all use of reason ceases. For it is impossible to find a way to define these things theoretically ([showing] that they are works of grace and not inner natural effects) because our use of the concept of cause and effect cannot be extended beyond matters of experience, and hence beyond nature. Moreover, even the hypothesis of a practical application of this idea is wholly self-contradictory. For the employment of this idea would presuppose a rule concerning the good which (for a particular end) we ourselves must do in order to accomplish something, whereas to await a work of grace means exactly the opposite, namely, that the good (the morally good) is not our deed but the deed of another being, and that we therefore can achieve it only by doing nothing, which contradicts itself. Hence we can admit a

work of grace as something incomprehensible, but we cannot adopt it into our maxims either for theoretical or for practical use.

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* That the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of moral maxims is inscrutable is indeed already evident from this, that since this adoption is free, its ground (why, for example, I have chosen an evil and not a good maxim) must not be sought in any natural impulse, but always again in a maxim. Now since this maxim also must have its ground, and since apart from maxims no determining ground of free choice can or ought to be adduced, we are referred back endlessly in the series of subjective determining grounds, without ever being able to reach the ultimate ground.

* If the good = a, then its diametric opposite is the not-good. This latter is the result either of a mere absence of a basis of goodness, = 0, or of a positive ground of the opposite of good, = -a. In the second case the not-good may also be called positive evil. (As regards pleasure and pain there is a similar middle term, whereby pleasure = a, pain = -a, and the state in which neither is to be found, indifference, = 0.) Now if the moral law in us were not a motivating force of the will, the morally good (the agreement of the will with the law) would = a, and the not-good would = 0; the latter, as merely the result of the absence of a moral motivating force, would = a ´ 0. In us, however, the law is a motivating force, = a; hence the absence of agreement of the will with this law (= 0) is possible only as a consequence of a real and contrary determination of the will, i.e., of an opposition to the law, = -a, i.e., of an evil will. Between a good and an evil disposition (inner principle of maxims), according to which the morality of an action must be judged, there is therefore no middle ground.

A morally indifferent action (*adiaphoron morale*) would be one resulting merely from natural laws, and hence standing in no relation whatsoever to the moral law, which is the law of freedom; for such action is not a morally significant fact at all and regarding it neither command, nor prohibition, nor permission (legal privilege) occurs or is necessary.

** Professor Schiller, in his masterly treatise (Thalia, 1793, Part III) on grace and dignity in morality, objects to this way of representing

obligation, as carrying with it a monastic cast of mind. Since, however, we are at one upon the most important principles, I cannot admit that there is disagreement here, if only we can make ourselves clear to one another. I freely grant that by very reason of the dignity of the idea of duty I am unable to associate grace with it. For the idea of duty involves absolute necessity, to which grace stands in direct contradiction. The majesty of the moral law (as of the law on Sinai) instils awe (not dread, which repels, nor yet charm, which invites familiarity); and in this instance, since the ruler resides within us, this respect, as of a subject toward his ruler, awakens a sense of the sublimity of our own destiny which enraptures us more than any beauty. Virtue, also, i.e., the firmly grounded disposition strictly to fulfil our duty, is also beneficent in its results, beyond all that nature and art can accomplish in the world; and the august picture of humanity, as portrayed in this character, does indeed allow the attendance of the graces. But when duty alone is the theme, they keep a respectful distance. If we consider, further, the happy results which virtue, should she gain admittance everywhere, would spread throughout the world, [we see] morally-directed reason (by means of the imagination) calling the sensibilities into play. Only after vanquishing monsters did Hercules become Musagetes, leader of the Muses, – after labors from which those worthy sisters, trembling, draw back. The attendants of Venus Urania become wantons in the train of Venus Dione as soon as they meddle in the business of determining duty and try to provide springs of action therefor.

Now if one asks, What is the aesthetic character, the temperament, so to speak, of virtue, whether courageous and hence joyous or fear-ridden and dejected, an answer is hardly necessary. This latter slavish frame of mind can never occur without a hidden hatred of the law. And a heart which is happy in the performance of its duty (not merely complacent in the recognition thereof) is a mark of genuineness in the virtuous disposition – of genuineness even in piety, which does not consist in the self-inflicted torment of a repentant sinner (a very ambiguous state of mind, which ordinarily is nothing but inward regret at having infringed upon the rules of prudence), but rather in the firm resolve to do better in the future. This resolve, then, encouraged by good progress, must needs beget a joyous frame of mind, without which man is never certain of having really attained a love for the good, i.e., of having incorporated it into his maxim.

* The ancient moral philosophers, who pretty well exhausted all that can be said upon virtue, have not left untouched the two questions mentioned above. The first they expressed thus: Must virtue be learned? (Is man by nature indifferent as regards virtue and vice?) The second they put thus: Is there more than one virtue (so that man might be virtuous in some respects, in others vicious)? Both questions were answered by them, with rigoristic precision, in the negative, and rightly so; for they were considering virtue as such, as it is in the idea of reason (that which man ought to be). If, however, we wish to pass moral judgment on this moral being, man as he appears, i.e., as experience reveals him to us, we can answer both questions in the affirmative; for in this case we judge him not according to the standard of pure reason (at a divine tribunal) but by an empirical standard (before a human judge). This subject will be treated further in what follows.

* We cannot regard this as included in the concept of the preceding, but necessarily must treat it as a special predisposition. For from the fact that a being has reason it by no means follows that this reason, by the mere representing of the fitness of its maxims to be laid down as universal laws, is thereby rendered capable of determining the will unconditionally, so as to be “practical” of itself; at least, not so far as we can see. The most rational mortal being in the world might still stand in need of certain incentives, originating in objects of desire, to determine his choice. He might. indeed, bestow the most rational reflection on all that concerns not only the greatest sum of these incentives in him but also the means of attaining the end thereby determined, without ever suspecting the possibility of such a thing as the absolutely imperative moral law which proclaims that it is itself an incentive, and, indeed, the highest. Were it not given us from within, we should never by any ratiocination subtilize it into existence or win over our will to it; yet this law is the only law which informs us of the independence of our will from determination by all other incentives (of our freedom) and at the same time of the accountability of all our actions.

A propensity (Hang) is really only the predisposition to crave a delight which, when once experienced, arouses in the subject an inclination to it. Thus all savage peoples have a propensity for intoxicants; for though many of them are wholly ignorant of intoxication and in consequence have absolutely no craving for an

intoxicant, let them but once sample it and there is aroused in them an almost inextinguishable craving for it.

Between inclination, which presupposes acquaintance with the object of desire, and propensity there still is instinct, which is a felt want to do or to enjoy something of which one has as yet no conception (such as the constructive impulse in animals, or the sexual impulse) . Beyond inclination there is finally a further stage in the faculty of desire, passion (not emotion, for this has to do with the feeling of pleasure and pain), which is an inclination that excludes the mastery over oneself.

* Thus the war ceaselessly waged between the Arathapesca Indians and the Dog Rib Indians has no other object than mere slaughter. Bravery in war is, in the opinion of savages, the highest virtue. Even in a civilized state it is an object of admiration and a basis for the special regard commanded by that profession in which bravery is the sole merit; and this is not without rational cause. For that man should be able to possess a thing (i.e., honor) and make it an end to be valued more than life itself, and because of it renounce all self-interest, surely bespeaks a certain nobility in his natural disposition. Yet we recognize in the complacency with which victors boast their mighty deeds (massacres, butchery without quarter, and the like) that it is merely their own superiority and the destruction they can wreak, without any other objective, in which they really take satisfaction.

When we survey the history of these, merely as the phenomenon of the inner predispositions of mankind which are for the most part concealed from us, we become aware of a certain machine-like movement of nature toward ends which are nature’s own rather than those of the nations. Each separate state, so long as it has a neighboring state which it dares hope to conquer, strives to aggrandize itself through such a conquest, and thus to attain a world-monarchy, a polity wherein all freedom, and with it (as a consequence) virtue, taste, and learning, would necessarily expire. Yet this monster (in which laws gradually lose their force), after it has swallowed all its neighbors, finally dissolves of itself, and through rebellion and disunion breaks up into many smaller states. These, instead of striving toward a league of nations (a republic of federated free nations), begin the same game over again, each for itself, so that war (that scourge of humankind) may not be allowed to cease.

Although indeed war is not so incurably evil as that tomb, a universal autocracy (or even as a confederacy which exists to hasten the weakening of a despotism in any single state), yet, as one of the ancients put it, war creates more evil men than it destroys.

* The special proof of this sentence of condemnation by morally judging reason is to be found in the preceding section rather than in this one, which contains only the confirmation of it by experience. Experience, however, never can reveal the root of evil in the supreme maxim of the free will relating to the law, a maxim which, as intelligible act, precedes all experience. Hence from the singleness of the supreme maxim, together with the singleness of the law to which it relates itself, we can also understand why, for the pure intellectual judgment of mankind, the rule of excluding a mean between good and evil must remain fundamental; yet for the empirical judgment based on sensible conduct (actual performance and neglect) the rule may be laid down that there is a mean between these extremes – on the one hand a negative mean of indifference prior to all education, on the other hand a positive, a mixture, partly good and partly evil. However, this latter is merely a judgment upon the morality of mankind as appearance, and must give place to the former in a final judgment.

* The three so-called “higher faculties” (in the universities) would explain this transmission of evil each in terms of its own specialty, as inherited disease, inherited debt, or inherited sin. (1) The faculty of medicine would represent this hereditary evil somewhat as it represents the tapeworm, concerning which several naturalists actually believe that, since no specimens have been met with anywhere but in us, not even (of this particular type) in other animals, it must have existed in our first parents. (2) The faculty of law would regard this evil as the legitimate consequence of succeeding to the patrimony bequeathed us by our first parents, [an inheritance] encumbered, however, with heavy forfeitures (for to be born is no other than to inherit the use of earthly goods so far as they are necessary to our continued existence). Thus we must fulfil payment (atone) and at the end still be dispossessed (by death) of the property. How just is legal justice! (3) The theological faculty would regard this evil as the personal participation by our first parents in the fall of a condemned rebel, maintaining either that we ourselves then participated (although now unconscious of having done so), or that

even now, born under the rule of the rebel (as prince of this world), we prefer his favors to the supreme command of the heavenly Ruler, and do not possess enough faith to free ourselves; wherefore we must also eventually share his doom.

* All homage paid to the moral law is an act of hypocrisy, if, in one's maxim, ascendancy is not at the same time granted to the law as an incentive sufficient in itself and higher than all other determining grounds of the will. The propensity to do this is inward deceit, i.e., a tendency to deceive oneself in the interpretation of the moral law, to its detriment (Genesis III, 5). Accordingly, the Bible (the Christian portion of it) denominates the author of evil (who is within us) as the liar from the beginning, and thus characterizes man with respect to what seems to be the chief ground of evil in him.

* What is written here must not be read as though intended for Scriptural exegesis, which lies beyond the limits of the domain of bare reason. It is possible to explain how an historical account is to be put to a moral use without deciding whether this is the intention of the author or merely our interpretation, provided this meaning is true in itself, apart from all historical proof, and is moreover the only one whereby we can derive something conducive to our betterment from a passage which otherwise would be only an unfruitful addition to our historical knowledge. We must not quarrel unnecessarily over a question or over its historical aspect, when, however it is understood, it in no way helps us to be better men, and when that which can afford such help is discovered without historical proof, and indeed must be apprehended without it. That historical knowledge which has no inner bearing valid for all men belongs to the class of adiaphora, which each man is free to hold as he finds edifying.

* The tree, good in predisposition, is not yet good in actuality, for were it so, it could certainly not bring forth bad fruit. Only when a man has adopted into his maxim the incentive implanted in him of allegiance to the moral law is he to be called a good man (or the tree a thoroughly good tree).

* *Self-love*. Words which can be taken in two entirely different meanings frequently delay for a long time the reaching of a conviction even on the clearest of grounds. Like love in general, so also can self-love be divided into love of good will and love of good

pleasure (*benevolentiae et complacentiae*), and both (as is self-evident) must be rational. To adopt the former into one's maxim is natural (for who will not wish to have it always go well with him?); it is also rational so far as, on the one hand, that end is chosen which can accord with the greatest and most abiding welfare, and, on the other, the fittest means are chosen [to secure] each of the components of happiness. Here reason holds but the place of a handmaid to natural inclination; the maxim adopted on such grounds has absolutely no reference to morality. Let this maxim, however, be made the unconditional principle of the will, and it is the source of an incalculably great antagonism to morality.

A rational love of good pleasure in oneself can be understood in either of two ways: first, that we are well pleased with ourselves with respect to those maxims already mentioned which aim at the gratification of natural inclination (so far as that end is attained through following those maxims); and then it is identical with love as good will toward oneself: one takes pleasure in oneself, just as a merchant whose business speculations turn out well rejoices in his good discernment regarding the maxims he used in these transactions. In the second sense, the maxim of self-love as unqualified good pleasure in oneself (not dependent upon success or failure as consequences of conduct) would be the inner principle of such a contentment as is possible to us only on condition that our maxims are subordinated to the moral law. No man who is not indifferent to morality can take pleasure in himself, can indeed escape a bitter dissatisfaction with himself, when he is conscious of maxims which do not agree with the moral law in him. One might call that a rational self-love which prevents any adulteration of the incentives of the will by other causes of happiness such as come from the consequences of one's actions (under the name of a thereby attainable happiness). Since, however this denotes an unconditional respect for the law, why needlessly render difficult the clear understanding of the principle by using the term rational self-love, when the use of the term moral self-love is restricted to this very condition, thus going around in a circle? (For only he can love himself in a moral fashion who knows that it is his maxim to make reverence for the law the highest incentive of his will.) By our nature as beings dependent upon circumstances of sensibility, we crave happiness first and unconditionally. Yet by this same nature of ours (if we wish in general so to term that which is innate). as beings endowed with reason and freedom, this happiness is

far from being first, nor indeed is it unconditionally an object of our maxims; rather this object is worthiness to be happy, i.e., the agreement of all our maxims with the moral law. That this is objectively the condition whereby alone the wish for happiness can square with legislative reason – therein consists the whole precept of morality; and the moral cast of mind consists in the disposition to harbor no wish except on these terms.

* The concept of the freedom of the will does not precede the consciousness of the moral law in us but is deduced from the determinability of our will by this law as an unconditional command. Of this we can soon be convinced by asking ourselves whether we are certainly and immediately conscious of power to overcome, by a firm resolve, every incentive, however great, to transgression (*Phalaris licet imperet, ut sis falsus et admoto dictet periuria tauro*). Everyone will have to admit that he does not know whether, were such a situation to arise, he would not be shaken in his resolution. Still, duty commands him unconditionally: he ought to remain true to his resolve; and thence he rightly concludes that he must be able to do so, and that his will is therefore free. Those who fallaciously represent this inscrutable property as quite comprehensible create an illusion by means of the word determinism (the thesis that the will is determined by inner self-sufficient grounds) as though the difficulty consisted in reconciling this with freedom – which after all never occurs to one; whereas what we wish to understand, and never shall understand, is how predeterminism, according to which voluntary actions, as events, have their determining grounds in antecedent time (which, with what happened in it. is no longer within our power), can he consistent with freedom, according to which the act as well as its opposite must be within the power of the subject at the moment of its taking place.

To reconcile the concept of freedom with the idea of God as a necessary Being raises no difficulty at all: for freedom consists not in the contingency of the act (that it is determined by no grounds whatever), i.e., not in indeterminism (that God must be equally capable of doing good or evil, if His actions are to be called free), but rather in absolute spontaneity. Such spontaneity is endangered only by predeterminism, where the determining ground of the act is in antecedent time, with the result that, the act being now no longer in my power but in the hands of nature, I am irresistibly determined; but

since in God no temporal sequence is thinkable, this difficulty vanishes.

Book Two

CONCERNING THE CONFLICT OF THE GOOD WITH THE EVIL PRINCIPLE FOR SOVEREIGNTY OVER MAN

To become morally good it is not enough merely to allow the seed of goodness implanted in our species to develop without hindrance; there is also present in us an active and opposing cause of evil to be combatted. Among the ancient moralists it was pre-eminently the Stoics who called attention to this fact by their watchword virtue, which (in Greek as well as in Latin) signifies courage and valor and thus presupposes the presence of an enemy. In this regard the name virtue is a noble one, and that it has often been ostentatiously misused and derided (as has of late the word “Enlightenment”) can do it no harm. For simply to make the demand for courage is to go half-way towards infusing it; on the other hand, the lazy and pusillanimous cast of mind (in morality and religion) which entirely mistrusts itself and hangs back waiting for help from without, is relaxing to all a man’s powers and makes him unworthy even of this assistance.

Yet those valiant men [the Stoics] mistook their enemy: for he is not to be sought in the merely undisciplined natural inclinations which present themselves so openly to everyone’s consciousness; rather is he, as it were, an invisible foe who screens himself behind reason and is therefore all the more dangerous. They called out wisdom against folly, which allows itself to be deceived by the inclinations through mere carelessness, instead of

summoning her against wickedness (the wickedness of the human heart), which secretly undermines the disposition with soul-destroying principles.*

Natural inclinations, considered in themselves, are good, that is, not a matter of reproach, and it is not only futile to want to extirpate them but to do so would also be harmful and blameworthy. Rather, let them be tamed and instead of clashing with one another they can be brought into harmony in a wholeness which is called happiness. Now the reason which accomplishes this is termed prudence. But only what is opposed to the moral law is evil in itself, absolutely reprehensible, and must be completely eradicated; and that reason which teaches this truth, and more especially that which puts it into actual practice, alone deserves the name of wisdom. The vice corresponding to this may indeed be termed folly, but again only when reason feels itself strong enough not merely to hate vice as something to be feared, and to arm itself against it, but to scorn vice (with all its temptations).

So when the Stoic regarded man's moral struggle simply as a conflict with his inclinations, so far as these (innocent in themselves) had to be overcome as hindrances to the fulfilment of his duty, he could locate the cause of transgression only in man's neglect to combat these inclinations, for he admitted no special, positive principle (evil in itself). Yet since this neglect is itself contrary to duty (a transgression) and no mere lapse of nature, and since the cause thereof cannot be sought once again in the inclinations (unless we are to argue in a circle) but only in that which determines the will as a free will (that is, in the first and inmost ground of the maxims which accord with the inclinations), we can well understand how philosophers for whom the basis of an explanation remained ever hidden in darkness* – a basis which, though inescapable, is yet unwelcome – could mistake the real opponent of goodness with whom they believed they had to carry on a conflict.

So it is not surprising that an Apostle represents this invisible enemy, who is known only through his operations upon us and who destroys basic principles, as being outside us and, indeed, as an evil spirit: “We wrestle not against flesh and blood (the natural inclinations) but against principalities and powers – against evil spirits.” This is an expression which seems to have been used not to extend our knowledge beyond the world of sense but only to make clear for practical use the conception of what is for us unfathomable. As far as its practical value to us is concerned, moreover, it is all one whether we place the seducer merely within ourselves or without, for guilt touches us not a whit less in the latter case than in the former, inasmuch as we would not be led astray by him at all were we not already in secret league with him.* We will treat of this whole subject in two sections.

SECTION ONE CONCERNING THE LEGAL CLAIM OF THE GOOD PRINCIPLE TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER MAN

A. The Personified Idea of the Good Principle

Mankind (rational earthly existence in general) in its complete moral perfection is that which alone can render a world the object of a divine decree and the end of creation. With such perfection as the prime condition, happiness is the direct consequence, according to the will of the Supreme Being. Man so conceived, alone pleasing to God, “is in Him through eternity”; the idea of him proceeds from God’s very being; hence he is no created thing but His only-begotten Son, “the Word (the Fiat!) through which all other things are, and without which nothing is in existence that is made” (since for him, that is, for rational existence in the world, so far as he may be regarded in the light of his moral destiny, all things were made). “He is the brightness of His glory.” “In him God loved

the world," and only in him and through the adoption of his disposition can we hope "to become the sons of God"; etc.

Now it is our universal duty as men to elevate ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection, that is, to this archetype of the moral disposition in all its purity – and for this the idea itself, which reason presents to us for our zealous emulation, can give us power. But just because we are not the authors of this idea, and because it has established itself in man without our comprehending how human nature could have been capable of receiving it, it is more appropriate to say that this archetype has come down to us from heaven and has assumed our humanity (for it is less possible to conceive how man, by nature evil, should of himself lay aside evil and raise himself to the ideal of holiness, than that the latter should descend to man and assume a humanity which is, in itself, not evil). Such union with us may therefore be regarded as a state of humiliation of the Son of God if we represent to ourselves this godly-minded person, regarded as our archetype, as assuming sorrows in fullest measure in order to further the world's good, though he himself is holy and therefore is bound to endure no sufferings whatsoever. Man, on the contrary, who is never free from guilt even though he has taken on the very same disposition, can regard as truly merited the sufferings that may overtake him, by whatever road they come; consequently he must consider himself unworthy of the union of his disposition with such an idea, even though this idea serves him as an archetype.

This ideal of a humanity pleasing to God (hence of such moral perfection as is possible to an earthly being who is subject to wants and inclinations) we can represent to ourselves only as the idea of a person who would be willing not merely to discharge all human duties himself and to spread about him goodness as widely as possible by precept and example, but even, though tempted by the greatest allurements, to take upon himself every affliction, up to the most ignominious death, for the

good of the world and even for his enemies. For man can frame to himself no concept of the degree and strength of a force like that of a moral disposition except by picturing it as encompassed by obstacles, and yet, in the face of the fiercest onslaughts, victorious.

Man may then hope to become acceptable to God (and so be saved) through a practical faith in this Son of God (so far as He is represented as having taken upon Himself man's nature). In other words, he, and he alone, is entitled to look upon himself as an object not unworthy of divine approval who is conscious of such a moral disposition as enables him to have a well-grounded confidence in himself and to believe that, under like temptations and afflictions (so far as these are made the touchstone of that idea), he would be loyal unswervingly to the archetype of humanity and, by faithful imitation, remain true to his exemplar.

B. The Objective Reality of this Idea

From the practical point of view this idea is completely real in its own right, for it resides in our morally-legislative reason. We ought to conform to it; consequently we must be able to do so. Did we have to prove in advance the possibility of man's conforming to this archetype, as is absolutely essential in the case of concepts of nature (if we are to avoid the danger of being deluded by empty notions), we should have to hesitate before allowing even to the moral law the authority of an unconditioned and yet sufficient determining ground of our will. For how it is possible that the bare idea of conformity to law, as such, should be a stronger incentive for the will than all the incentives conceivable whose source is personal gain, can neither be understood by reason nor yet proved by examples from experience. As regards the former, the law commands unqualifiedly; and as regards the latter, even though there had never existed an individual who yielded unqualified obedience to this law, the objective necessity of being such an one would yet be undiminished and

self-evident. We need, therefore, no empirical example to make the idea of a person morally well-pleasing to God our archetype; this idea as an archetype is already present in our reason. Moreover, if anyone, in order to acknowledge, for his imitation, a particular individual as such an example of conformity to that idea, demands more than what he sees, more, that is, than a course of life entirely blameless and as meritorious as one could wish; and if he goes on to require, as credentials requisite to belief, that this individual should have performed miracles or had them performed for him – he who demands this thereby confesses to his own moral unbelief, that is, to his lack of faith in virtue. This is a lack which no belief that rests upon miracles (and is merely historical) can repair. For only a faith in the practical validity of that idea which lies in our reason has moral worth. (Only this idea, to be sure, can establish the truth of miracles as possible effects of the good principle; but it can never itself derive from them its own verification.)

Just for this reason must an experience be possible in which the example of such a [morally perfect] human being is presented (so far, at least, as we can expect or demand from any merely external experience the evidences of an inner moral disposition). According to the law, each man ought really to furnish an example of this idea in his own person; to this end does the archetype reside always in the reason: and this, just because no example in outer experience is adequate to it; for outer experience does not disclose the inner nature of the disposition but merely allows of an inference about it though not one of strict certainty. (For the matter of that, not even does a man's inner experience with regard to himself enable him so to fathom the depths of his own heart as to obtain, through self-observation, quite certain knowledge of the basis of the maxims which he professes, or of their purity and stability.)

Now if it were indeed a fact that such a truly godly-minded man at some particular time had descended, as it were, from heaven to earth and

had given men in his own person, through his teachings, his conduct, and his sufferings, as perfect an example of a man well-pleasing to God as one can expect to find in external experience (for be it remembered that the archetype of such a person is to be sought nowhere but in our own reason), and if he had, through all this, produced immeasurably great moral good upon earth by effecting a revolution in the human race – even then we should have no cause for supposing him other than a man naturally begotten. (Indeed, the naturally begotten man feels himself under obligation to furnish just such an example in himself.) This is not, to be sure, absolutely to deny that he might be a man supernaturally begotten. But to suppose the latter can in no way benefit us practically, inasmuch as the archetype which we find embodied in this manifestation must, after all, be sought in ourselves (even though we are but natural men). And the presence of this archetype in the human soul is in itself sufficiently incomprehensible without our adding to its supernatural origin the assumption that it is hypostasized in a particular individual. The elevation of such a holy person above all the frailties of human nature would rather, so far as we can see, hinder the adoption of the idea of such a person for our imitation. For let the nature of this individual pleasing to God be regarded as human in the sense of being encumbered with the very same needs as ourselves, hence the same sorrows, with the very same inclinations, hence with the same temptations to transgress; let it, however, be regarded as superhuman to the degree that his unchanging purity of will, not achieved with effort but innate, makes all transgression on his part utterly impossible: his distance from the natural man would then be so infinitely great that such a divine person could no longer be held up as an example to him. Man would say: If I too had a perfectly holy will, all temptations to evil would of themselves be thwarted in me; if I too had the most complete inner assurance that, after a short life on earth, I should (by virtue of this holiness) become at once a partaker in all the eternal glory of the kingdom of heaven, I too should take upon myself

not only willingly but joyfully all sorrows, however bitter they might be, even to the most ignominious death, since I would see before my eyes the glorious and imminent sequel. To be sure, the thought that this divine person was in actual possession of this eminence and this bliss from all eternity (and needed not first of all to earn them through such afflictions), and that he willingly renounced them for the sake of those absolutely unworthy, even for the sake of his enemies, to save them from everlasting perdition – this thought must attune our hearts to admiration, love, and gratitude. Similarly the idea of a demeanor in accordance with so perfect a standard of morality would no doubt be valid for us, as a model for us to copy. Yet he himself could not be represented to us as an example for our imitation, nor, consequently, as a proof of the feasibility and attainability for us of so pure and exalted a moral goodness.*

Now such a godly-minded teacher, even though he was completely human, might nevertheless truthfully speak of himself as though the ideal of goodness were displayed incarnate in him (in his teachings and conduct). In speaking thus he would be alluding only to the disposition which he makes the rule of his actions; since he cannot make this disposition visible, as an example for others, by and through itself, he places it before their eyes only through his teachings and actions: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” For in the absence of proofs to the contrary it is no more than right to ascribe the faultless example which a teacher furnishes of his teaching – when, moreover, this is a matter of duty for all – to the supremely pure moral disposition of the man himself. When a disposition such as this, together with all the afflictions assumed for the sake of the world’s highest good, is taken as the ideal of mankind, it is, by standards of supreme righteousness, a perfectly valid ideal for all men, at all times and in all worlds, whenever man makes his own disposition like unto it, as he ought to do. To be sure, such an attainment will ever remain a righteousness not our own, inasmuch as it would have to consist of a

course of life completely and faultlessly harmonious with that perfect disposition. Yet an appropriation of this righteousness for the sake of our own must be possible when our own disposition is made at one with that of the archetype, although the greatest difficulties will stand in the way of our rendering this act of appropriation comprehensible. To these difficulties we now turn.

C. Difficulties which Oppose the Reality of this Idea, and their Solution

The first difficulty which makes doubtful the realization in us of that idea of a humanity well-pleasing to God, when we consider the holiness of the Lawgiver and the lack of a righteousness of our own, is the following. The law says: “Be ye holy (in the conduct of your lives) even as your Father in Heaven is holy.” This is the ideal of the Son of God which is set up before us as our model. But the distance separating the good which we ought to effect in ourselves from the evil whence we advance is infinite, and the act itself, of conforming our course of life to the holiness of the law, is impossible of execution in any given time. Nevertheless, man’s moral constitution ought to accord with this holiness. This constitution must therefore be found in his disposition, in the all-embracing and sincere maxim of conformity of conduct to the law, as the seed from which all goodness is to be developed. Such a disposition arises, then, from a holy principle which the individual has made his own highest maxim. A change of heart such as this must be possible because duty requires it.

Now the difficulty lies here: How can a disposition count for the act itself, when the act is always (not eternally, but at each instant of time) defective? The solution rests on these considerations. In our conceptions of the relation of cause and effect we are unavoidably confined to time-conditions. According to our mode of estimation, therefore, conduct itself,

as a continual and endless advance from a deficient to a better good, ever remains defective. We must consequently regard the good as it appears in us, that is, in the guise of an act, as being always inadequate to a holy law. But we may also think of this endless progress of our goodness towards conformity to the law, even if this progress is conceived in terms of actual deeds, or life-conduct, as being judged by Him who knows the heart, through a purely intellectual intuition, as a completed whole, because of the disposition, supersensible in its nature, from which this progress itself is derived.* Thus may man, notwithstanding his permanent deficiency, yet expect to be essentially well-pleasing to God, at whatever instant his existence be terminated.

The second difficulty emerges when we consider man, as he strives towards the good, with respect to the relation of his moral goodness to the divine goodness. This difficulty concerns moral happiness. By this I do not mean that assurance of the everlasting possession of contentment with one's physical state (freedom from evils and enjoyment of ever-increasing pleasures) which is physical happiness; I mean rather the reality and constancy of a disposition which ever progresses in goodness (and never falls away from it). For if only one were absolutely assured of the unchangeableness of a disposition of this sort, the constant "seeking for the kingdom of God" would be equivalent to knowing oneself to be already in possession of this kingdom, inasmuch as an individual thus minded would quite of his own accord have confidence that "all things else (i.e., what relates to physical happiness) would be added unto him."

Now a person solicitous on this score might perhaps be rebuked for his concern, with: "His (God's) Spirit beareth witness to our spirit," etc.; that is to say, he who possesses as pure a disposition as is required will feel of himself that he could never fall so low as again to love evil. And yet to trust to such feelings, supposedly of supersensible origin, is a rather perilous undertaking; man is never more easily deceived than in what

promotes his good opinion of himself. Moreover it does not even seem advisable to encourage such a state of confidence; rather is it advantageous (to morality) to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (a hard saying, which, if misunderstood, is capable of driving a man to the blackest fanaticism). On the other hand, if a man lacked all confidence in his moral disposition, once it was acquired, he would scarcely be able to persevere steadfastly in it. He can gain such confidence, however, without yielding himself up either to pleasing or to anxious fantasies, by comparing the course of his life hitherto with the resolution which he has adapted. It is true, indeed, that the man who, through a sufficiently long course of life, has observed the efficacy of these principles of goodness, from the time of their adoption, in his conduct, that is, in the steady improvement of his way of life, can still only conjecture from this that there has been a fundamental improvement in his inner disposition. Yet he has reasonable grounds for hope as well. Since such improvements, if only their underlying principle is good, ever increase his strength for future advances, he can hope that he will never forsake this course during his life on earth but will press on with ever-increasing courage. Nay, more: if after this life another life awaits him, he may hope to continue to follow this course still – though to all appearances under other conditions – in accordance with the very same principle, and to approach ever nearer to, though he can never reach, the goal of perfection. All this may he reasonably hope because, on the strength of what he has observed in himself up to the present, he can look upon his disposition as radically improved. Just the reverse is true of him who, despite good resolutions often repeated, finds that he has never stood his ground, who is ever falling back into evil, or who is constrained to acknowledge that as his life has advanced he has slipped, as though he were on a declivity, evermore from bad to worse. Such an individual can entertain no reasonable hope that he would conduct himself better were he to go on living here on earth, or even were a future life awaiting him,

since, on the strength of his past record, he would have to regard the corruption as rooted in his very disposition.

Now in the first experience we have a glimpse of an immeasurable future, yet one which is happy and to be desired; in the second, of as incalculable a misery – either of them being for men, so far as they can judge, a blessed or cursed eternity. These are representations powerful enough to bring peace to the one group and strengthen them in goodness, and to awaken in the other the voice of conscience commanding them still to break with evil so far as it is possible; hence powerful enough to serve as incentives without our having to presume to lay down dogmatically the objective doctrine that man's destiny is an eternity of good or evil.* In making such assertions and pretensions to knowledge, reason simply passes beyond the limits of its own insight.

And so that good and pure disposition of which we are conscious (and of which we may speak as a good spirit presiding over us) creates in us, though only indirectly, a confidence in its own permanence and stability, and is our Comforter (Paraclete) whenever our lapses make us apprehensive of its constancy. Certainty with regard to it is neither possible to man, nor, so far as we can see, [would it be] morally beneficial. For, be it well noted, we cannot base such confidence upon an immediate consciousness of the unchangeableness of our disposition, for this we cannot scrutinize: we must always draw our conclusions regarding it solely from its consequences in our way of life. Since such a conclusion, however, is drawn merely from objects of perception, as the appearances of the good or evil disposition, it can least of all reveal the strength of the disposition with any certainty. This is particularly true when we think that we have effected an improvement in our disposition only a short while before we expect to die; because now, in the absence of further conduct upon which to base a judgment regarding our moral worth, even such empirical proofs of the genuineness of the new disposition are entirely

lacking. In this case a feeling of wretchedness is the inevitable result of a rational estimate of our moral state (though, indeed, human nature itself, by virtue of the obscurity of all its views beyond the limits of this life, prevents this comfortlessness from turning into wild despair).

The third and apparently the greatest difficulty, which represents every man, even after he has entered upon the path of goodness, as reprobate when his life-conduct as a whole is judged before a divine righteousness, may be stated thus: Whatever a man may have done in the way of adopting a good disposition, and, indeed, however steadfastly he may have persevered in conduct conformable to such a disposition, he nevertheless started from evil, and this debt he can by no possibility wipe out. For he cannot regard the fact that he incurs no new debts subsequent to his change of heart as equivalent to having discharged his old ones. Neither can he, through future good conduct, produce a surplus over and above what he is under obligation to perform at every instant, for it is always his duty to do all the good that lies in his power. This debt which is original, or prior to all the good a man may do – this, and no more, is what we referred to in Book One as the radical evil in man – this debt can never be discharged by another person, so far as we can judge according to the justice of our human reason. For this is no transmissible liability which can be made over to another like a financial indebtedness (where it is all one to the creditor whether the debtor himself pays the debt or whether some one else pays it for him); rather is it the most personal of all debts, namely a debt of sins, which only the culprit can bear and which no innocent person can assume even though he be magnanimous enough to wish to take it upon himself for the sake of another. Now this moral evil (transgression of the moral law, called SIN when the law is regarded as a divine command) brings with it endless violations of the law and so infinite guilt. The extent of this guilt is due not so much to the infinitude of the Supreme Lawgiver whose authority is thereby violated (for we

understand nothing of such transcendent relationships of man to the Supreme Being) as to the fact that this moral evil lies in the disposition and the maxims in general, in universal basic principles rather than in particular transgressions. (The case is different before a human court of justice, for such a court attends merely to single offenses and therefore to the deed itself and what is relative thereto, and not to the general disposition.) It would seem to follow, then, that because of this infinite guilt all mankind must look forward to endless punishment and exclusion from the kingdom of God.

The solution of this difficulty rests on the following considerations. The judicial verdict of one who knows the heart must be regarded as based upon the general disposition of the accused and not upon the appearances of this disposition, that is, not upon actions at variance or in harmony with the law. We are assuming, however, that there now exists in man a good disposition having the upper hand over the evil principle which was formerly dominant in him. So the question which we are now raising is: Can the moral consequence of his former disposition, the punishment (or in other words the effect upon the subject of God's displeasure), be visited upon his present state, with its bettered disposition, in which he is already an object of divine pleasure? Since the question is not being raised as to whether, before his change of heart, the punishment ordained for him would have harmonized with the divine justice (on this score no one has any doubts), this punishment must not be thought of (in the present inquiry) as consummated prior to his reformation. After his change of heart, however, the penalty cannot be considered appropriate to his new quality (of a man well-pleasing to God), for he is now leading a new life and is morally another person; and yet satisfaction must be rendered to Supreme Justice, in whose sight no one who is blameworthy can ever be guiltless. Since, therefore, the infliction of punishment can, consistently with the divine wisdom, take place neither before nor after the change of

heart, and is yet necessary, we must think of it as carried out during the change of heart itself, and adapted thereto. Let us see then whether, by means of the concept of a changed moral attitude, we cannot discover in this very act of reformation such ills as the new man, whose disposition is now good, may regard as incurred by himself (in another state) and, therefore, as constituting punishments* whereby satisfaction is rendered to divine justice.

Now a change of heart is a departure from evil and an entrance into goodness, the laying off of the old man and the putting on of the new, since the man becomes dead unto sin (and therefore to all inclinations so far as they lead thereto) in order to become alive unto righteousness. But in this change, regarded as an intellectual determination, there are not two moral acts separated by an interval of time but only a single act, for the departure from evil is possible only through the agency of the good disposition which effects the individual's entrance into goodness, and vice versa. So the good principle is present quite as much in the desertion of the evil as in the adoption of the good disposition, and the pain, which by rights accompanies the former disposition, ensues wholly from the latter. The coming forth from the corrupted into the good disposition is, in itself (as "the death of the old man," "the crucifying of the flesh"), a sacrifice and an entrance upon a long train of life's ills. These the new man undertakes in the disposition of the Son of God, that is, merely for the sake of the good, though really they are due as punishments to another, namely to the old man (for the old man is indeed morally another).

Although the man (regarded from the point of view of his empirical nature as a sentient being) is physically the self-same guilty person as before and must be judged as such before a moral tribunal and hence by himself; yet, because of his new disposition, he is (regarded as an intelligible being) morally another in the eyes of a divine judge for whom this disposition takes the place of action. And this moral disposition which

in all its purity (like unto the purity of the Son of God) the man has made his own – or, (if we personify this idea) this Son of God, Himself – bears as vicarious substitute the guilt of sin for him, and indeed for all who believe (practically) in Him; as savior He renders satisfaction to supreme justice by His sufferings and death; and as advocate He makes it possible for men to hope to appear before their judge as justified. Only it must be remembered that (in this mode of representation) the suffering which the new man, in becoming dead to the old, must accept throughout life* is pictured as a death endured once for all by the representative of mankind.

Here, then, is that surplus – the need of which was noted previously – over the profit from good works, and it is itself a profit which is reckoned to us by grace. That what in our earthly life (and possibly at all future times and in all worlds) is ever only a becoming (namely, becoming a man well-pleasing to God) should be credited to us exactly as if we were already in full possession of it – to this we really have no legal claim,* that is, so far as we know ourselves (through that empirical self-knowledge which yields no immediate insight into the disposition but merely permits of an estimate based upon our actions); and so the accuser within us would be more likely to propose a judgment of condemnation. Thus the decree is always one of grace alone, although fully in accord with eternal justice, when we come to be cleared of all liability by dint of our faith in such goodness; for the decree is based upon a giving of satisfaction (a satisfaction which consists for us only in the idea of an improved disposition, known only to God).

Now the question may still be raised: Does this deduction of the idea of a justification of an individual who is indeed guilty but who has changed his disposition into one well-pleasing to God posses any practical use whatever, and what may this use be? One does not perceive what positive use could be made of it for religion or for the conduct of life, because the condition underlying the enquiry just conducted is that the individual in

question is already in actual possession of the required good disposition toward the development and encouragement of which all practical employment of ethical concepts properly aims; and as regards comfort, a good disposition already carries with it, for him who is conscious of possessing it, both comfort and hope (though not certainty). Thus the deduction of the idea has done no more than answer a speculative question, which, however, should not be passed over in silence just because it is speculative. Otherwise reason could be accused of being wholly unable to reconcile with divine justice man's hope of absolution from his guilt – a reproach which might be damaging to reason in many ways, but most of all morally. Indeed the negative benefit to religion and morality which may be derived, to every man's advantage, from the deduction of this idea of justification is very far- reaching. For we learn from this deduction that only the supposition of a complete change of heart allows us to think of the absolution, at the bar of heavenly justice, of the man burdened with guilt; that therefore no expiations, be they penances or ceremonies, no invocations or expressions of praise (not even those appealing to the ideal of the vicarious Son of God), can supply the lack of this change of heart, if it is absent, or, if it is present, can increase in the least its validity before the divine tribunal, since that ideal must be adopted into our disposition if it is to stand in place of conduct.

Another point is suggested by the question: What at life's close may a man promise himself, or what has he to fear, on the basis of his way of life? To answer this question a man must know his own character, at least to a certain extent. That is, even though he may believe that his disposition has improved, he must also take into consideration the old (corrupt) disposition with which he started; he must be able to infer what, and how much, of this disposition he has cast off, what quality (whether pure or still impure) the assumed new disposition possesses, as well as its degree of strength to overcome the old disposition and to guard against a

relapse. Thus he will have to examine his disposition throughout his whole life. Now he can form no certain and definite concept of his real disposition through an immediate consciousness thereof and can only abstract it from the way of life he has actually followed. When, therefore, he considers the verdict of his future judge (that is, of his own awakening conscience, together with the empirical knowledge of himself which is summoned to its aid), he will not be able to conceive any other basis for passing judgment than to have placed before his eyes at that time his whole life and not a mere segment of it, such as the last part of it or the part most advantageous to him. He would of his own accord add to this his prospects in a life continued further (without setting any limits thereto) were he to live longer. Here he will not be able to let a previously recognized disposition take the place of action; on the contrary, it is from the action before him that he must infer his disposition. What, I ask the reader, will be a man's verdict when someone tells him no more than that he has reason to believe that he will one day stand before a judge – and this thought will bring back to his recollection (even though he is not of the worst) much that he has long since light-heartedly forgotten – what verdict, based on the way of life he has hitherto led, will this thought lead him to pronounce upon his future destiny?

If this question is addressed to the judge within a man he will, pronounce a severe verdict upon himself; for a man cannot bribe his own reason. Place him, however, before another judge – since there are those who claim to know of such a judge through other channels of information – and he will have a store of excuses drawn from human frailty with which to oppose the severity of that judge, and in general his purpose will be to circumvent him. He may plan to anticipate his penalties by offering rueful self-inflicted penances, which do not arise from any genuine disposition toward improvement; or else to mollify him with prayers and entreaties, or with formulas and confessions in which he claims to believe.

And if he receives encouragement in all this (in keeping with the proverb, “All’s well that ends well”), he will lay his plans betimes so as not to forfeit needlessly too much of the enjoyment of life and yet, shortly before the end, to settle his account in all haste and to his own advantage.*

SECTION TWO CONCERNING THE LEGAL CLAIM OF THE EVIL PRINCIPLE TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER MAN, AND THE CONFLICT OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES WITH ONE ANOTHER

Holy Scripture (the Christian portion) sets forth this intelligible moral relationship in the form of a narrative, in which two principles in man, as opposed to one another as is heaven to hell, are represented as persons outside him; who not only pit their strength against each other but also seek (the one as man’s accuser, the other as his advocate) to establish their claims legally as though before a supreme judge.

Man was originally constituted the proprietor of all the goods of the earth (Genesis I, 28), though he was to possess them only in fee (*dominium utile*) under his Creator and Master as overlord (*dominus directus*). At once an evil being appears (how he became so evil as to prove untrue to his Master is not known, for he was originally good) who, through his fall, has been deprived of whatever estate he might have had in heaven and who now wishes to win another on earth. But since, as a being of a higher order – a spirit – he can derive no satisfaction from earthly and material objects, he seeks to acquire a dominion over spiritual natures by causing man’s first parents to be disloyal to their Overlord and dependent upon himself. Thus he succeeds in setting himself up as the lord paramount of all the goods of the earth, that is, as the prince of this world. Now one might indeed find it strange that God did not avail Himself of His might* against this traitor, and prefer to destroy at its

inception the kingdom which he had intended to found. In its dominion over the government of rational beings, however, Supreme Wisdom deals with them according to the principle of their freedom, and the good or evil that befalls them is to be imputable to themselves. A kingdom of evil was thus set up in defiance of the good principle, a kingdom to which all men, descended (in natural wise) from Adam, became subject, and this, too, with their own consent, since the false show of this world's goods lured their gaze away from the abyss of destruction for which they were reserved. Because of its legal claim to sovereignty over man the good principle did, indeed, secure itself through the establishment (in the Jewish theocracy) of a form of government instituted solely for the public and exclusive veneration of its name. Yet since the spiritual natures of the subjects of this government remained responsive to no incentives other than the goods of this world; since consequently they chose to be ruled only by rewards and punishments in this life; and since, therefore, they were suited only for such laws as were partly prescriptive of burdensome ceremonies and observances, and partly ethical, but all purely civil, in that external compulsion characterized them all and the inner essence of the moral disposition was not considered in the least: this institution did no substantial injury to the realm of darkness and served merely to keep ever in remembrance the imprescriptible right of the First Possessor.

Now there appeared at a certain time among these very people, when they were feeling in full measure all the ills of an hierarchical constitution, and when because of this and perhaps also because of the ethical doctrines of freedom of the Greek sages (doctrines staggering to the slavish mind) which had gradually acquired an influence over them, they had for the most part been brought to their senses and were therefore ripe for a revolution, – there suddenly appeared a person whose wisdom was purer even than that of previous philosophers, as pure as though it had descended from heaven. This person proclaimed himself as indeed truly

human with respect to his teachings and example, yet also an as envoy from heaven who, through an original innocence, was not involved in the bargain with the evil principle into which, through their representatives, their first parents, the rest of the human race had entered,* and “in whom, therefore, the prince of this world had no part.” Hereby the sovereignty of this prince was endangered. For were this man, well-pleasing to God, to withstand his temptations to enter also into that bargain, and were other men then devoutly to adopt the same disposition, the prince would lose just as many subjects and his kingdom would be in danger of being completely overthrown. The prince accordingly offered to make this person deputy-governor of his entire kingdom if only he would pay homage to him as owner thereof. When this attempt failed he not only took away from this stranger in his house all that could make his earthly life agreeable (to the point of direst poverty), but he also incited against him all the persecutions by means of which evil men can embitter life, [causing him] such sorrows as only the well-disposed can feel deeply, by slandering the pure intent of his teachings in order to deprive him of all following – and finally pursuing him to the most ignominious death. Yet he achieved nothing by this onslaught through the agency of a worthless mob upon his steadfastness and forthrightness in teaching and example for the sake of the good. And now as to the issue of this combat: the event can be viewed either in its legal or in its physical aspect. When we regard it as a physical event (which strikes the senses) the good principle is the worsted party; having endured many sorrows in this combat, he must give up his life* because he stirred up a rebellion against a (powerful) foreign suzerainty. Since, however, the realm in which principles (be they good or evil) have might is a realm not of nature but of freedom, i.e., a realm in which one can control events only so far as one can rule hearts and minds6 and where, consequently, no one is a slave (or bondsman) but the man who wills to be one, and only so long as he wills: this death (the last extremity of human suffering) was therefore a manifestation of the good

principle, that is, of humanity in its moral perfection, and an example for everyone to follow. The account of this death ought to have had, and could have had, the greatest influence upon human hearts and minds at that time and, indeed, at all times; for it exhibited the freedom of the children of heaven in most striking contrast to the bondage of a mere son of earth. Yet the good principle has descended in mysterious fashion from heaven into humanity not at one particular time alone but from the first beginnings of the human race (as anyone must grant who considers the holiness of this principle, and the incomprehensibility of a union between it and man's sensible nature in the moral predisposition) and it rightfully has in mankind its first dwelling place. And since it made its appearance in an actual human being, as an example to all others, [it may be said that] "he came unto his own, and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to be called the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." That is, by example (in and through the moral idea) he opens the portals of freedom to all who, like him, choose to become dead to everything that holds them fettered to life on earth to the detriment of morality; and he gathers together, among them, "a people for his possession, zealous of good works" and under his sovereignty, while he abandons to their fate all those who prefer moral servitude.

So the moral outcome of the combat, as regards the hero of this story (up to the time of his death), is really not the conquering of the evil principle – for its kingdom still endures, and certainly a new epoch must arrive before it is overthrown – but merely the breaking of its power to hold, against their will, those who have so long been its subjects, because another dominion (for man must be subject to some rule or other), a moral dominion, is now offered them as an asylum where they can find protection for their morality if they wish to forsake the former sovereignty. Furthermore, the evil principle is still designated the prince of this world, where those who adhere to the good principle should always

be prepared for physical sufferings, sacrifices, and mortifications of self-love – [tribulations] to be viewed, in this connection, as persecutions by the evil principle, since the latter has rewards in his kingdom only for those who have made earthly well-being their final goal.

Once this vivid mode of representation, which was in its time probably the only popular one, is divested of its mystical veil, it is easy to see that, for practical purposes, its spirit and rational meaning have been valid and binding for the whole world and for all time, since to each man it lies so near at hand that he knows his duty towards it. Its meaning is this: that there exists absolutely no salvation for man apart from the sincerest adoption of genuinely moral principles into his disposition; that what works against this adoption is not so much the sensuous nature, which so often receives the blame, as it is a certain self-incurred perversity, or however else one may care to designate this wickedness which the human race has brought upon itself – falsity (faussetZ), Satanic guile, through which evil came into the world – a corruption which lies in all men and which can be overcome only through the idea of moral goodness in its entire purity, together with the consciousness that this idea really belongs to our original predisposition and that we need but be assiduous in preserving it free from all impure admixture and in registering it deeply in our dispositions to be convinced, by its gradual effect upon the spiritual nature, that the dreaded powers of evil can in no wise make headway against it (“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”). Finally, lest perchance for want of this assurance we compensate superstitiously, through expiations which presuppose no change of heart, or fanatically, through pretended (and merely passive) inner illumination, and so forever be kept distant from the good that is grounded in activity of the self, we should acknowledge as a mark of the presence of goodness in us naught but a well-ordered conduct of life. An attempt such as the present, moreover, to discover in Scripture that sense* which harmonizes with the

most holy teachings of reason is not only allowable but must be deemed a duty. And we can remind ourselves of what the wise Teacher said to His disciples regarding someone who went his own way, by which, however, he was bound eventually to arrive at the same goal: “Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.”

GENERAL OBSERVATION

If a moral religion (which must consist not in dogmas and rites but in the heart’s disposition to fulfil all human duties as divine commands) is to be established, all miracles which history connects with its inauguration must themselves in the end render superfluous the belief in miracles in general; for it bespeaks a culpable degree of moral unbelief not to acknowledge as completely authoritative the commands of duty – commands primordially engraved upon the heart of man through reason – unless they are in addition accredited through miracles: “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” Yet, when a religion of mere rites and observances has run its course, and when one based on the spirit and the truth (on the moral disposition) is to be established in its stead, it is wholly conformable to man’s ordinary ways of thought, though not strictly necessary, for the historical introduction of the latter to be accompanied and, as it were, adorned by miracles, in order to announce the termination of the earlier religion, which without miracles would never have had any authority. Indeed, in order to win over the adherents of the older religion to the new, the new order is interpreted as the fulfilment, at last, of what was only prefigured in the older religion and has all along been the design of Providence. If this be so it is quite useless to debate those narratives or interpretations; the true religion, which in its time needed to be introduced through such expedients, is now here, and from now on is able to maintain itself on rational grounds. Otherwise one would have to assume that mere faith in, and repetition of, things incomprehensible (which any one can do without thereby being or ever

becoming a better man) is a way, and indeed the only way, of pleasing God – an assertion to be combatted with might and main. The person of the teacher of the one and only religion, valid for all worlds, may indeed be a mystery; his appearance on earth, his translation thence, and his eventful life and his suffering may all be nothing but miracles; nay, the historical record, which is to authenticate the account of all these miracles, may itself be a miracle (a supersensible revelation). We need not call in question any of these miracles and indeed may honor the trappings which have served to bring into public currency a doctrine whose authenticity rests upon a record indelibly registered in every soul and which stands in need of no miracle. But it is essential that, in the use of these historical accounts, we do not make it a tenet of religion that the knowing, believing, and professing of them are themselves means whereby we can render ourselves well-pleasing to God.

As for miracles in general, it appears that sensible men, while not disposed to renounce belief in them, never want to allow such belief to appear in practice; that is to say, they believe in theory that there are such things as miracles but they do not warrant them in the affairs of life. For this reason wise governments have always granted the proposition, and indeed legally recorded it among the public doctrines of religion, that miracles occurred of old, but they have not tolerated new miracles.* The ancient miracles were little by little so defined and so delimited by the authorities that they could cause no disturbance in the commonwealth; the authorities had to be concerned, however, over the effects which the new workers of miracles might have upon the public peace and the established order.

If one asks: What is to be understood by the word miracle? it may be explained (since it is really proper for us to know only what miracles are for us, i.e., for our practical use of reason) by saying that they are events in the world the operating laws of whose causes are, and must remain,

absolutely unknown to us. Accordingly, one can conceive of either theistic or demonic miracles; the second are divided into angelic miracles (of good spirits) and devilish miracles (of bad spirits). Of these only the last really come into question because the good angels (I know not why) give us little or nothing to say about them.

As regards theistic miracles: we can of course frame for ourselves a concept of the laws of operation of their cause (as an omnipotent, etc., and therewith a moral Being), but only a general concept, so far as we think of Him as creator of the world and its ruler according to the order of nature, as well as the moral order. For we can obtain direct and independent knowledge of the laws of the natural order, a knowledge which reason can then employ for its own use. If we assume, however, that God at times and under special circumstances allows nature to deviate from its own laws, we have not, and can never hope to have, the slightest conception of the law according to which God then brings about such an event (aside from the general moral concept that whatever He does will be in all things good- whereby, however, nothing is determined regarding this particular occurrence). But here reason is, as it were, crippled, for it is impeded in its dealings with respect to known laws, it is not instructed with anything new, and it can never in the world hope thus to be instructed. Among miracles, the demonic are the most completely irreconcilable with the use of our reason. For as regards theistic miracles, reason would at least have a negative criterion for its use, namely that even though something is represented as commanded by God, through a direct manifestation of Him, yet, if it flatly contradicts morality, it cannot, despite all appearances, be of God (for example, were a father ordered to kill his son who is, so far as he knows, perfectly innocent). But in the presence of what is taken to be a demonic miracle even this criterion fails; and were we, instead, to avail ourselves in these instances of the opposite, positive criterion for reason's use – namely, that, when through such an agency

there comes a bidding to a good act which in itself we already recognize as duty, this bidding has not issued from an evil spirit – we might still make a false inference, for the evil spirit often disguises himself, they say, as an angel of light.

In the affairs of life, therefore, it is impossible for us to count on miracles or to take them into consideration at all in our use of reason (and reason must be used in every incident of life). The judge (however credulous of miracles he may be in church) listens to the delinquent's claims to have been tempted of the devil exactly as though nothing has been said; although, were the judge to regard this diabolical influence as possible, it would be worthy of some consideration that an ordinary simple-minded man had been ensnared in the toils of an arch-rogue. Yet the judge cannot summon the tempter and confront each with the other; in a word, he can make absolutely nothing rational out of the matter. The wise clergyman will therefore guard himself well against cramming the heads and debasing the imaginations of those committed to his pastoral care with anecdotes from The Hellish Proteus. As regards miracles of the good variety, they are employed by men in the affairs of life as mere phrases. Thus the doctor says that there is no help for the patient unless a miracle occurs – in other words, he will certainly die. Among these affairs belongs also the work of the scientist, searching for the causes of events in their own natural laws; in the natural laws of these events, I say, which he can verify through experience, even though he must renounce knowledge of what it is in itself that works according to these laws, or what it might be for us if we had, possibly, another sense. In like manner, a man's own moral improvement is one of the tasks incumbent upon him; and heavenly influences may cooperate with him in this, or may be deemed needful for the explanation of the possibility of such improvement – yet man cannot comprehend them; he can neither distinguish them with certainty from natural influences, nor draw them, and thereby, as it were, heaven, down

to him. Since, then, he can make no possible use of them he sanctions* no miracles in this case but instead, should he attend to the commands of reason, he conducts himself as though all change of heart and all improvement depended solely upon his own exertions directed thereto. But to think that, through the gift of a really firm theoretical faith in miracles, man could himself perform them and so storm heaven – this is to venture so far beyond the limits of reason that we are not justified in tarrying long over such a senseless conceit.**

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* These philosophers derived their universal ethical principle from the dignity of human nature, that is, from its freedom (regarded as an independence from the power of the inclinations), and they could not have used as their foundation a better or nobler principle. They then derived the moral laws directly from reason, which alone legislates morally and whose command, through these laws, is absolute. Thus everything was quite correctly defined – objectively, with regard to the rule, and subjectively, with reference to the incentive – provided one ascribes to man an uncorrupted will to incorporate these laws unhesitatingly into his maxims. Now it was just in the latter presupposition that their error lay. For no matter how early we direct our attention to our moral state, we find that this state is no longer a res integra, but that we must start by dislodging from its stronghold the evil which has already entered in (and it could never have done so, had we not ourselves adopted it into our maxims); that is, the first really good act that a man can perform is to forsake the evil, which is to be sought not in his inclinations, but in his perverted maxim, and so in freedom itself. Those inclinations merely make difficult the execution of the good maxim which opposes them; whereas genuine evil consists in this, that a man does not will to withstand those inclinations when they tempt him to transgress – so it is really this disposition that is the true enemy. The inclinations are but the opponents of basic principles in general (be they good or evil); and so far that high-minded principle of morality [of the Stoics] is of value as an initiatory lesson (a general discipline of the inclinations) in allowing oneself to be guided by basic principles. But so far as

specific principles of moral goodness ought to be present but are not present, as maxims, we must assume the presence in the agent of some other opponent with whom virtue must join combat. In the absence of such an opponent all virtues would not, indeed, be splendid vices, as the Church Father has it; yet they would certainly be splendid frailties. For though it is true that thus the rebellion is often stilled, the rebel himself is not being conquered and exterminated.

* It is a very common assumption of moral philosophy that the existence of moral evil in man may easily be explained by the power of the motivating springs of his sensuous nature on the one hand, and the impotence of his rational impulses (his respect for the law) on the other, that is, by weakness. But then the moral goodness in him (his moral predisposition) would have to allow of a still easier explanation, for to comprehend the one apart from comprehending the other is quite unthinkable. Now reason's ability to master all opposing motivating forces through the bare idea of a law is utterly inexplicable; it is also inconceivable, therefore, how the motivating forces of the sensuous nature should be able to gain the ascendancy over a reason which commands with such authority. For if all the world were to proceed in conformity with the precepts of the law, we should say that everything came to pass according to natural order, and no one would think of so much as inquiring after the cause.

[Several of Kant's quotations from the Bible, and this among them, are not accurate reproductions of Luther's translation. Where such discrepancies occur we have given, in the text, a direct translation of Kant's words, using, so far as possible, the language of the King James version, and adding, in a footnote, the King James version of the entire passage which Kant seems to have had in mind. Cf. Ephesians VI, 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."]

* It is a peculiarity of Christian ethics to represent moral goodness as differing from moral evil not as heaven from earth but as heaven from hell. Though this representation is figurative, and, as such, disturbing, it is none the less philosophically correct in meaning. That is, it serves to prevent us from regarding good and evil, the realm of light and the realm of darkness, as bordering on each other and as losing

themselves in one another by gradual steps (of greater and lesser brightness); but rather to represent those realms as being separated from one another by an immeasurable gulf. The complete dissimilarity of the basic principles, by which one can become a subject of this realm or that, and the danger, too, which attends the notion of a close relationship between the characteristics which fit an individual for one or for the other, justify this manner of representation – which, though containing an element of horror, is none the less very exalting.

* It is indeed a limitation of human reason, and one which is ever inseparable from it, that we can conceive of no considerable moral worth in the actions of a personal being without representing that person, or his manifestation, in human guise. This is not to assert that such worth is in itself (kato alhqeian) so conditioned, but merely that we must always resort to some analogy to natural existences to render supersensible qualities intelligible to ourselves. Thus a philosophical poet assigns a higher place in the moral gradation of beings to man, so far as he has to fight a propensity to evil within himself, nay, just in consequence of this fact, if only he is able to master the propensity, than to the inhabitants of heaven themselves who, by reason of the holiness of their nature, are placed above the possibility of going astray:

“The world with all its faults
Is better than a realm of will-less angels.” (Haller)

The Scriptures too accommodate themselves to this mode of representation when, in order to make us comprehend the degree of God’s love for the human race, they ascribe to Him the very highest sacrifice which a loving being can make, a sacrifice performed in order that even those who are unworthy may be made happy (“For God so loved the world ...,”); though we cannot indeed rationally conceive how an all-sufficient Being could sacrifice a part of what belongs to His state of bliss or rob Himself of a possession. Such is the schematism of analogy, with which (as a means of explanation) we cannot dispense. But to transform it into a schematism of objective determination (for the extension of our knowledge) is anthropomorphism, which has, from the moral point of view (in religion), most injurious consequences.

At this point let me remark incidentally that while, in the ascent from the sensible to the supersensible, it is indeed allowable to schematize (that is, to render a concept intelligible by the help of an analogy to something sensible), it is on no account permitted us to infer (and thus to extend our concept), by this analogy, that what holds of the former must also be attributed to the latter. Such an inference is impossible, for the simple reason that it would run directly counter to all analogy to conclude that, because we absolutely need a schema to render a concept intelligible to ourselves (to support it with an example), it therefore follows that this schema must necessarily belong to the object itself as its predicate. Thus, I cannot say: I can make comprehensible to myself the cause of a plant (or of any organic creature, or indeed of the whole purposive world) only by attributing intelligence to it, on the analogy of an artificer in his relation to his work (say a watch); therefore the cause (of the plant and of the world in general) must itself possess intelligence. That is, I cannot say that this postulated intelligence of the cause conditions not merely my comprehending it but also conditions the possibility of its being a cause. On the contrary, between the relation of a schema to its concept and the relation of this same schema of a concept to the objective fact itself there is no analogy, but rather a mighty chasm, the overleaping of which (metabasiV eiV allo genoV) leads at once to anthropomorphism. The proof of this I have given elsewhere.

* Yet the following must not be overlooked. I do not mean by the above statement that the disposition shall serve to compensate for failure in allegiance to duty, or, consequently, for the actual evil in this endless course [of progress] (rather is it presupposed that a moral character in man, which is pleasing to God, is actually to be met with in this temporal series). What I do mean is that the disposition, which stands in the place of the totality of this series of approximations carried on without end, makes up for only that failure which is inseparable from the existence of a temporal being as such, the failure, namely, ever wholly to be what we have in mind to become. The question of compensation for actual transgressions occurring in this course of progress will be considered in connection with the solution of the third difficulty.

* Among those questions which might well be entitled childish, since even if an answer were forthcoming the questioner would be none the wiser, is this: Will the punishments of hell be terminable or

everlasting? Were the former alternative to be taught, there would be cause for fear that many (and indeed all who believe in purgatory) would say with the sailor in Moore's Travels, "Then I hope that I can stand it out!" If, however, the other alternative were to be affirmed and counted as an article of faith, there might arise the hope of complete immunity from punishment after a most abandoned life, though the purpose of the doctrine would be directly opposed to such a hope. For a clergyman, sought for advice and consolation by a man in moments of tardy repentance at the end of such a wicked life, must find it gruesome and inhuman to have to announce to the sinner his eternal condemnation. And since between this and complete absolution he recognizes no middle ground (but rather that men are punished either through all eternity or not at all), he will have to hold out to the sinner hope of the latter alternative. That is to say, he will have to promise to transform him on the spur of the moment into a man well- pleasing to God. Moreover, since there is now no more time to enter upon a good course of life, avowals of penitence, confessions of faith, nay, even solemn vows to lead a new life in the event of a further postponement of death, must serve as the means to this transformation. Such is the inevitable result when the eternity of man's future destiny, conformable to the way of life here led, is set forth as a dogma. When, on the contrary, a man is taught to frame for himself a concept of his future state from his moral condition up to the present, as the natural and foreseeable result of it, the immeasurableness of this series of consequences under the sway of evil will have upon him the same beneficial moral effect (i.e., of impelling him before his life ends to undo so far as possible what he has done, by reparation or compensation proportionate to his actions) as can be expected from proclaiming the eternity of his doom, but without entailing the disadvantages of that dogma (which, moreover, neither rational insight nor Scriptural exegesis warrants). For the consequences of this dogma are that the wicked man either counts in advance, even during the course of life, upon this pardon so easily obtainable, or else, at life's close, believes that it is merely a question of the claims of divine justice upon him, and that these claims may be satisfied with mere words. The rights of humanity meanwhile are disregarded and no one gets back what belongs to him. (This is a sequel so common to this form of expiation that an instance to the contrary is almost unheard of.) Furthermore, if anyone is apprehensive that his reason, through his conscience, will judge him too leniently, he errs, I believe, very seriously. For just because

reason is free, and must pass judgment even upon the man himself, it is not to be bribed; and if we tell a man under such circumstances that it is at least possible that he will soon have to stand before a judge, we need but leave him to his own reflections, which will in all probability pass sentence upon him with the greatest severity.

I will add here one or two further observations. The common proverb, "All's well that ends well," may indeed be applied to moral situations, but only if by ending well is meant the individual's becoming a genuinely good person. Yet wherein is he to recognize himself as such, since he can make this inference only from subsequent persistently good conduct for which, at the end of life, no time remains? The application of this saying to happiness may be more easily admitted, but, even here, only relatively to the position from which a man looks upon his life – that is, not if he looks ahead from its beginning but only if he reviews it from its close. Griefs that have been endured leave behind them no tormenting recollections, once we recognize that we are now delivered from them, but rather a feeling of gladness which but enhances the enjoyment of the good fortune which is now becoming ours: for both pleasure and pain are included in the temporal series (as belonging to the world of sense') and so disappear with it; they do not enter into the totality of the present enjoyment of life, but are displaced by it as their successor. If, finally, this proverb is applied in estimating the moral worth of the life we have led up to the present, we may go very far wrong if we accept its truth, even though our conduct at the end of life be perfectly good. For the subjective moral principle of the disposition, according to which alone our life must be judged, is of such a nature (being something supersensible) that its existence is not susceptible to division into periods of time, but can only be thought of as an absolute unity. And since we can arrive at a conclusion regarding the disposition only on the basis of actions (which are its appearances), our life must come to be viewed, for the purpose of such a judgment, as a temporal unity, a whole; in which case the reproaches [of conscience] arising from the earlier portion of life (before the improvement began) might well speak as loudly as the approbation from the latter portion, and might considerably repress the triumphant note of "All's well that ends well!"

In conclusion, there is another tenet, closely related to this doctrine regarding the duration of punishments in another world, though not

identical with it; namely, that “All sins must be forgiven here,” that at the end of life our account must be completely closed, and that none may hope somehow to retrieve there what has been neglected here. This teaching can no more proclaim itself to us as a dogma than could the previous one. It is only a principle by means of which practical reason regulates its use of its own concepts of the supernatural, while granting that it knows nothing of the objective character of this supersensible realm. That is, practical reason says: We can draw an inference as to whether or not we are persons well- pleasing to God only from the way in which we have conducted our lives; but since such life-conduct ends with life, the reckoning, whose sum total alone can tell us whether we may regard ourselves as justified or not, also closes for us at death.

In general, if we limited our judgment to regulative principles, which content themselves with their own possible application to the moral life, instead of aiming at constitutive principles of a knowledge of supersensible objects, insight into which, after all, is forever impossible to us, human wisdom would be better off in a great many ways, and there would be no breeding of a presumptive knowledge of that about which, in the last analysis, we know nothing at all – a groundless sophistry that glitters indeed for a time but only, as in the end becomes apparent, to the detriment of morality.

* The hypothesis that all the ills in the world are uniformly to be regarded as punishments for past transgressions cannot be thought of as devised for the sake of a theodicy or as a contrivance useful to the religion of priest-craft (or formal worship2) for it is a conception too commonly held to have been excogitated in so artificial a manner); rather, it lies in all probability very near to human reason, which is inclined to knit up the course of nature with the laws of morality and therefore very naturally conceives the idea that we are to seek to become better men before we can expect to be freed from the ills of life or to be compensated for these by preponderating goods. Hence the first man is represented (in Holy Scripture) as condemned to work if he would eat, his wife to bear children in pain, and both to die, all on account of their transgressions, although we cannot see how animal creatures supplied with such bodily members could have expected any other destiny even had these transgressions never been committed. To the Hindus men are nothing but spirits (called devas) who are imprisoned in animal bodies in punishment for old offenses.

Even a philosopher, Malebranche, chose to deny to non-rational animals a soul, and therefore feelings, rather than to admit that horses had to endure so much misery “without ever having eaten of forbidden hay.”

* In terms of the actions which are met with in the world of sense, even the purest moral disposition brings about in man, regarded as an earthly creature, nothing more than a continual becoming of a subject pleasing to God. In quality, indeed, this disposition (since it must be conceived as grounded supersensibly) ought to be and can be holy and conformable to that of its archetype; but in degree [of manifestation], as revealed in conduct, it ever remains deficient and infinitely removed therefrom. Nevertheless, because this disposition contains the basis for continual progress in the reparation of this deficiency, it does, as an intellectual unity of the whole, take the place of action carried to its perfect consummation. But now the question arises: Can he “in whom there is no condemnation,” and in whom there must be none, believe himself justified and at the same time count as punishment the miseries which befall him on his way to an ever greater goodness, thus acknowledging blameworthiness and a disposition that is displeasing to God? Yes, but only in his quality of the man whom he is continually putting off. Everything (and this comprises all the miseries and ills of life in general) that would be due him as punishment in that quality (of the old man) he gladly takes upon himself in his quality of new man simply for the sake of the good. So far as he is a new man, consequently, these sufferings are not ascribed to him as punishments at all. The use of the term “punishment” signifies merely that, in his quality of new man, he now willingly takes upon himself, as so many opportunities for the testing and exercising of his disposition to goodness, all the ills and miseries that assail him, which the old man would have had to regard as punishments and which he too, so far as he is still in the process of becoming dead to the old man, accepts as such. This punishment, indeed, is simultaneously the effect and also the cause of such moral activity and consequently of that contentment and moral happiness which consists of a consciousness of progress in goodness (and this is one and the same act as the forsaking of evil). While possessed of the old disposition, on the other hand, he would not only have had to count the very same ills as punishments but he would also have had to feel them as such, since, even though they are regarded as mere ills,

they are the direct opposite of what, in the form of physical happiness, an individual in this state of mind makes his sole objective.

* But only a capability of receiving, which is all that we, for our part, can credit to ourselves; and a superior's decree conferring a good for which the subordinate possesses nothing but the (moral) receptivity is called grace.

* The purpose of those who at the end of life have a clergyman summoned is usually that they want him as a comforter – not for the physical suffering brought on by the last illness or even for the fear which naturally precedes death (death itself, which ends these ills, can here be the comforter), but for their moral anguish, the reproaches of conscience. At such a time, however, conscience should rather be stirred up and sharpened, in order that the dying man may not neglect to do what good he still may, or (through reparation) to wipe out, so far as he can, the remaining consequences of his evil actions. This is in accordance with the warning: "Agree with thine adversary" (with him who has a claim against thee) "quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him" (that is, so long as thou art still alive), "lest he deliver thee to the judge" (after death) etc. But, instead of this, to administer a sort of opium to the conscience is an offense both against the man himself and against those who survive him, and is wholly contrary to the purpose for which such an aid to conscience at life's close can be considered necessary.

* Father Charlevoix reports that when he recounted to the Iroquois, to whom he was teaching the catechism, all the evil which the wicked spirit had brought into a world created good, and how he still persistently sought to frustrate the best divine arrangements, his pupil asked indignantly, "But why doesn't God strike the devil dead?" – a question for which the priest candidly admits he could, at the moment, find no answer.

* To conceive the possibility of a person free from innate propensity to evil by having him born of a virgin mother is an idea of reason accommodating itself to an instinct which is hard to explain, yet which cannot be disowned, and is moral, too. For we regard natural generation, since it cannot occur without sensual pleasure on both sides and since it also seems to relate us to the common animal species far too closely for the dignity of humanity, as something of

which we should be ashamed (it is certainly this idea which gave rise to the notion that the monastic state is holy) and which therefore signifies for us something unmoral, irreconcilable with perfection in man, and yet ingrafted in man's nature and so inherited also by his descendants as an evil predisposition. Well suited to this confused view (on one side merely sensuous, yet on the other moral, and therefore intellectual) is this idea of a birth, dependent upon no sexual intercourse (a virgin birth), of a child encumbered with no moral blemish. The idea, however, is not without difficulty in theory (though a decision on this score is not at all necessary from the practical point of view). For according to the hypothesis of epigenesis the mother, who was descended from her parents through natural generation, would be infected with this moral blemish and would bequeath it to her child at least to the extent of a half [of his nature], even though he had been supernaturally begotten. To avoid this conclusion, we should have to adopt the theory that the seed [of evil] pre-existed in the parents but that it did not develop on the part of the female (for otherwise that conclusion is not avoided) but only on the part of the male (not in the ova but in the spermatazoa), for the male has no share in supernatural pregnancy. This mode of representation could thus be defended as reconcilable theoretically with that idea.

Yet of what use is all this theory pro or con when it suffices for practical purposes to place before us as a pattern this idea taken as a symbol of mankind raising itself above temptation to evil (and withstanding it victoriously)?

* Not that (as D. Bahrdt fancifully imagined) he sought death to further a worthy design through a brilliant and sensational example; that would have been suicide. For one may indeed attempt something at the risk of losing one's life, or even suffer death at the hands of another, when one cannot avoid it without becoming faithless to an irremissible duty; but one may not dispose of oneself and of one's life as a means, to any end whatever, and so be the author of one's own death.

Nor yet (as the writer of the WolfenbYttel Fragmente suspects) did he stake his life without moral but merely with political (and unlawful) intent, to the end, perhaps, of overthrowing the priests' rule and establishing himself in worldly supremacy in their stead. This conflicts with his exhortation delivered, after he had already given up

hope of such an achievement, to his disciples at the supper, “to do this in remembrance” of him. Intended as a reminder of a worldly design that had miscarried, this would have been a mortifying admonition, provocative of ill-will toward its author and therefore self-contradictory. But it might well refer to the failure of a very good and purely moral design of the Master, namely, the achievement during his lifetime of a public revolution (in religion) through the overthrow of a ceremonial faith, which wholly crowded out the moral disposition, and of the authority of its priests. (The preparations for the gathering together at Easter of his disciples, scattered over the land, may have had this purpose.) We may indeed even now regret that this revolution did not succeed; yet it really was not frustrated, for it developed, after his death, into a religious transformation which quietly, despite many misfortunes, continued to spread.

* Even the teachers of religion who link their articles of faith to the authority of the government (i.e., the orthodox) follow, like it, this same maxim. Hence Hr. Pfenninger, in defending his friend Hr. Lavater, for declaring that belief in miracles was still possible, rightly charged these orthodox theologians with inconsistency (since he specifically excepted those who think naturalistically on this topic) in that, while they insisted that there had really been workers of miracles in the Christian community some seventeen hundred years ago, they were unwilling to authenticate any such at the present time; yet without being able to prove from Scripture either that miracles were wholly to cease or at what date they were to cease (for the over-subtle argument that they are no longer necessary involves a presumption of greater insight than man should attribute to himself). Such proof they never gave. The refusal to admit or to tolerate contemporary miracles was therefore merely a maxim of reason and not [an expression of] objective knowledge that there are none. But is not this same maxim, which in this instance is applied to a threatened disorder in the civic life, equally valid for the fear of a similar disorder in the philosophical, and the whole rational contemplative commonwealth? Those who do not admit great (sensational) miracles but who freely allow little ones under the name of special Providence (since this last, as mere guidance, requires only a little application of force on the part of the supernatural cause) do not bear in mind that what matters herein is not the effect, or its magnitude, but rather the form of the course of earthly events, that is, the way in which the effect occurs, whether naturally or supernaturally; and that for God no distinction of

easy and difficult is to be thought of. But as regards the mystery of supernatural influences, thus deliberately to conceal the importance of such an occurrence is still less proper.

* That is to say, he does not incorporate belief in miracles into his maxims (either of theoretical or practical reason), though, indeed, he does not impugn their possibility or reality.

** It is a common subterfuge of those who deceive the gullible with magic arts, or at least who want to render such people credulous in general, to appeal to the scientists' confession of their ignorance. After all, they say, we do not know the cause of gravity, of magnetic force, and the like! Yet we are acquainted with the laws of these [phenomena] with sufficient thoroughness [to know] within definite limits the conditions under which alone certain effects occur; and this suffices both for an assured rational use of these forces and for the explanation of their manifestations, secundum quid, downwards to the use of these laws in the ordering of experiences thereunder, though not indeed simpliciter and upwards, to the comprehension of the very causes of the forces which operate according to these laws.

From this an inner phenomenon of the human mind becomes comprehensible – why so-called natural wonders, i.e., sufficiently attested, though irrational appearances, or unexpected qualities of things emerging and not conforming to laws of nature previously known, are eagerly seized upon and exhilarate the spirit so long as they are still held to be natural; whereas the spirit is dejected by the announcement of a real miracle. For the first opens up the prospect of a new acquisition for the nourishment of reason; that is, it awakens the hope of discovering new laws of nature: the second, in contrast, arouses the fear that confidence shall be lost in what has been hitherto accepted as known. For when reason is severed from the laws of experience it is of no use whatsoever in such a bewitched world, not even, in such a world, for moral application toward fulfilment of duty; for we no longer know whether, without our being aware, changes may not be occurring, through miracles, among our moral incentives, changes regarding which no one can decide whether they should be ascribed to ourselves or to another, inscrutable cause.

Book Three

THE VICTORY OF THE GOOD OVER THE EVIL PRINCIPLE, AND THE FOUNDING OF A KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

The combat which every morally well-disposed man must sustain in this life, under the leadership of the good principle, against the attacks of the evil principle, can procure him, however much he exerts himself, no greater advantage than freedom from the sovereignty of evil. To become free, “to be freed from bondage under the law of sin, to live for righteousness” – this is the highest prize he can win. He continues to be exposed, none the less, to the assaults of the evil principle; and in order to assert his freedom, which is perpetually being attacked, he must ever remain armed for the fray.

Now man is in this perilous state through his own fault; hence he is bound at the very least to strive with all his might to extricate himself from it. But how? That is the question. When he looks around for the causes and circumstances which expose him to this danger and keep him in it, he can easily convince himself that he is subject to these not because of his own gross nature, so far as he is here a separate individual, but because of mankind to whom he is related and bound. It is not at the instigation of the former that what should properly be called the passions, which cause such havoc in his original good predisposition, are aroused. His needs are but few and his frame of mind in providing for them is temperate and tranquil. He is poor (or considers himself so) only in his anxiety lest other men consider him poor and despise him on that account. Envy, the lust for power, greed, and the malignant inclinations bound up with these, besiege his nature, contented within itself, as soon as he is

among men. And it is not even necessary to assume that these are men sunk in evil and examples to lead him astray; it suffices that they are at hand, that they surround him, and that they are men, for them mutually to corrupt each other's predispositions and make one another evil. If no means could be discovered for the forming of an alliance uniquely designed as a protection against this evil and for the furtherance of goodness in man – of a society, enduring, ever extending itself, aiming solely at the maintenance of morality, and counteracting evil with united forces – this association with others would keep man, however much, as a single individual, he may have done to throw off the sovereignty of evil, incessantly in danger of falling back under its dominion. As far as we can see, therefore, the sovereignty of the good principle is attainable, so far as men can work toward it, only through the establishment and spread of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue, a society whose task and duty it is rationally to impress these laws in all their scope upon the entire human race. For only thus can we hope for a victory of the good over the evil principle. In addition to prescribing laws to each individual, morally legislative reason also unfurls a banner of virtue as a rallying point for all who love the good, that they may gather beneath it and thus at the very start gain the upper hand over the evil which is attacking them without rest.

A union of men under merely moral laws, patterned on the above idea, may be called an ethical, and so far as these laws are public, an ethico-civil (in contrast to a juridico-civil) society or an ethical commonwealth. It can exist in the midst of a political commonwealth and may even be made up of all its members; (indeed, unless it is based upon such a commonwealth it can never be brought into existence by man). It has, however, a special and unique principle of union (virtue), and hence a form and constitution, which fundamentally distinguish it from the political commonwealth.

At the same time there is a certain analogy between them, regarded as two commonwealths, in view of which the former may also be called an ethical state, i.e., a kingdom of virtue (of the good principle). The idea of such a state possesses a thoroughly well-grounded objective reality in human reason (in man's duty to join such a state), even though, subjectively, we can never hope that man's good will will lead mankind to decide to work with unanimity towards this goal.

DIVISION ONE
PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE VICTORY OF THE GOOD PRINCIPLE IN THE FOUNDING OF A KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

I. Concerning the Ethical State of Nature

A juridico-civil (political) state is the relation of men to each other in which they all alike stand socially under public juridical laws (which are, as a class, laws of coercion). An ethico-civil state is that in which they are united under non-coercive laws, i.e., laws of virtue alone.

Now just as the rightful (but not therefore always righteous), i.e., the juridical, state of Nature is opposed to the first, the ethical state of Nature is distinguished from the second. In both, each individual prescribes the law for himself, and there is no external law to which he, along with all others, recognizes himself to be subject. In both, each individual is his own judge, and there exists no powerful public authority to determine with legal power according to laws, what is each man's duty in every situation that arises, and to bring about the universal performance of duty.

In an already existing political commonwealth all the political citizens, as such, are in an ethical state of nature and are entitled to remain therein; for it would be a contradiction (in adjecto) for the political commonwealth

to compel its citizens to enter into an ethical commonwealth, since the very concept of the latter involves freedom from coercion. Every political commonwealth may indeed wish to be possessed of a sovereignty, according to laws of virtue, over the spirits [of its citizens]; for then, when its methods of compulsion do not avail (for the human judge cannot penetrate into the depths of other men) their dispositions to virtue would bring about what was required. But woe to the legislator who wishes to establish through force a polity directed to ethical ends! For in so doing he would not merely achieve the very opposite of an ethical polity but also undermine his political state and make it insecure. The citizen of the political commonwealth remains therefore, so far as its legislative function is concerned, completely free to enter with his fellow-citizens into an ethical union in addition [to the political] or to remain in this kind of state of nature, as he may wish. Only so far as an ethical commonwealth must rest on public laws and possess a constitution based on these laws are those who freely pledge themselves to enter into this ethical state bound, not indeed] to accept orders from the political power as to how they shall or shall not fashion this ethical constitution internally, but to agree to limitations, namely, to the condition that this constitution shall contain nothing which contradicts the duty of its members as citizens of the state – although when the ethical pledge is of the genuine sort the political limitation need cause no anxiety.

Further, because the duties of virtue apply to the entire human race, the concept of an ethical commonwealth is extended ideally to the whole of mankind, and thereby distinguishes itself from the concept of a political commonwealth. Hence even a large number of men united in that purpose can be called not the ethical commonwealth itself but only a particular society which strives towards harmony with all men (yes, finally with all rational beings) in order to form an absolute ethical whole of which every partial society is only a representation or schema; for each of these

societies in turn, in its relation to others of the same kind, can be represented as in the ethical state of nature and subject to all the defects thereof. (This is precisely the situation with separate political states which are not united through a public international law.)

II. Man ought to leave his Ethical State of nature-in order to become a Member of an Ethical COMMONWEALTH

Just as the juridical state of nature is one of war of every man against every other, so too is the ethical state of nature one in which the good principle, which resides in each man, is continually attacked by the evil which is found in him and also in everyone else. Men (as was noted above) mutually corrupt one another's moral predispositions; despite the good will of each individual, yet, because they lack a principle which unites them, they recede, through their dissensions, from the common goal of goodness and, just as though they were instruments of evil, expose one another to the risk of falling once again under the sovereignty of the evil principle. Again, just as the state of a lawless external (brutish) freedom and independence from coercive laws is a state of injustice and of war, each against each, which a man ought to leave in order to enter into a politico-civil state*: so is the ethical state of nature one of open conflict between principles of virtue and a state of inner immorality which the natural man ought to bestir himself to leave as soon as possible.

Now here we have a duty which is sui generis, not of men toward men, but of the human race toward itself. For the species of rational beings is objectively, in the idea of reason, destined for a social goal, namely, the promotion of the highest as a social good. But because the highest moral good cannot be achieved merely by the exertions of the single individual toward his own moral perfection, but requires rather a union of such individuals into a whole toward the same goal – into a system of well-disposed men, in which and through whose unity alone the highest moral

good can come to pass – the idea of such a whole, as a universal republic based on laws of virtue, is an idea completely distinguished from all moral laws (which concern what we know to lie in our own power); since it involves working toward a whole regarding which we do not know whether, as such, it lies in our power or not. Hence this duty is distinguished from all others both in kind and in principle. We can already foresee that this duty will require the presupposition of another idea, namely, that of a higher moral Being through whose universal dispensation the forces of separate individuals, insufficient in themselves, are united for a common end. First of all, however, we must follow up the clue of that moral need [for social union] and see whither this will lead us.

III. The Concept of an Ethical Commonwealth is the Concept of a PEOPLE OF GOD under Ethical Laws

If an ethical commonwealth is to come into being, all single individuals must be subject to a public legislation, and all the laws which bind them must be capable of being regarded as commands of a common law-giver. Now if the commonwealth to be established is to be juridical, the mass of people uniting itself into a whole would itself have to be the law giver (of constitutional laws), because legislation proceeds from the principle of limiting the freedom of each to those conditions under which it can be consistent with the freedom of everyone else according to a common law,* and because, as a result, the general will sets up an external legal control. But if the commonwealth is to be ethical, the people, as a people, cannot itself be regarded as the law-giver. For in such a commonwealth all the laws are expressly designed to promote the morality of actions (which is something inner, and hence cannot be subject to public human laws) whereas, in contrast, these public laws – and this would go to constitute a juridical commonwealth – are directed only toward the legality of actions, which meets the eye, and not toward (inner) morality, which alone is in

question here. There must therefore be someone other than the populace capable of being specified as the public law-giver for an ethical commonwealth. And yet, ethical laws cannot be thought of as emanating originally merely from the will of this superior being (as statutes, which, had he not first commanded them, would perhaps not be binding), for then they would not be ethical laws and the duty proper to them would not be the free duty of virtue but the coercive duty of law. Hence only he can be thought of as highest law-giver of an ethical commonwealth with respect to whom all true duties, hence also the ethical,** must be represented as at the same time his commands; he must therefore also be "one who knows the heart," in order to see into the innermost parts of the disposition of each individual and, as is necessary in every commonwealth, to bring it about that each receives whatever his actions are worth. But this is the concept of God as moral ruler of the world. Hence an ethical commonwealth can be thought of only as a people under divine commands, i.e., as a people of God, and indeed under laws of virtue.

We might indeed conceive of a people of God under statutory laws, under such laws that obedience to them would concern not the morality but merely the legality of acts. This would be a juridical commonwealth, of which, indeed, God would be the lawgiver (hence the constitution of this state would be theocratic); but men, as priests receiving His behests from Him directly, would build up an aristocratic government. Such a constitution, however, whose existence and form rest wholly on an historical basis, cannot settle the problem of the morally-legislative reason, the solution of which alone we are to effect; as an institution under politico- civil laws, whose lawgiver, though God, is yet external, it will come under review in the historical section. Here we have to do only with an institution whose laws are purely inward – a republic under laws of virtue, i.e., a people of God "zealous of good works."

To such a people of God we can oppose the idea of a rabble of the evil principle, the union of those who side with it for the propagation of evil, and whose interest it is to prevent the realization of that other union – although here again the principle which combats virtuous dispositions lies in our very selves and is represented only figuratively as an external power.

IV. The Idea of a People of God can be Realized (through Human Organization) only in the Form of a Church

The sublime, yet never wholly attainable, idea of an ethical commonwealth dwindles markedly under men's hands. It becomes an institution which, at best capable of representing only the pure form of such a commonwealth, is, by the conditions of sensuous human nature, greatly circumscribed in its means for establishing such a whole. How indeed can one expect something perfectly straight to be framed out of such crooked wood?

To found a moral people of God is therefore a task whose consummation can be looked for not from men but only from God Himself. Yet man is not entitled on this account to be idle in this business and to let Providence rule, as though each could apply himself exclusively to his own private moral affairs and relinquish to a higher wisdom all the affairs of the human race (as regards its moral destiny). Rather must man proceed as though everything depended upon him; only on this condition dare he hope that higher wisdom will grant the completion of his well-intentioned endeavors.

The wish of all well-disposed people is, therefore, "that the kingdom of God come, that His will be done on earth." But what preparations must they now make that it shall come to pass? An ethical commonwealth under divine moral legislation is a church which, so far as it is not an

object of possible experience, is called the church invisible (a mere idea of the union of all the righteous under direct and moral divine world-government, and idea serving all as the archetype of what is to be established by men. The visible church is the actual union of men into a whole which harmonizes with that ideal. So far as each separate society maintains, under public laws, an order among its members (in the relation of those who obey its laws to those who direct their obedience) the group, united into a whole (the church), is a congregation under authorities, who (called teachers or shepherds of souls) merely administer the affairs of the invisible supreme head thereof. In this function they are all called servants of the church,) just as, in the political commonwealth, the visible overlord occasionally calls himself the highest servant of the state even though he recognizes no single individual over him (and ordinarily not even the people as a whole). The true (visible) church is that which exhibits the moral kingdom of God on earth So far as it can be brought to pass by men. The requirements upon, and hence the tokens of, the true church are the following:

> 1. Universality, and hence its numerical oneness; for which it must possess this characteristic, that, although divided and at variance in unessential opinions, it is none the less, with respect to its fundamental intention, founded upon such basic principles as must necessarily lead to a general unification in a single church (thus, no sectarian divisions).
>
> 2. Its nature (quality); i.e., purity, union under no motivating forces other than moral ones (purified of the stupidity of superstition and the madness of fanaticism).
>
> 3. Its relation under the principle of freedom; both the internal relation of its members to one another, and the external relation of the church to political power – both

relations as in a republic (hence neither a hierarchy, nor an illuminatism, which is a kind of democracy through special inspiration, where the inspiration of one man can differ from that of another, according to the whim of each).

4. Its modality, the unchangeableness of its constitution, yet with the reservation that incidental regulations, concerning merely its administration, may be changed according to time and circumstance; to this end, however, it must already contain within itself a priori (in the idea of its purpose) settled principles. (Thus [it operates] under primordial laws, once [for all] laid down, as it were out of a book of laws, for guidance; not under arbitrary symbols which, since they lack authenticity, are fortuitous, exposed to contradiction, and changeable.)

An ethical commonwealth, then, in the form of a church, i.e., as a mere representative of a city of God, really has, as regards its basic principles, nothing resembling a political constitution. For its constitution is neither monarchical (under a pope or patriarch), nor aristocratic (under bishops and prelates), nor democratic (as of sectarian illuminati). It could best of all be likened to that of a household (family) under a common, though invisible, moral Father, whose holy Son, knowing His will and yet standing in blood relation with all members of the household, takes His place in making His will better known to them; these accordingly honor the Father in him and so enter with one another into a voluntary, universal, and enduring union of hearts.

V. The Constitution of every Church Originates always in some Historical (Revealed) Faith which we can Call

Ecclesiastical Faith; and this is best Founded on a Holy Scripture

Pure religious faith alone can found a universal church; for only [such] rational faith can be believed in and shared by everyone, whereas an historical faith, grounded solely on facts, can extend its influence no further than tidings of it can reach, subject to circumstances of time and place and dependent upon the capacity [of men] to judge the credibility of such tidings. Yet, by reason of a peculiar weakness of human nature, pure faith can never be relied on as much as it deserves, that is, a church cannot be established on it alone.

Men are conscious of their inability to know supersensible things; and although they allow all honor to be paid to faith in such things (as the faith which must be universally convincing to them), they are yet not easily convinced that steadfast diligence in morally good life-conduct is all that God requires of men, to be subjects in His kingdom and well-pleasing to Him. They cannot well think of their obligation except as an obligation to some service or other which they must offer to God – wherein what matters is not so much the inner moral worth of the actions as the fact that they are offered to God – to the end that, however morally indifferent men may be in themselves, they may at least please God through passive obedience. It does not enter their heads that when they fulfil their duties to men (themselves and others) they are, by these very acts, performing God's commands and are therefore in all their actions and abstentions, so far as these concern morality, perpetually in the service of God, and that it is absolutely impossible to serve God more directly in any other way (since they can affect and have an influence upon earthly beings alone, and not upon God). Because each great worldly lord stands in special need of being honored by his subjects and glorified through protestations of submissiveness, without which he cannot expect from them as much compliance with his behests as he requires to be able to rule them, and

since, in addition, however gifted with reason a man may be, he always finds an immediate satisfaction in attestations of honor, we treat duty, so far as it is also a divine command, as the prosecution of a transaction with God, not with man. Thus arises the concept of a religion of divine worship instead of the concept of a religion purely moral.

Since all religion consists in this, that in all our duties we look upon God as the lawgiver universally to be honored, the determining of religion, so far as the conformity of our attitude with it is concerned, hinges upon knowing how God wishes to be honored (and obeyed). Now a divine legislative will commands either through laws in themselves merely statutory or through purely moral laws. As to the latter, each individual can know of himself, through his own reason, the will of God which lies at the basis of his religion; for the concept of the Deity really arises solely from consciousness of these laws and from the need of reason to postulate a might which can procure for these laws, as their final end, all the results conformable to them and possible in a world. The concept of a divine will, determined according to pure moral laws alone, allows us to think of only one religion which is purely moral, as it did of only one God. But if we admit statutory laws of such a will and make religion consist of our obedience to them, knowledge of such laws is possible not through our own reason alone but only through revelation, which, be it given publicly or to each individual in secret, would have to be an historical and not a pure rational faith in order to be propagated among men by tradition or writ. And even admitting divine statutory laws (laws which do not in themselves appear to us as obligatory but can be known as such only when taken as the revelation of God’s will), pure moral legislation, through which the will of God is primordially engraved in our hearts, is not only the ineluctable condition of all true religion whatsoever but is also that which really constitutes such religion; statutory religion can merely comprise the means to its furtherance and spread.

If, then, the question: How does God wish to be honored? is to be answered in a way universally valid for each man, regarded merely as man, there can be no doubt that the legislation of His will ought to be solely moral; for statutory legislation (which presupposes a revelation) can be regarded merely as contingent and as something which never has applied or can apply to every man, hence as not binding upon all men universally. Thus, “not they who say Lord! Lord! but they who do the will of God,” they who seek to become well-pleasing to Him not by praising Him (or His envoy, as a being of divine origin) according to revealed concepts which not every man can have, but by a good course of life, regarding which everyone knows His will – these are they who offer Him the true veneration which He desires.

But when we regard ourselves as obliged to behave not merely as men but also as citizens in a divine state on earth, and to work for the existence of such a union, under the name of a church, then the question: How does God wish to be honored in a church (as a congregation of God)? appears to be unanswerable by reason alone and to require statutory legislation of which we become cognizant only through revelation, i.e., an historical faith which, in contradistinction to pure religious faith, we can call ecclesiastical faith.

For pure religious faith is concerned only with what constitutes the essence of reverence for God, namely, obedience, ensuing from the moral disposition, to all duties as His commands; a church, on the other hand, as the union of many men with such dispositions into a moral commonwealth, requires a public covenant, a certain ecclesiastical form dependent upon the conditions of experience. This form is in itself contingent and manifold, and therefore cannot be apprehended as duty without divine statutory laws. But the determination of this form must not be regarded forthwith as the concern of the divine Lawgiver; rather are we justified in assuming that it is the divine will that we should ourselves

carry into effect the rational idea of such a commonwealth and that, although men may have tried many a type of church with unhappy result, yet on no account should they cease to strive after this goal, with new attempts if necessary, avoiding so far as possible the mistakes of the earlier ones – inasmuch as this task, which is for them a duty as well, is entirely committed to them alone. We therefore have no reason straightway to take the laws constituting the basis and form of any church as divine statutory laws; rather is it presumptuous to declare them to be such, in order to save ourselves the trouble of still further improving the church's form, and it is a usurpation of higher authority to seek, under pretense of a divine commission, to lay a yoke upon the multitude by means of ecclesiastical dogmas. Yet it would be as great self-conceit to deny peremptorily that the way in which a church is organized may perhaps be a special divine arrangement, if, so far as we can see, it is completely harmonious with the moral religion – and if, in addition, we cannot conceive how it could have appeared all at once without the requisite initiatory progress of the public in religious conceptions.

In the indecision over the problem of whether God or men themselves should found a church, there is evidenced man's propensity to a religion of divine worship (cultus) and – since such a religion rests upon arbitrary precepts – to belief in divine statutory laws, on the assumption that some divine legislation, not to be discovered through reason but calling for revelation, must supplement the best life-conduct (conduct which man is always free to adopt under the guidance of the pure moral religion). Herein consideration is given to the veneration of the Highest Being directly (and not by way of that obedience to His laws which is already prescribed to us by reason). Thus it happens that men will regard neither union into a church, nor agreement with respect to the form which it is to take, nor yet public institutions, as in themselves necessary for the promotion of the moral element in religion, but only, as they say, for the

service of their God, through ceremonies, confessions of faith in revealed laws, and observance of the ordinances requisite to the form of the church (which is itself, after all, only a means). All these observances are at bottom morally indifferent actions; yet, just because they are to be performed merely for His sake, they are held to be all the more pleasing to Him. In men's striving towards an ethical commonwealth, ecclesiastical faith thus naturally precedes pure religious faith; temples (buildings consecrated to the public worship of God) were before churches (meeting-places for the instruction and quickening of moral dispositions), priests (consecrated stewards of pious rites) before divines (teachers of the purely moral religion); and for the most part they still are first in the rank and value ascribed to them by the great mass of people. Since, then, it remains true once for all that a statutory ecclesiastical faith is associated with pure religious faith as its vehicle and as the means of public union of men for its promotion, one must grant that the preservation of pure religious faith unchanged, its propagation in the same form everywhere, and even a respect for the revelation assumed therein, can hardly be provided for adequately through tradition, but only through scripture; which, again, as a revelation to contemporaries and posterity, must itself be an object of esteem, for the necessities of men require this in order that they may be sure of their duty in divine service. A holy book arouses the greatest respect even among those (indeed, most of all among those) who do not read it, or at least those who can form no coherent religious concept therefrom; and the most sophistical reasoning avails nothing in the face of the decisive assertion, which beats down every objection: Thus it is written. It is for this reason that the passages in it which are to lay down an article of faith are called simply texts. The appointed expositors of such a scripture are themselves, by virtue of their occupation, like unto consecrated persons; and history proves that it has never been possible to destroy a faith grounded in scripture, even with the most devastating revolutions in the state, whereas the faith established upon tradition and

ancient public observances has promptly met its downfall when the state was overthrown. How fortunate,* when such a book, fallen into men's hands, contains, along with its statutes, or laws of faith, the purest moral doctrine of religion in its completeness – a doctrine which can be brought into perfect harmony with such statutes ([which serve] as vehicles for its introduction). In this event, both because of the end thereby to be attained and because of the difficulty of rendering intelligible according to natural laws the origin of such enlightenment of the human race as proceeds from it, such a book can command an esteem like that accorded to revelation.

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And now a few words touching this concept of a belief in revelation.

There is only one (true) religion; but there can be faiths of several kinds. We can say further that even in the various churches, severed from one another by reason of the diversity of their modes of belief, one and the same true religion can yet be found.

It is therefore more fitting (as it is more customary in actual practice) to say: This man is of this or that faith (Jewish, Mohammed, Christian, Catholic, Lutheran), than: He is of this or that religion. The second expression ought in justice never to be used in addressing the general public (in catechisms and sermons), for it is too learned and unintelligible for them; indeed, the more modern languages possess no word of equivalent meaning. The common man always takes it to mean his ecclesiastical faith, which appeals to his senses, whereas religion is hidden within and has to do with moral dispositions.

One does too great honor to most people by saying of them: They profess this or that religion. For they know none and desire none – statutory ecclesiastical faith is all that they understand by the word. The so-called religious wars which have so often shaken the world and

bespattered it with blood, have never been anything but wrangles over ecclesiastical faith; and the oppressed have complained not that they were hindered from adhering to their religion (for no external power can do this) but that they were not permitted publicly to observe their ecclesiastical faith.

Now when, as usually happens, a church proclaims itself to be the one church universal (even though it is based upon faith in a special revelation, which, being historical, can never be required of everyone), he who refuses to acknowledge its (peculiar) ecclesiastical faith is called by it an unbeliever and is hated wholeheartedly; he who diverges therefrom only in part (in non-essentials) is called heterodox and is at least shunned as a source of infection. But he who avows [allegiance to] this church and yet diverges from it on essentials of its faith (namely, regarding the practices connected with it), is called, especially if he spreads abroad his false belief, a heretic,* and, as a rebel, such a man is held more culpable than a foreign foe, is expelled from the church with an anathema (like that which the Romans pronounced on him who crossed the Rubicon against the Senate's will) and is given over to all the gods of hell. The exclusive correctness of belief in matters of ecclesiastical faith claimed by the church's teachers or heads is called orthodoxy. This could be sub-divided into despotic (brutal) or liberal orthodoxy.

If a church which claims that its ecclesiastical faith is universally binding is called a catholic church, and if that which protests against such claims on the part of others (even though oftentimes it would gladly advance similar claims itself, if it could) is called a protestant church, an alert observer will come upon many laudable examples of Protestant Catholics and, on the other hand, still more examples, and offensive ones, of arch-catholic Protestants: the first, men of a cast of mind (even though it is not that of their church) leading to self-expansion; to which the

second, with their circumscribed cast of mind, stand in sharp contrast – not at all to their own advantage.

VI. Ecclesiastical Faith Has Pure Religious Faith as its Highest Interpreter

We have noted that a church dispenses with the most important mark of truth, namely, a rightful claim to universality, when it bases itself upon a revealed faith. For such a faith, being historical (even though it be far more widely disseminated and more completely secured for remotest posterity through the agency of scripture) can never be universally communicated so as to produce conviction. Yet, because of the natural need and desire of all men for something sensibly tenable, and for a confirmation of some sort from experience of the highest concepts and grounds of reason (a need which really must be taken into account when the universal dissemination of a faith is contemplated), some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually to be found at hand, must be utilized.

If such an empirical faith, which chance, it would seem, has tossed into our hands, is to be united with the basis of a moral faith (be the first an end or merely a means), an exposition of the revelation which has come into our possession is required, that is, a thorough-going interpretation of it in a sense agreeing with the universal practical rules of a religion of pure reason. For the theoretical part of ecclesiastical faith cannot interest us morally if it does not conduce to the performance of all human duties as divine commands (that which constitutes the essence of all religion). Frequently this interpretation may, in the light of the text (of the revelation), appear forced – it may often really be forced; and yet if the text can possibly support it, it must be preferred to a literal interpretation which either contains nothing at all [helpful] to morality or else actually works counter to moral incentives.

We shall find, too, that this has always been done with all types of faith, old and new, some of them recorded in holy books, and that wise and thoughtful teachers of the people kept on interpreting them until, gradually, they brought them, as regards their essential content, into line with the universal moral dogmas. The moral philosophers among the Greeks, and later among the Romans, did exactly this with the fabulous accounts of the gods. They were able in the end to interpret the grossest polytheism as mere symbolic representation of the attributes of the single divine Being, and to supply the various wicked actions [of the gods] and the wild yet lovely fancies of the poets with a mystical meaning which made a popular faith (which it would have been very inadvisable to destroy, since atheism, still more dangerous to the state, might perhaps have resulted) approach a moral doctrine intelligible to all men and wholly salutary. The later Judaism, and even Christianity itself, consist of such interpretations, often very forced, but in both instances for ends unquestionably good and needful for all men. The Mohammedans (as Reland shows) know very well how to ascribe a spiritual meaning to the description of their paradise, which is dedicated to sensuality of every kind; the Indians do exactly the same thing in the interpretation of their Vedas, at least for the enlightened portion of their people.

That this can be done without ever and again offending greatly against the literal meaning of the popular faith is due to the fact that, earlier by far than this faith, the predisposition to the moral religion lay hidden in human reason; and though its first rude manifestations took the form merely of practices of divine worship, and for this very purpose gave rise to those alleged revelations, yet these manifestations have infused even into the myths, though unintentionally, something from the nature of their supersensible origin. Nor can we charge such interpretations with dishonesty, provided we are not disposed to assert that the meaning which we ascribe to the symbols of the popular faith, even to the holy books, is

exactly as intended by them, but rather allow this question to be left undecided and merely admit the possibility that their authors may be so understood. For the final purpose even of reading these holy scriptures, or of investigating their content, is to make men better; the historical element, which contributes nothing to this end, is something which is in itself quite indifferent, and we can do with it what we like. (Historical faith “is dead, being alone”; that is, of itself, regarded as a creed, it contains nothing, and leads to nothing, which could have any moral value for us.)

Hence, even if a document is accepted as a divine revelation, the highest criterion of its being of divine origin will be: “All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for improvement, etc.”; and since this last, to wit, the moral improvement of men, constitutes the real end of all religion of reason, it will comprise the highest principle of all Scriptural exegesis. This religion is “the Spirit of God, who guides us into all truth”; and this it is which in instructing us also animates us with basic principles for action, and wholly subjects whatever scripture may contain for historical faith to the rules and incentives of pure moral faith, which alone constitutes the element of genuine religion in each ecclesiastical faith. All investigation and interpretation of Scripture must from the start be based on a search for this Spirit in it, and “eternal life can be found therein only so far as it [Scripture] testifies of this principle.”

Now placed beside this Scriptural interpreter, but subordinated to him, is another, namely, the Scriptural scholar. The authority of Scripture, as the most worthy instrument, and at present the only instrument in the most enlightened portion of the world, for the union of all men into one church, constitutes the ecclesiastical faith, which, as the popular faith, cannot be neglected, because no doctrine based on reason alone seems to the people qualified to serve as an unchangeable norm. They demand divine

revelation, and hence also an historical certification of its authority through the tracing back of its origin. Now human skill and wisdom cannot ascend so far as heaven in order itself to inspect the credentials validating the mission of the first Teacher. It must be content with evidence that can be elicited, apart from the content, as to the way in which such a faith has been introduced – that is, with human reports which must be searched out little by little from very ancient times, and from languages now dead, for evaluation as to their historical credibility. Hence Scriptural scholarship will [ever] be required to maintain in authority a church founded upon Holy Scripture, ([though] not a religion, which, to be universal, must always be founded upon reason alone), even though this scholarship settles no more than that there is nothing in the origin of Scripture to render impossible its acceptance as direct divine revelation; for this would suffice to provide security for those who fancy that they find in this idea [of a revealed Scripture] special fortification of their moral faith, and who therefore gladly accept it. Yet not only the authentication of Holy Scripture, but its interpretation as well, stands in need of scholarship, and for the same reason. For how are the unlearned, who can read it only in translation, to be certain of its meaning? Hence the expositor, in addition to being familiar with the original tongue, must also be a master of extended historical knowledge and criticism, in order that from the conditions, customs, and opinions (the popular faith) of the times in question he may be able to derive the means wherewith to enlighten the understanding of the ecclesiastical commonwealth.

Rational religion and Scriptural learning are thus the properly qualified interpreters and trustees of a sacred document. It is obvious that they must on no account be hindered by the secular arm in the public use of their judgments and discoveries in this field, or bound to certain dogmas; for otherwise the laity would compel the clergy to concur in their opinion, which, after all, they have acquired only from the clergy’s instruction. So

long as the state takes care that there is no dearth of scholars and of men in morally good repute who have authority in the entire church body and to whose consciences the state entrusts this commission, it has done all that its duty and capacity require. But to insist that the legislator should carry this matter into the schools and concern himself with their quarrels (which, if they are not proclaimed from the pulpit, leave the church-public quite undisturbed) – such a burden the public cannot thrust upon him without arrogance, for it is beneath his dignity.

A third claimant contests the office of interpreter, the man who needs neither reason nor scholarship, but merely an inner feeling, to recognize the true meaning of Scripture as well as its divine origin. Now we certainly cannot deny that "he who follows its teachings and does what it commands will surely find that it is of God," and that the very impulse to good actions and to uprightness in the conduct of life, which the man who reads Scripture or hears it expounded must feel, cannot but convince him of its divine nature; for this impulse is but the operation of the moral law which fills man with fervent respect and hence deserves to be regarded as a divine command. A knowledge of laws, and of their morality, can scarcely be derived from any sort of feeling; still less can there be inferred or discovered from a feeling certain evidence of a direct divine influence; for the same effect can have more than one cause. In this case, however, the bare morality of the law (and the doctrine), known through reason, is the source [of the law's validity]; and even if this origin were no more than barely possible, duty demands that it be thus construed unless we wish to open wide the gates to every kind of fanaticism, and even cause the unequivocal moral feeling to lose its dignity through affiliation with fantasy of every sort. Feeling is private to every individual and cannot be demanded of others [even] when the law, from which and according to which this feeling arises, is known in advance; therefore one cannot urge it as a touchstone for the genuineness of a revelation, for it teaches

absolutely nothing, but is merely the way in which the subject is affected as regards pleasure or displeasure – and on this basis can be established no knowledge whatever.

There is therefore no norm of ecclesiastical faith other than Scripture, and no expositor thereof other than pure religion of reason and Scriptural scholarship (which deals with the historical aspect of that religion). Of these, the first alone is authentic and valid for the whole world; the second is merely doctrinal, having as its end the transformation of ecclesiastical faith for a given people at a given time into a definite and enduring system. Under this system, historical faith must finally become mere faith in Scriptural scholars and their insight. This does not, indeed, particularly redound to the honor of human nature; yet it is a situation which can be corrected through public freedom of thought – and such freedom is the more justified since only if scholars submit their interpretations to public examination, while they themselves ever hope for and remain open and receptive to better insight, can they count on the community's confidence in their decisions.

VII. The Gradual Transition of Ecclesiastical Faith to the Exclusive Sovereignty of Pure Religious Faith is the Coming of the Kingdom of God

The token of the true church is its universality; the sign of this, in turn, is its necessity and its determinability in only one possible way. Historical faith (which is based upon revelation, regarded as an experience) has only particular validity, to wit, for those who have had access to the historical record upon which this faith rests; and like all empirical knowledge it carries with it the consciousness not that the object believed in must be so and not otherwise, but merely that it is so; hence it involves as well the consciousness of its contingency. Thus historical faith can become an ecclesiastical faith (of which there can be several), whereas only pure

religious faith, which bases itself wholly upon reason, can be accepted as necessary and therefore as the only one which signalizes the true church.

When, therefore, (in conformity with the unavoidable limitation of human reason) an historical faith attaches itself to pure religion, as its vehicle, but with the consciousness that it is only a vehicle, and when this faith, having become ecclesiastical, embraces the principle of a continual approach to pure religious faith, in order finally to be able to dispense with the historical vehicle, a church thus characterized can at any time be called the true church; but, since conflict over historical dogmas can never be avoided, it can be spoken of only as the church militant, though with the prospect of becoming finally the changeless and all-unifying church triumphant! We call the faith of every individual who possesses moral capacity (worthiness) for eternal happiness a saving faith. This also can be but a single faith; amid all diversity of ecclesiastical faiths [or creeds] it is discoverable in each of these in which, moving toward the goal of pure religious faith, it is practical. The faith of a religion of divine worship, in contrast, is a drudging and mercenary faith (*fides mercenaria, servilis*) and cannot be regarded as saving because it is not moral. For a moral faith must be free and based upon an ingenuous disposition of the heart (*fides ingenua*). Ecclesiastical faith fancies it possible to become well-pleasing to God through actions (of worship) which (though irksome) yet possess in themselves no moral worth and hence are merely acts induced by fear or hope – acts which an evil man also can perform. Moral faith, in contrast, presupposes that a morally good disposition is requisite.

Saving faith involves two elements, upon which hope of salvation is conditioned, the one having reference to what man himself cannot accomplish, namely, undoing lawfully (before a divine judge) actions which he has performed, the other to what he himself can and ought to do, that is, leading a new life conformable to his duty. The first is the faith in an atonement (reparation for his debt, redemption, reconciliation with

God); the second, the faith that we can become well-pleasing to God through a good course of life in the future. Both conditions constitute but one faith and necessarily belong together. Yet we can comprehend the necessity of their union only by assuming that one can be derived from the other, that is, either that the faith in the absolution from the debt resting upon us will bring forth good life-conduct, or else that the genuine and active disposition ever to pursue a good course of life will engender the faith in such absolution according to the law of morally operating causes. Here now appears a remarkable antinomy of human reason with itself, whose solution, or, were this not possible, at least whose adjustment can alone determine whether an historical (ecclesiastical) faith must always be present as an essential element of saving faith, over and above pure religious faith, or whether it is only a vehicle which finally – however distant this future event may be – can pass over into pure religious faith.

l. If it is assumed that atonement has been made for the sins of mankind, it is indeed conceivable that every sinner would gladly have it applied to himself and that were it merely a matter of belief (which means no more than an avowal that he wishes the atonement to be rendered for him also), he would not for an instant suffer misgivings on this score. However, it is quite impossible to see how a reasonable man, who knows himself to merit punishment, can in all seriousness believe that he needs only to credit the news of an atonement rendered for him, and to accept this atonement utiliter (as the lawyers say), in order to regard his guilt as annihilated, – indeed, so completely annihilated (to the very root) that good life-conduct, for which he has hitherto not taken the least pains, will in the future be the inevitable consequence of this faith and this acceptance of the proffered favor. No thoughtful person can bring himself to believe this, even though self-love often does transform the bare wish for a good, for which man does nothing and can do nothing, into a hope, as though one’s object were to come of itself, elicited by mere longing.

Such a persuasion can be regarded as possible only if the individual regards this belief as itself instilled in him by heaven and hence as something concerning which he need render no further account to his reason. If he cannot think this, or if he is still too sincere artificially to produce in himself such a confidence, as a mere means of ingratiation, he can only, with all respect for such a transcendent atonement, and with every wish that it be available for him also, regard it as conditioned. That is, he must believe that he must first improve his way of life, so far as improvement lies in his power, if he is to have even the slightest ground for hope of such a higher gain. Wherefore, since historical knowledge of the atonement belongs to ecclesiastical faith, while the improved way of life, as a condition, belongs to pure moral faith, the latter must take precedence over the former.

2. But if men are corrupt by nature, how can a man believe that by himself, try as hard as he will, he can make himself a new man well-pleasing to God, when – conscious of the transgressions of which up to the present he has been guilty – he still stands in the power of the evil principle and finds in himself no capacity adequate for future improvement? If he cannot regard justice, which he has provoked against himself, as satisfied through atonement by another, and cannot regard himself reborn, so to speak, through this faith and so for the first time able to enter upon a new course of life – and this would follow from his union with the good principle – upon what is he to base his hope of becoming a man pleasing to God? Thus faith in a merit not his own, whereby he is reconciled with God, must precede every effort to good works. But this goes counter to the previous proposition, [that good works must precede faith in divine atonement]. This contradiction cannot be resolved through insight into the causal determination of the freedom of a human being, i.e., into the causes which bring it about that a man becomes good or bad; hence it cannot be resolved theoretically, for it is a question wholly

transcending the speculative capacity of our reason. But practically, the question arises: What, in the use of our free will, comes first, (not physically but morally)? Where shall we start, i.e., with a faith in what God has done on our behalf, or with what we are to do to become worthy of God's assistance (whatever this may be)? In answering this question we cannot hesitate in deciding for the second alternative.

The acceptance of the first requisite for salvation, namely, faith in a vicarious atonement, is in any case necessary only for the theoretical concept; in no other way can we make comprehensible to ourselves such absolution. In contrast, the necessity for the second principle is practical and, indeed, purely moral. We can certainly hope to partake in the appropriation of another's atoning merit, and so of salvation, only by qualifying for it through our own efforts to fulfil every human duty – and this obedience must be the effect of our own action and not, once again, of a foreign influence in the presence of which we are passive. For since the command to do our duty is unconditioned, it is also necessary that man shall make it, as maxim, the basis of his belief, that is to say that he shall begin with the improvement of his life as the supreme condition under which alone a saving faith can exist.

Ecclesiastical faith, being historical, rightly starts with the belief in atonement; but since it merely constitutes the vehicle for pure religious faith (in which lies the real end), the maxim of action, which in religious faith (being practical) is the condition, must take the lead, and the maxim of knowledge, or theoretical faith, must merely bring about the strengthening and consummation of the maxim of action.

In this connection it might also be remarked that, according to the ecclesiastical principle, the faith in a vicarious atonement would be imputed to man as a duty, whereas faith in good life conduct, as being effected through a higher agency, would be reckoned to him as of grace.

According to the other principle the order is reversed. For according to it the good course of life, as the highest condition of grace, is unconditioned duty, whereas atonement from on high is purely a matter of grace. Against the first faith is charged (often not unjustly) the superstitious belief of divine worship, which knows how to combine a blameworthy course of life with religion; against the second, naturalistic unbelief, which unites with a course of life, perhaps otherwise exemplary, indifference or even antagonism to all revelation. This [latter attitude] would constitute cutting the knot (by means of a practical maxim) instead of disentangling it (theoretically) – a procedure which is after all permitted in religious questions. However, the theoretical demand can be satisfied in the following manner.

The living faith in the archetype of humanity well-pleasing to God (in the Son of God) is bound up, in itself, with a moral idea of reason so far as this serves us not only as a guide-line but also as an incentive; hence it matters not whether I start with it as a rational faith, or with the principle of a good course of life. In contrast, the faith in the self-same archetype in its [phenomenal appearance (faith in the God-Man), as an empirical (historical) faith, is not interchangeable with the principle of the good course of life (which must be wholly rational), and it would be quite a different matter to wish to start with such a faith and to deduce the good course of life from it. To this extent then, there would be a contradiction between the two propositions above. And yet, in the appearance of the God-Man [on earth], it is not that in him which strikes the senses and can be known through experience, but rather the archetype, lying in our reason, that we attribute to him (since, so far as his example can be known, he is found to conform thereto), which is really the object of saving faith, and such a faith does not differ from the principle of a course of life well- pleasing to God.

Here, then, are not two principles which in themselves so differ that to begin with the one, or the other, would be to enter upon opposing paths, but only one and the same practical idea from which we take our start, this idea representing the archetype now as found in God and proceeding from Him, and now, as found in us, but in both instances as the gauge for our course of life. The antinomy is therefore only apparent, since, through a misunderstanding, it regards the self-same practical idea, taken merely in different references, as two different principles. If one wished, however, to make the historical faith in the reality of such an appearance, taking place in the world on a single occasion, the condition of the only saving faith, there would, indeed, be two quite different principles (the one empirical, the other rational) regarding which a real conflict of maxims would arise – whether one should begin with and start out from the one or the other This conflict no reason would ever be able to resolve.

The proposition: We must believe that there was once a man (of whom reason tells us nothing) who through his holiness and merit rendered satisfaction both for himself (with reference to his duty) and for all others (with their shortcomings, in the light of their duty), if we are to hope that we ourselves, though in a good course of life, will be saved by virtue of that faith alone – this proposition says something very different from the following: With all our strength we must strive after the holy disposition of a course of life well-pleasing to God, to be able to believe that the love (already assured us through reason) of God toward man, so far as man does endeavor with all his strength to do the will of God, will make good, in consideration of an upright disposition, the deficiency of the deed, whatever this deficiency may be. The first belief is not in the power of everyone (even of the unlearned). History testifies that in all forms of religion this conflict between two principles of faith has existed; for all religions have involved expiation, on whatever basis they put it, and the moral predisposition in each individual has not failed, on its side, to let its

claims be heard. Yet at all times the priests have complained more than the moralists: the former (with summons to the authorities to check the mischief) protesting loudly against the neglect of divine worship, which was instituted to reconcile the people with heaven and to ward off misfortune from the state; the latter complaining, on the other hand, about the decline of morals, a decline which they zealously set to the account of those means of absolution whereby the priests made it easy for anyone to make his peace with the Deity over the grossest vices. In point of fact, if an inexhaustible fund is already at hand for the payment of debts incurred or still to be incurred, so that man has merely to reach out (and at every claim which conscience makes one would be sure, first of all, to reach out) in order to free himself of sin, while he can postpone resolving upon a good course of life until he is first clear of those debts – if this were possible it is not easy to conceive any other consequences of such a faith. Yet were this faith to be portrayed as having so peculiar a power and so mystical (or magical) an influence, that although merely historical, so far as we can see, it is yet competent to better the whole man from the ground up (to make a new man of him) if he yields himself to it and to the feelings bound up with it, such a faith would have to be regarded as imparted and inspired directly by heaven (together with, and in, the historical faith), and everything connected even with the moral constitution of man would resolve itself into an unconditioned decree of God: “He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth,” which, taken according to the letter, is the *salto mortale* of human reason.

Hence a necessary consequence of the physical and, at the same time, the moral predisposition in us, the latter being the basis and the interpreter of all religion, is that in the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes which rest on history and which through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirements of the good; and thus at last the pure religion of

reason will rule over all, “so that God may be all in all.” The integuments within which the embryo first developed into a human being must be laid aside when he is to come into the light of day. The leading- string of holy tradition with its appendages of statutes and observances, which in its time did good service, becomes bit by bit dispensable, yea, finally, when man enters upon his adolescence, it becomes a fetter. While he (the human race) “was a child he understood as a child” and managed to combine a certain amount of erudition, and even a philosophy ministering to the church, with the propositions which were bestowed on him without his cooperation: “but when he becomes a man he puts away childish things.” The humiliating distinction between laity and clergy disappears, and equality arises from true freedom, yet without anarchy, because, though each obeys the (non-statutory) law which he prescribes to himself, he must at the same time regard this law as the will of a World-Ruler revealed to him through reason, a will which by invisible means unites all under one common government into one state – a state previously and inadequately represented and prepared for by the visible church. All this is not to be expected from an external revolution, because such an upheaval produces its effect tempestuously and violently, an effect, quite dependent on circumstances. Moreover whatever mistake has once been made in the establishment of a new constitution, is regretfully retained throughout hundreds of years, since it can no longer be changed or at least only through a new (and at any time dangerous) revolution. The basis for the transition to that new order of affairs must lie in the principle that the pure religion of reason is a continually occurring divine (though not empirical) revelation for all men. Once this basis has been grasped with mature reflection, it is carried into effect, so far as this is destined to be a human task, through gradually advancing reform. As for revolutions which might hasten this progress, they rest in the hands of Providence and cannot be ushered in according to plan without damage to freedom.

We have good reason to say, however, that “the kingdom of God is come unto us” once the principle of the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth, has become general and has also gained somewhere a public foothold, even though the actual establishment of this state is still infinitely removed from us. For since this principle contains the basis for a continual approach towards such a consummation, there lies in it (invisibly), as in a seed which is self-developing and in due time self-fertilizing, the whole, which one day is to illumine and to rule the world. But truth and goodness – and in the natural predisposition of every man there lies a basis of insight into these as well as a basis of heartfelt sympathy with them – do not fail to communicate themselves far and wide once they have become public, thanks to their natural affinity with the moral predisposition of rational beings generally. The obstacles, arising from political and civil causes, which may from time to time hinder their spread, serve rather to make all the closer the union of men’s spirits with the good (which never leaves their thoughts after they have once cast their eyes upon it).

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Such, therefore, is the activity of the good principle, unnoted by human eyes but ever continuing – erecting for itself in the human race, regarded as a commonwealth under laws of virtue, a power and kingdom which sustains the victory over evil and, under its own dominion, assures the world of an eternal peace.

DIVISION TWO HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE GRADUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE GOOD PRINCIPLE ON EARTH

We can expect no universal history of religion (in the strictest meaning of the word) among men on earth; for, since it is based upon pure moral faith, it has no public status, and each man can become aware only in and for himself of the advances which he has made in it. Hence it is only of ecclesiastical faith that we can expect a universal historical account, in which its varied and changing form is compared with the single, unchanging, pure religious faith. At the point where the first of these publicly recognizes its dependence upon the qualifying conditions of the second and the necessity of conformity to them, the church universal commences to fashion itself into an ethical state of God and to march toward the consummation of this state under a steadfast principle which is one and the same for all men and for all times. We can see in advance that this history will be nothing but the narrative of the enduring conflict between the faith of divine worship and the moral faith of religion, the first of which, as historical faith, man is continually inclined to put foremost, while, on the other hand, the second has never relinquished its claim to the priority to which it is entitled as the only faith bettering the soul – a claim which it will certainly, in the end, make good.

Now this historical account can have unity only if it is confined wholly to that portion of the human race in which the predisposition to the unity of the universal church is already approaching its [complete] development, that is, when the problem of the difference between the faiths of reason and of history has already been publicly propounded and its solution made a matter of the greatest moral importance; for an historical account merely of the dogmas of diverse peoples, whose faiths stand in no connection with one another, can reveal no [such example of] church unity. It cannot be taken as an instance of this unity that in one and

the same people a certain new faith once arose and distinguished itself by name from the faith previously dominant, even though the latter afforded the occasional causes of the new product. For there must exist a unity of principle if we are to construe the succession of different types of belief following one another as modifications of one and the same church; and it is really with the history of this church that we are now concerned.

So we can deal, under this heading, only with the history of that church which contained within itself, from its first beginning, the seed and the principles of the objective unity of the true and universal religious faith, to which it is gradually brought nearer. And first of all it is evident that the Jewish faith stands in no essential connection whatever, i.e., in no unity of concepts, with this ecclesiastical faith whose history we wish to consider, though the Jewish immediately preceded this (the Christian) church and provided the physical occasion for its establishment.

The Jewish faith was, in its original form, a collection of mere statutory laws upon which was established a political organization; for whatever moral additions were then or later appended to it in no way whatever belong to Judaism as such. Judaism is really not a religion at all but merely a union of a number of people who, since they belonged to a particular stock, formed themselves into a commonwealth under purely political laws, and not into a church; nay, it was intended to be merely an earthly state so that, were it possibly to be dismembered through adverse circumstances, there would still remain to it (as part of its very essence) the political faith in its eventual re-establishment (with the advent of the Messiah). That this political organization has a theocracy as its basis (visibly, an aristocracy of priests or leaders, who boast of instructions imparted directly by God), and that therefore the name of God, who after all is here merely an earthly regent making absolutely no claims upon, and no appeals to, conscience, is respected – this does not make it a religious organization. The proof that Judaism has not allowed its organization to

become religious is clear. First, all its commands are of the kind which a political organization can insist upon and lay down as coercive laws, since they relate merely to external acts; and although the Ten Commandments are, to the eye of reason, valid as ethical commands even had they not been given publicly, yet in that legislation they are not so prescribed as to induce obedience by laying requirements upon the moral disposition (Christianity later placed its main emphasis here); they are directed to absolutely nothing but outer observance. From this it is also clear that, second, all the consequences of fulfilling or transgressing these laws, all rewards or punishments, are limited to those alone which can be allotted to all men in this world, and not even these [are distributed] according to ethical concepts, since both rewards and punishments were to reach a posterity which has taken no practical part in these deeds or misdeeds. In a political organization this may indeed be a prudent device for creating docility, but in an ethical organization it would be contrary to all right. Furthermore, since no religion can be conceived of which involves no belief in a future life, Judaism, which, when taken in its purity is seen to lack this belief, is not a religious faith at all. This can be further supported by the following remark. We can hardly question that the Jews, like other peoples, even the most savage, ought [normally] to have had a belief in a future life, and therefore in a heaven and a hell; for this belief automatically obtrudes itself upon everyone by virtue of the universal moral predisposition in human nature. Hence it certainly came about intentionally that the law-giver of this people, even though he is represented as God Himself, wished to pay not the slightest regard to the future life. This shows that he must have wanted to found merely a political, not an ethical commonwealth; and to talk, in a political state, of rewards and punishments which cannot become apparent here in this life-would have been, on that premise, a wholly inconsequential and unsuitable procedure. And though, indeed, it cannot be doubted that the Jews may, subsequently, and each for himself, have framed some sort of

religious faith which was mingled with the articles of their statutory belief, such religious faith has never been part and parcel of the legislation of Judaism. Third, Judaism fell so far short of constituting an era suited to the requirements of the church universal, or of setting up this universal church itself during its time, as actually to exclude from its communion the entire human race, on the ground that it was a special people chosen by God for Himself – [an exclusiveness] which showed enmity toward all other peoples and which, therefore, evoked the enmity of all. In this connection, we should not rate too highly the fact that this people set up, as universal Ruler of the world, a one and only God who could be represented through no visible image. For we find that the religious doctrines of most other peoples tended in the same direction and that these made themselves suspected of polytheism only by the veneration of certain mighty undergods subordinated to Him. For a God who desires merely obedience to commands for which absolutely no improved moral disposition is requisite is, after all, not really the moral Being the concept of whom we need for a religion. Religion would be more likely to arise from a belief in many mighty invisible beings of this order, provided a people conceived of these as all agreeing, amid their "departmental" differences, to bestow their good pleasure only upon the man who cherishes virtue with all his heart – more likely, I say, than when faith is bestowed upon but one Being, who, however, attaches prime importance to mechanical worship.

We cannot, therefore, do otherwise than begin general church history, if it is to constitute a system, with the origin of Christianity, which, completely forsaking the Judaism from which it sprang, and grounded upon a wholly new principle, effected a thoroughgoing revolution in doctrines of faith. The pains which teachers of Christianity take now, and may have taken in the beginning, to join Judaism and Christianity with a connecting strand by trying to have men regard the new faith as a mere

continuation of the old (which, they allege, contained in prefiguration all the events of the new) – these efforts reveal most clearly that their problem is and was merely the discovery of the most suitable means of introducing a purely moral religion in place of the old worship, to which the people were all too well habituated, without directly offending the people's prejudices. The subsequent dispensing with the corporal sign which served wholly to separate this people from others warrants the judgment that the new faith, not bound to the statutes of the old, nor, indeed, to any statutes whatever, was to comprise a religion valid for the world and not for one single people.

Thus Christianity arose suddenly, though not unprepared for, from Judaism. The latter, however, was no longer patriarchal and unmixed, standing solely upon its political constitution (for even this was by that time sorely unsettled), but was already interfused, by reason of moral doctrines gradually made public within it, with a religious faith – for this otherwise ignorant people had been able to receive much foreign (Greek) wisdom. This wisdom presumably had the further effect of enlightening Judaism with concepts of virtue and, despite the pressing weight of its dogmatic faith, of preparing it for revolution, the opportunity being afforded by the diminished power of the priests, who had been subjugated to the rule of a people which regarded all foreign popular beliefs with indifference. The Teacher of the Gospel announced himself to be an ambassador from heaven. As one worthy of such a mission, he declared that servile belief (taking the form of confessions and practices on days of divine worship) is essentially vain and that moral faith, which alone renders men holy "as their Father in Heaven is holy" and which proves its genuineness by a good course of life, is the only saving faith. After he had given, in his own person, through precept and suffering even to unmerited yet meritorious death,* an example conforming to the archetype of a humanity alone pleasing to God, he is represented as returning to heaven,

whence he came. He left behind him, by word of mouth, his last will (as in a testament); and, trusting in the power of the memory of his merit, teaching, and example, he was able to say that “he (the ideal of humanity well-pleasing to God) would still be with his disciples, even to the end of the world.” Were it a question of historical belief concerning the derivation and the rank, possibly supermundane, of his person, this doctrine would indeed stand in need of verification through miracles; although, as merely belonging to moral soul-improving faith, it can dispense with all such proofs of its truth. Hence, in a holy book miracles and mysteries find a place; the manner of making these known, in turn, is also miraculous, and demands a faith in history; which, finally, can be authenticated, and assured as to meaning and import, only by scholarship.

Every faith which, as an historical faith, bases itself upon books, needs for its security a learned public for whom it can be controlled, as it were, by writers who lived in those times, who are not suspected of a special agreement with the first disseminators of the faith, and with whom our present-day scholarship is connected by a continuous tradition. The pure faith of reason, in contrast, stands in need of no such documentary authentication, but proves itself. Now at the time of the revolution in question there was present among the people (the Romans), who ruled the Jews and who had spread into their very domain, a learned public from whom the history of the political events of that period has indeed been handed down to us through an unbroken series of writers. And although the Romans concerned themselves but little with the religious beliefs of their non-Roman subjects, they were by no means incredulous of the miracles alleged to have taken place publicly in their midst. Yet they made no mention, as contemporaries, either of these miracles or of the revolution which the miracles produced (in respect to religion) in the people under their dominion, though the revolution had taken place quite as publicly. Only later, after more than a generation, did they institute

inquiries into the nature of this change of faith which had remained unknown to them hitherto (but which had occurred not without public commotion), but they did not inquire into the history of its first beginning, in order to learn this history from its own records. So from this period to the time when Christendom could furnish a learned public of its own, its history is obscure and we remain ignorant of what effect the teaching of Christianity had upon the morality of its adherents whether the first Christians actually were morally improved men or just people of the common run. At any rate, the history of Christendom, from the time that it became a learned public itself, or at least part of the universal learned public, has served in no way to recommend it on the score of the beneficent effect which can justly be expected of a moral religion.

For history tells how the mystical fanaticism in the lives of hermits and monks, and the glorification of the holiness of celibacy, rendered great masses of people useless to the world; how alleged miracles accompanying all this weighed down the people with heavy chains under a blind superstitution; how, with a hierarchy forcing itself upon free men, the dreadful voice of orthodoxy was raised, out of the mouths of presumptuous, exclusively “called,” Scriptural expositors, and divided the Christian world into embittered parties over credal opinions on matters of faith (upon which absolutely no general agreement can be reached without appeal to pure reason as the expositor); how in the East, where the state meddled in an absurd manner with the religious statutes of the priests and with priestdom, instead of holding them within the narrow confines of a teacher’s status (out of which they are at all times inclined to pass over into that of ruler) – how, I say, this state had finally to become, quite inescapably, the prey of foreign enemies, who at last put an end to its prevailing faith; how, in the West, where faith had erected its own throne, independent of worldly power, the civil order together with the sciences (which maintain this order) were thrown into confusion and rendered

impotent by a self-styled viceroy of God; how both Christian portions of the world became overrun by barbarians, just as plants and animals, near death from some disease, attract destructive insects to complete their dissolution; how, in the West, the spiritual head ruled over and disciplined kings like children by means of the magic wand of his threatened excommunication, and incited them to depopulating foreign wars in another portion of the world (the Crusades), to the waging of war with one another, to the rebellion of subjects against those in authority over them, and to bloodthirsty hatred against their otherwise-minded colleagues in one and the same universal Christendom so-called; how the root of this discord, which even now is kept from violent outbreaks only through political interest, lies hidden in the basic principle of a despotically commanding ecclesiastical faith and still gives cause for dread of events like unto these – this history of Christendom (which indeed could not eventuate otherwise if erected upon an historical faith), when surveyed in a single glance, like a painting, might well justify the exclamation: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*, did not the fact still shine forth clearly from its founding that Christianity's first intention was really no other than to introduce a pure religious faith, over which no conflict of opinions can prevail; whereas that turmoil, through which the human race was disrupted and is still set at odds, arises solely from this, that what, by reason of an evil propensity of human nature, was in the beginning to serve merely for the introduction of pure religious faith, i.e., to win over for the new faith the nation habituated to the old historical belief through its own prejudices, was in the sequel made the foundation of a universal world-religion.

If now one asks, What period in the entire known history of the church up to now is the best? I have no scruple in answering, the present. And this, because, if the seed of the true religious faith, as it is now being publicly sown in Christendom, though only by a few, is allowed more and

more to grow unhindered, we may look for a continuous approximation to that church, eternally uniting all men, which constitutes the visible representation (the schema) of an invisible kingdom of God on earth. For reason has freed itself, in matters which by their nature ought to be moral and soul-improving, from the weight of a faith forever dependent upon the arbitrary will of the expositors, and has among true reverers of religion in all the lands of this portion of the world universally (though indeed not in all places publicly) laid down the following principles. The first is the principle of reasonable modesty in pronouncements regarding all that goes by the name of revelation. For no one can deny the possibility that a scripture which, in practical content, contains much that is godly, may (with respect to what is historical in it) be regarded as a genuinely divine revelation. It is also possible that the union of men into one religion cannot feasibly be brought about or made abiding without a holy book and an ecclesiastical faith based upon it. Moreover, the contemporary state of human insight being what it is, one can hardly expect a new revelation, ushered in with new miracles. Hence the most intelligent and most reasonable thing to do is from how on to use the book already at hand as the basis for ecclesiastical instruction and not to lessen its value through useless or mischievous attacks, yet meanwhile not forcing belief in it, as requisite to salvation, upon any man. The second principle is this: that, since the sacred narrative, which is employed solely on behalf of ecclesiastical faith, can have and, taken by itself, ought to have absolutely no influence upon the adoption of moral maxims, and since it is given to ecclesiastical faith only for the vivid presentation of its true object (virtue striving toward holiness), it follows that this narrative must at all times be taught and expounded in the interest of morality; and yet (because the common man especially has an enduring propensity within him to sink into passive belief) it must be inculcated painstakingly and repeatedly that true religion is to consist not in the knowing or considering of what God does or has done for our salvation but in what we must do to become

worthy of it. This last can never be anything but what possesses in itself undoubted and unconditional worth, what therefore can alone make us well-pleasing to God, and of whose necessity every man can become wholly certain without any Scriptural learning whatever. Now it is the duty of rulers not to hinder these basic principles from becoming public. On the contrary, very much is risked and a great responsibility assumed by one who intrudes upon the process of divine Providence and, for the sake of certain historical ecclesiastical doctrines which at best have in their favor only a probability discoverable by scholars, exposes to temptation the consciences of the subjects through the offer, or denial, of certain civil advantages otherwise open to all: all this, apart from the damage done thereby to a freedom which in this case is holy, can scarcely produce good citizens for the state. Who among those proffering themselves to hinder such a free development of godly predispositions to the world's highest good, or even proposing such a hindrance, would wish, after thinking it over in communion with his conscience, to answer for all the evil which might arise from such forcible encroachments, whereby the advance in goodness intended by the Governor of the world, though it can never be wholly destroyed through human might or human contrivance, may perhaps be checked for a long time, yea, even turned into a retrogression!

As regards its guidance by Providence, the kingdom of heaven is represented in this historical account not only as being brought ever nearer, in an approach delayed at certain times yet never wholly interrupted, but also as arriving. When to this narrative is added (in the Apocalypse) a prophecy (like those in the Sibylline books) of the consummation of this great world-change, in the image of a visible kingdom of God on earth (under the government of His representative and viceroy, again descended to earth), and of the happiness which is to be enjoyed under him in this world after the separation and expulsion of the

rebels who once again seek to withstand him, and also of the complete extirpation of these rebels and their leader, and when, thus, the account closes with the end of the world, all this may be interpreted as a symbolical representation intended merely to enliven hope and courage and to increase our endeavors to that end. The Teacher of the Gospel revealed to his disciples the kingdom of God on earth only in its glorious, soul-elevating moral aspect, namely, in terms of the value of citizenship in a divine state, and to this end he informed them of what they had to do, not only to achieve it themselves but to unite with all others of the same mind and, so far as possible, with the entire human race. Concerning happiness, however, which constitutes the other part of what man inevitably wishes, he told them in advance not to count on it in their life on earth. Instead he bade them be prepared for the greatest tribulations and sacrifices; yet he added (since man cannot be expected, while he is alive, wholly to renounce what is physical in happiness): “Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” The supplement, added to the history of the church, dealing with man’s future and final destiny, pictures men as ultimately triumphant, i.e., as crowned with happiness while still here on earth, after all obstacles have been overcome. The separation of the good from the evil, which, during the progress of the church toward its consummation, would not have conduced to this end (since their mixture with one another was needed, partly to spur the good on to virtue, partly to withdraw the bad from evil through the others’ example), is represented as following upon the completed establishment of the divine state and as its last consequence; whereto is added, as the final proof of the state’s stability and might, its victory over all external foes who are also regarded as forming a state (the state of hell). With this all earthly life comes to an end, in that “the last enemy (of good men), death, is destroyed”; and immortality commences for both parties, to the salvation of one, the damnation of the other. The very form of a church is

dissolved, the viceroy becomes at one with man who is raised up to his level as a citizen of heaven, and so God is all in all.

This sketch of a history of after-ages, which themselves are not yet history, presents a beautiful ideal of the moral world-epoch, brought about by the introduction of true universal religion and in faith foreseen even to its culmination – which we cannot conceive as a culmination in experience, but can merely anticipate, i.e., prepare for, in continual progress and approximation toward the highest good possible on earth (and in all of this there is nothing mystical, but everything moves quite naturally in a moral fashion). The appearance of the Antichrist, the millennium, and the news of the proximity of the end of the world – all these can take on, before reason, their right symbolic meaning; and to represent the last of these as an event not to be seen in advance (like the end of life, be it far or near) admirably expresses the necessity of standing ready at all times for the end and indeed (if one attaches the intellectual meaning to this symbol) really to consider ourselves always as chosen citizens of a divine (ethical) state. “When, therefore, cometh the kingdom of God?” “The kingdom of God cometh not in visible form. Neither shall they say, Lo here; or lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you,” (Luke XVII, 21-2).

GENERAL OBSERVATION

Investigation into the inner nature of all kinds of faith which concern religion invariably encounters a mystery, i.e., something holy which may indeed be known by each single individual but cannot be made known publicly, that is, shared universally. Being something holy, it must be moral, and so an object of reason, and it must be capable of being known from within adequately for practical use, and yet, as something mysterious, not for theoretical use, since in this case it would have to be capable of being shared with everyone and made known publicly.

Belief in what we are yet to regard as a holy mystery can be looked upon as divinely prompted or as a pure rational faith. Unless we are impelled by the greatest need to adopt the first of these views, we shall make it our maxim to abide by the second. Feelings are not knowledge and so do not indicate [the presence of] a mystery; and since the latter is related to reason, yet cannot be shared universally, each individual will have to search for it (if ever there is such a thing) solely in his own reason.

It is impossible to settle, a priori and objectively, whether there are such mysteries or not. We must therefore search directly in the inner, the subjective, part of our moral predisposition to see whether any such thing is to be found in us. Yet we shall not be entitled to number among the holy mysteries the grounds of morality, which are inscrutable to us; for we can thus classify only that which we can know but which is incapable of being communicated publicly, whereas, though morality can indeed be communicated publicly, its cause remains unknown to us. Thus freedom, an attribute of which man becomes aware through the determinability of his will by the unconditioned moral law, is no mystery, because the knowledge of it can be shared with everyone; but the ground, inscrutable to us, of this attribute is a mystery because this ground is not given us as an object of knowledge. Yet it is this very freedom which, when applied to the final object of practical reason (the realization of the idea of the moral end), alone leads us inevitably to holy mysteries.*

The idea of the highest good, inseparably bound up with the purely moral disposition, cannot be realized by man himself (not only in the matter of the happiness pertaining thereto, but also in the matter of the union of men necessary for the end in its entirety); yet he discovers within himself the duty to work for this end. Hence he finds himself impelled to believe in the cooperation or management of a moral Ruler of the world, by means of which alone this goal can be reached. And now there opens up before him the abyss of a mystery regarding what God may do [toward

the realization of this end], whether indeed anything in general, and if so, what in particular should be ascribed to God. Meanwhile man knows concerning each duty nothing but what he must himself do in order to be worthy of that supplement, unknown, or at least incomprehensible, to him.

This idea of a moral Governor of the world is a task presented to our practical reason. It concerns us not so much to know what God is in Himself (His nature) as what He is for us as moral beings; although in order to know the latter we must conceive and comprehend all the attributes of the divine nature (for instance, the unchangeableness, omniscience, omnipotence, etc. of such a Being) which, in their totality, are requisite to the carrying out of the divine will in this regard. Apart from this context we can know nothing about Him.

Now the universal true religious belief conformable to this requirement of practical reason is belief in God (1) as the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, i.e., morally as holy Legislator, (2) as Preserver of the human race, its benevolent Ruler and moral Guardian, (3) as Administrator of His own holy laws, i.e., as righteous Judge.

This belief really contains no mystery, because it merely expresses the moral relation of God to the human race; it also presents itself spontaneously to human reason everywhere and is therefore to be met with in the religion of most civilized peoples.* It is present likewise in the concept of a people regarded as a commonwealth, in which such a threefold higher power (pouvoir) will always be descried, except that this commonwealth is here represented as ethical: hence this threefold quality of the moral Governor of the human race, which in a juridico-civil state must of necessity be divided among three different departments [legislative, executive, and judicial], can be thought of as combined in one and the same Being.

And since this faith which, on behalf of religion in general, has cleansed the moral relation of men to the Supreme Being from harmful anthropomorphism, and has harmonized it with the genuine morality of a people of God, was first set forth in a particular (the Christian) body of doctrine and only therein made public to the world, we can call the promulgation of these doctrines a revelation of the faith which had hitherto remained hidden from men through their own fault.

These doctrines assert, first, that we are to look upon the Supreme Lawgiver as one who commands not mercifully or with forbearance (indulgently) for men's weakness, or despotically and merely according to His unlimited right; and we are to look upon His laws not as arbitrary and as wholly unrelated to our concepts of morality, but as laws addressed to man's holiness. Second, we must place His beneficence not in an unconditioned good-will toward His creatures but in this, that He first looks upon their moral character, through which they can be well-pleasing to Him, and only then makes good their inability to fulfil this requirement of themselves. Third, His justice cannot be represented as beneficent and exorable (for this involves a contradiction); even less can it be represented as dispensed by Him in his character of holy Lawgiver (before Whom no man is righteous); rather, it must be thought of as beneficence which is limited by being conditioned upon men's agreement with the holy law so far as they, as sons of men, may be able to measure up to its requirement. In a word, God wills to be served under three specifically different moral aspects. The naming of the different (not physically, but morally different) persons of one and the same Being expresses this not ineptly. This symbol of faith gives expression also to the whole of pure moral religion which, without this differentiation, runs the risk of degenerating into an anthropomorphic servile faith, by reason of men's propensity to think of the Godhead as a human overlord (because in man's government rulers

usually do not separate these three qualities from one another but often mix and interchange them).

But if this very faith (in a divine tri-unity) were to be regarded not merely as a representation of a practical idea but as a faith which is to describe what God is in Himself, it would be a mystery transcending all human concepts, and hence a mystery of revelation, unsuited to man's powers of comprehension; in this account, therefore, we can declare it to be such. Faith in it, regarded as an extension of the theoretical knowledge of the divine nature, would be merely the acknowledgment of a symbol of ecclesiastical faith which is quite incomprehensible to men or which, if they think they can understand it, would be anthropomorphic, and therefore nothing whatever would be accomplished for moral betterment. Only that which, in a practical context, can be thoroughly understood and comprehended, but which, taken theologically (for the determining of the nature of the object in itself), transcends all our concepts, is a mystery (in one respect) and can yet (in another) be revealed. To this type belongs what has just been mentioned; and this can be divided into three mysteries revealed to us through our reason.

1. The mystery of the divine call (of men, as citizens, to an ethical state). We can conceive of the universal unconditioned subjection of men to the divine legislation only so far as we likewise regard ourselves as God's creatures; just as God can be regarded as the ultimate source of all natural laws only because He is the creator of natural objects. But it is absolutely incomprehensible to our reason how beings can be created to a free use of their powers; for according to the principle of causality we can assign to a being, regarded as having been brought forth, no inner ground for his actions other than that which the producing cause has placed there, by which, then, (and so by an external cause) his every act would be determined, and such a being would therefore not be free. So the legislation which is divine and holy, and therefore concerns free beings

only, cannot through the insight of our reason be reconciled with the concept of the creation of such beings; rather must one regard them even now as existing free beings who are determined not through their dependence upon nature by virtue of their creation but through a purely moral necessitation possible according to laws of freedom, i.e., a call to citizenship in a divine state. Thus the call to this end is morally quite clear, while for speculation the possibility of such a calling is an impenetrable mystery.

2. The mystery of atonement. Man, as we know him, is corrupt and of himself not in the least suited to that holy law. And yet, if the goodness of God has called him, as it were, into being, i.e., to exist in a particular manner (as a member of the kingdom of Heaven), He must also have a means of supplementing, out of the fullness of His own holiness, man's lack of requisite qualifications therefor. But this contradicts spontaneity (which is assumed in all the moral good or evil which a man can have within himself), according to which such a good cannot come from another but must arise from man himself, if it is to be imputable to him. Therefore, so far as reason can see, no one can, by virtue of the superabundance of his own good conduct and through his own merit, take another's place; or, if such vicarious atonement is accepted, we would have to assume it only from the moral point of view, since for ratiocination it is an unfathomable mystery.

3. The mystery of election. Even if that vicarious atonement be admitted as possible, still a morally-believing acceptance of it is a determination of the will toward good that already presupposes in man a disposition which is pleasing to God; yet man, by reason of his natural depravity, cannot produce this within himself through his own efforts. But that a heavenly grace should work in man and should accord this assistance to one and not to another, and this not according to the merit of works but by an unconditioned decree; and that one portion of our race should be destined

for salvation, the other for eternal reprobation – this again yields no concept of a divine justice but must be referred to a wisdom whose rule is for us an absolute mystery.

As to these mysteries, so far as they touch the moral life-history of every man – how it happens that there is a moral good or evil at all in the world, and (if the evil is present in all men and at all times) how out of evil good could spring up and be established in any man whatever, or why, when this occurs in some, others remain deprived thereof – of this God has revealed to us nothing and can reveal nothing since we would not understand it. It is as though we wished to explain and to render comprehensible to ourselves in terms of a man's freedom what happens to him; on this question God has indeed revealed His will through the moral law in us, but the causes due to which a free action on earth occurs or does not occur He has left in that obscurity in which human investigation must leave whatever (as an historical occurrence, though yet springing from freedom) ought to be conceived of according to the laws of cause and effect. But all that we need concerning the objective rule of our behavior is adequately revealed to us (through reason and Scripture), and this revelation is at the same time comprehensible to every man.

That, through the moral law, man is called to a good course of life; that, through unquenchable respect for this law lying in him, he finds in himself justification for confidence in this good spirit and for hope that, however it may come about, he will be able to satisfy this spirit; finally, that, comparing the last-named expectation with the stern command of the law, he must continually test himself as though summoned to account before a judge – reason, heart, and conscience all teach this and urge its fulfilment. To demand that more than this be revealed to us is presumptuous, and were such a revelation to occur, it could not rightly be reckoned among man's universal needs.

Although that great mystery, comprising in one formula all that we have mentioned, can be made comprehensible to each man through his reason as a practical and necessary religious idea, we can say that, in order to become The moral basis of religion, and particularly of a public religion, it was, at that time, first revealed when it was publicly taught and made the symbol of a wholly new religious epoch. Ceremonial formulas are usually couched in a language of their own, intended only for those who belong to a particular union (a guild or society), a language at times mystical and not understood by everyone, which properly (out of respect) ought to BC made use of only for a ceremonial act (as, for instance, when some one is to be initiated as a member of a society which is exclusive) But theca highest goal of moral perfection of finite creatures – a goal to which man can never completely attain – is love of the law.

The equivalent in religion of this idea would be an article of faith, “God is love”: in Him we can revere the loving One (whose love is that of moral approbation of men so far as they measure up to His holy law) the Father; in Him also, so far as He reveals Himself in His all-inclusive idea, the archetype of humanity reared and beloved by Him, we can revere His Son; and finally, so far as He makes this approbation dependent upon men’s agreement with the condition of that approving love, and so reveals love as based upon wisdom, we can revere the Holy Ghost.* Not that we should actually invoke Him in terms of this multiform personality (for to do so would suggest a diversity of entities, whereas He is ever but single); but we can call upon Him in the name of that object loved of Him, which He Himself esteems above all else, with which to enter into moral union is [our] desire and also [our] duty. Over and above this, the theoretical avowal of faith in the divine nature under this threefold character is part of what is merely the classic formula of an ecclesiastical faith, to be used for the distinguishing of this faith from other modes of belief deriving from historical sources. Few men are in the position of being able to combine

with this faith a concept [of the Trinity] which is clear and definite (open to no misinterpretation); and its exposition concerns, rather, teachers in their relation to one another (as philosophical and scholarly expositors of a Holy Book), that they may agree as to its interpretation, since not everything in it is suited to the common capacity of comprehension, nor to the needs of the present, and since a bare literal faith in it hurts rather than improves the truly religious disposition.

NOTES:

* Hobbes' statement, status hominum naturalis est bellum omnium in omnes, is correct except that it should read, est status belli, etc. For even if one does not concede that actual hostilities are continually in progress between men who do not stand under eternal and public laws, yet the state (status iuridicus) is the same; i.e., the relationship in and through which men are fitted for the acquisition and maintenance of rights – a state in which each wants to be the judge of what shall be his rights against others, but for which rights he has no security against others, and gives others no security: each has only his private strength. This is a state of war in which everyone must be perpetually armed against everyone else. Hobbes' second statement, exeundum esse e statu naturali, follows from the first; for this state is a continual infringement upon the rights of all others through man's arrogant insistence on being the judge in his own affairs and giving other men no security in their affairs save his own arbitrary will.

** As soon as anything is recognized as a duty, even if it should be a duty imposed through the arbitrary will of a human law-giver, obedience to it is also a divine command. Of course one cannot call statutory civil laws divine commands; yet, when they are just, obedience to them is still a divine command. The saying: "We ought to obey God rather than men," signifies merely that when men command anything which in itself is evil (directly opposed to the law of morality) we dare not, and ought not, obey them. But conversely, when a politico-civil law, itself not immoral, is opposed to what is held to be a divine statutory law, there are grounds for regarding the latter as spurious, since it contradicts a plain duty and since [the notion] that it is actually a divine command can never, by any

empirical token, be accredited adequately enough to allow an otherwise established duty to be neglected on its account.

* An expression for everything wished for, or worthy of being wished for, which we can neither foresee nor bring about through our own endeavors according to the laws of experience; for which, therefore, if we wish to name its source, we can offer none other than a gracious Providence.

* According to the Alphabetum Tibetanum of Georgius, Mongols call Tibet “Tangut-Chazar,” or the land of the house-dwellers, to distinguish its inhabitants from themselves as nomads living in the desert under tents. From this has originated the name Chazars, and from this name that of a Ketzer [= heretic], since the Mongols adhered to the Tibetan faith (of the Lamas) which agrees with Manicheanism, perhaps even arose from it, and spread it in Europe during their invasions; whence, too, for a long time the names H3/4retici and Manich3/4i were synonymous in usage.

As an illustration of this, take Psalm LIX, 11-16, where we find a prayer for revenge which goes to terrifying extremes. Michaelis (Moral, Part II, p. 202) approves of this prayer, and adds: “The Psalms are inspired; if in them punishment is prayed for, it cannot be wrong, and we must have no morality holier than the Bible.” Restricting myself to this last expression, I raise the question as to whether morality should be expounded according to the Bible or whether the Bible should not rather be expounded according to morality. Without considering how the passage in the New Testament, “It was said to them of old times, etc.... But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, etc...,” which is also inspired, can agree with the other, I should try, as a first alternative, to bring the New Testament passage into conformity with my own self- subsistent moral principles (that perhaps the reference is here not to enemies in the flesh but rather to invisible enemies which are symbolized by them and are far more dangerous to us, namely, evil inclinations which we must desire to bring wholly under foot). Or, if this cannot be managed, I shall rather have it that this passage is not to be understood in a moral sense at all but only as applying to the relation in which the Jews conceived themselves to stand to God as their political regent. This latter interpretation applies to still another passage in the Bible, where it is written: “Vengeance is mine. I will

repay, saith the Lord." This is commonly interpreted as a moral warning against private revenge, though probably it merely refers to the law, valid for every state, that satisfaction for injury shall be sought in the courts of justice of the overlord, where the judge's permission to the complainant to ask for a punishment as severe as he desires is not to be taken as approval of the complainant's craving for revenge.

* This can, indeed, be interpreted as follows. No one can say with certainty why this man becomes good, that man evil (both comparatively), because the predisposition to one of these characters or the other often seems to be discoverable at birth, and because contingencies of life as well, which no one can foresee, seem to tip the scale. No more can one say what a man may develop into. In all this therefore we must entrust judgment to the All-Seeing; but this is expressed in the text as though His decree, pronounced upon men before they were born, had prescribed to each the role which he was some day to play. Prevision regarding the order of appearances is at the same time predestination for a World-Creator, when, in this connection, He is conceived of in terms of human senses. But in the supersensible order of things, according to the laws of freedom, where time drops out, it is only an all-seeing knowledge; and yet it is impossible to explain why one man conducts himself in one way, and another according to opposite principles and to harmonize [this knowledge of causes] with the freedom of the will.

* Without either renouncing the service of ecclesiastical faith or attacking it, one can recognize its useful influence as a vehicle and at the same time deny to it, taken as the illusory duty of divine worship, all influence upon the concept of genuine (that is, moral) religion. Thus, amid the diversity of statutory forms of belief, a mutual compatibility of the adherents to these forms can be established through the basic principles of the one and only religion of reason, toward which the teachers of all such dogmas and observances should direct their interpretations; until, in time, by virtue of the true enlightenment (conformity to law, proceeding from moral freedom) which has now prevailed, the form of a debasing means of constraint can be exchanged, by unanimous consent, for an ecclesiastical form which squares with the dignity of a moral religion, to wit, the religion of a free faith. To combine a unity of ecclesiastical belief with freedom in matters of faith is a problem toward whose solution the

idea of the objective unity of the religion of reason continually urges us, through the moral interest which we take in this religion; although, when we take human nature into account, there appears small hope of bringing this to pass in a visible church. It is an idea of reason which we cannot represent through any [sensuous] intuition adequate to it, but which, as a practical regulative principle, does have objective reality, enabling it to work toward this end, i.e. the unity of the pure religion of reason. In this it is like the political idea of the rights of a state so far as these are meant to relate to an international law which is universal and possessed of power. Here experience bids us give over all hope. A propensity seems to have been implanted (perhaps designedly) in the human race causing every single state to strive if possible to subjugate every other state and to erect a universal monarchy, but, when it has reached a certain size, to break up, of its own accord, into smaller states. In like manner every single church cherishes the proud pretension of becoming a church universal; yet as soon as it has extended itself and commenced to rule, a principle of dissolution and schism into different sects at once shows itself.

The premature and therefore (since it comes before men have become morally better) the harmful fusion of states into one is chiefly hindered – if we are permitted here to assume a design of Providence – through two mightily effective causes, namely, difference of tongues, and difference of religions.

* With which the public record of his life ends (a record which, as public, might serve universally as an example for imitation). The more secret records, added as a sequel, of his resurrection and ascension, which took place before the eyes only of his intimates, cannot be used in the interest of religion within the limits of reason alone without doing violence to their historical valuation. (If one takes these events merely as ideas of reason, they would signify the commencement of another life and entrance into the seat of salvation, i.e., into the society of all the good.) This is so not merely because this added sequel is an historical narrative (for the story which precedes it is that also) but because, taken literally, it involves a concept, i.e., of the materiality of all worldly beings, which is, indeed, very well suited to man’s mode of sensuous representation but which is most burdensome to reason in its faith regarding the future. This concept involves both the materialism of personality in men (psychological materialism), which asserts that a personality can exist

only as always conditioned by the same body, as well as the materialism of necessary existence in a world, a world which, according to this principle, must be spatial (cosmological materialism). In contrast, the hypothesis of the spirituality of rational world- beings asserts that the body can remain dead in the earth while the same person is still alive, and that man, as a spirit (in his non-sensuous quality), can reach the seat of the blessed without having to be transported to some portion or other of the endless space which surrounds the earth (and which is also called heaven). This hypothesis is more congenial to reason, not only because of the impossibility of making comprehensible a matter which thinks, but especially because of the contingency to which materialism exposes our existence after death by claiming that such existence depends solely upon the cohering of a certain lump of matter in a certain form, and denying the possibility of thinking that a simple substance can persist based upon its [own] nature. On the latter supposition (of spirituality) reason can neither take an interest in dragging along, through eternity, a body which, however purified, must yet (if the personality is to rest upon the body's identity) consist of the self-same stuff which constitutes the basis of its organization and for which, in life, it never achieved any great love; nor can it render conceivable that this calcareous earth, of which the body is composed, should be in heaven, i.e., in another region of the universe, where presumably other materials might constitute the condition of the existence and maintenance of living beings.

* One of the causes of this propensity lies in the principle of security; that the defects of a religion in which I am born and brought up, instruction therein not having been chosen by me nor in any way altered through my own ratiocination, are charged not to my account but to that of my instructors or teachers publicly appointed for the task. This is also a ground for our not easily giving our approval to a man's public change of religion: although here, no doubt, there is another (and deeper) ground, namely, that amid the uncertainty which every man feels within himself as to which among the historical faiths is the right one, while the moral faith is everywhere the same, it seems highly unnecessary to create a stir about the matter.

* When a government wishes to be regarded as not coercing man's conscience because it merely prohibits the public utterance of his religious opinions and hinders no one from thinking to himself in

secrecy whatever he sees fit, we usually jest about it and say that in this the government grants no freedom at all, for it cannot in any case hinder thinking. Yet what the greatest secular power cannot do, spiritual power can – that is, forbid thought itself and really hinder it; it can even lay such a compulsion – the prohibition even to think other than it prescribes – upon those in temporal authority over it. For because of men's propensity to the servile faith of divine worship, which they are automatically inclined not only to endow with an importance greater than that of moral faith (wherein man serves God truly through the performance of his duties) but also to regard as unique and compensating for every other deficiency, it is always easy for the custodians of orthodoxy, the shepherds of souls, to instil into their flock a pious terror of the slightest swerving from certain dogmas resting on history, and even of all investigation – a terror so great that they do not trust themselves to allow a doubt concerning the doctrines forced upon them to arise, even in their thoughts, for this would be tantamount to lending an ear to the evil spirit. True, to become free from this compulsion one needs but to will (which is not the case when the sovereign compels public confessions); but it is precisely this willing against which a rule has been interposed internally. Such forcing of conscience is indeed bad enough (for it leads to inner hypocrisy); yet it is not as bad as the restriction of external freedom of belief. For the inner compulsion must of itself gradually disappear through the progress of moral insight and the consciousness of one's own freedom, from which alone true respect for duty can arise, whereas this external pressure hinders all spontaneous advances in the ethical community of believers – which constitutes the being of the true church – and subjects its form to purely political ordinances.

* This expression (if one sets aside what is mysterious, what reaches out beyond the limits of all possible experience, and what belongs merely to sacred history and so in no way applies to us practically) can be taken to mean that historical faith, which, as ecclesiastical, stands in need of a sacred book as a leading-string for men, but, for that very reason, hinders the unity and universality of the church, will itself cease and pass over into a pure religious faith equally obvious to the whole world. To this end we ought even now to labor industriously, by way of continuously setting free the pure religion from its present shell, which as yet cannot be spared.

Not that it is to cease (for as a vehicle it may perhaps always be useful and necessary) but that it be able to cease; whereby is indicated merely the inner stability of the pure moral faith.

** Here a kingdom of God is represented not according to a particular covenant (i.e., not Messianic) but moral (knowable through unassisted reason). The former (*regnum divinum pactitium*) had to draw its proofs from history; and there it is divided into the Messianic kingdom according to the old and according to the new covenant. Now it is worthy of notice that the followers of the former (the Jews) have continued to maintain themselves as such, though scattered throughout the world; whereas the faith of other religious fellowships has usually been fused with the faith of the people among whom they have been scattered. This phenomenon strikes many as so remarkable that they judge it to be impossible according to the nature of things, but to be an extraordinary dispensation for a special divine purpose. Yet a people which has a written religion (sacred books) never fuses together in one faith with a people (like the Roman Empire, then the entire civilized world) possessing no such books but only rites; instead, sooner or later it makes proselytes. This is the reason why, after the Babylonian captivity (following which, it seems, their sacred books were for the first time read publicly), the Jews were no longer chargeable with their propensity to run after strange gods; though the Alexandrian culture, which must also have had an influence upon them, could have been favorable to their giving this propensity a systematic form. Thus also the Parsees, followers of the religion of Zoroaster, have kept their faith up to the present despite their dispersion; for their dustoors possessed the Zendavesta. These Hindus, on the other hand, who under the name of gipsies are scattered far and wide, have not escaped a mixture with foreign faiths, for they came from the dregs of the people (the Pariahs) who are forbidden even to read in the sacred books of the Hindus. What the Jews would not have achieved of themselves, the Christian and later the Mohammedan religions brought about- especially the former; for these religions presupposed the Jewish faith and the sacred books belonging to it (even though Mohammedanism declares that these books have been falsified). For the Jews could ever and again seek out their old documents among the Christians (who had issued forth from them) whenever, in their wanderings, the skill in reading these books, and so the desire to possess them, was lost, as may often have happened, and when they merely retained the memory of having

formerly possessed them. Hence we find no Jews outside the countries referred to, if we except the few on the coast of Malabar and possibly a community in China (and of these the first could have been in continual commercial relation with their co-religionists in Arabia). Although it cannot be doubted that they spread throughout those rich lands, yet, because of the lack of all kinship between their faith and the types of belief found there, they came wholly to forget their own. To base edifying remarks upon this preservation of the Jewish people, together with their religion, under circumstances so disadvantageous to them, is very hazardous, for both sides believe that they find in it [confirmation of] their own opinions. One man sees in the continuation of the people to which he belongs, and in his ancient faith which remained unmixed despite the dispersion among such diverse nations, the proof of a special beneficent Providence saving this people for a future kingdom on earth; the other sees nothing but the warning ruins of a disrupted state which set itself against the coming of the kingdom of heaven – ruins, however, which a special Providence still sustains, partly to preserve in memory the ancient prophecy of a Messiah arising from this people, partly to offer, in this people, an example of punitive justice [visited upon it] because it stiff-neckedly sought to create a political and not a moral concept of the Messiah.

* Similarly, the cause of the universal gravity of all matter in the world is unknown to us, so much so, indeed, that we can even see that we shall never know it: for the very concept of gravity presupposes a primary motive force unconditionally inhering in it. Yet gravity is no mystery but can be made public to all, for its law is adequately known. When Newton represents it as similar to divine omnipresence in the [world of] appearance (omnipr3/4sentia ph3/4nomenon), this is not an attempt to explain it (for the existence of God in space involves a contradiction), but a sublime analogy which has regard solely to the union of corporeal beings with a world-whole, an incorporeal cause being here attributed to this union. The same result would follow upon an attempt to comprehend the self-sufficing principle of the union of rational beings in the world into an ethical state, and to explain this in terms of that principle. All we know is the duty which draws us toward such a union; the possibility of the achievement held in view when we obey that duty lies wholly beyond the limits of our insight.

There are mysteries which are hidden things in nature (arcana), and there can be mysteries (secrecies, secreta) in politics which ought not to be known publicly; but both can, after all, become known to us, inasmuch as they rest on empirical causes. There can be no mystery with respect to what all men are in duty bound to know (i.e., what is moral); only with respect to that which God alone can do and the performance of which exceeds our capacity, and therefore our duty, can there be a genuine, that is, a holy mystery (mysterium) of religion; and it may well be expedient for us merely to know and understand that there is such a mystery, not to comprehend it.

* In the sacred prophetic story of "the last things," the judge of the world (really he who will separate out and take under his dominion, as his own, those who belong to the kingdom of the good principle) is not represented and spoken of as God but as the Son of Man. This seems to indicate that humanity itself, knowing its limitation and its frailty, will pronounce the sentence in this selection [of the good from the bad] – a benevolence which yet does not offend against justice. In contrast, the Judge of men, represented in His divinity (the Holy Ghost), i.e., as He speaks to our conscience according to the holy law which we know, and in terms of our own reckoning, can be thought of only as passing judgment according to the rigor of the law. For we ourselves are wholly ignorant of how much can be credited, in our behalf, to the account of our frailty, and have moreover before our eyes nothing but our transgression, together with the consciousness of our freedom, and the violation of duty for which we are wholly to blame; hence we have no ground for assuming benevolence in the judgment passed upon us.

We cannot discover the cause for the agreement of so many ancient peoples in this idea, unless it is that the idea is present universally in human reason whenever man wants to conceive of civil government or (by analogy therewith) of world government. The religion of Zoroaster had these three divine persons, Ormazd, Mithra, and Ahriman; that of the Hindus had Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva – but with this difference, that Zoroastrians represent the third person as creator, not only of evil so far as it is punishment, but even of moral evil for which man is punished, whereas the Hindus represent him as merely judging and punishing. The religion of Egypt had its Ptah, Kneph, and Neith, of whom, so far as the obscurity of the earliest records of this people allows of conjecture, the first was intended to represent spirit,

distinguished from matter, as World-Creator, the second, a principle of sustaining and ruling benevolence, the third, wisdom setting limits to this benevolence, i.e., justice. The Goths honored their Odin (father of all), their Freya (also Freyer, beneficence), and Thor, the judging (punishing) god. Even the Jews seem to have followed these ideas during the last period of their hierarchical constitution. For in the complaint of the Pharisees that Christ had called himself a Son of God, they seem to have attached no special weight of blame to the doctrine that God had a son, but merely to Christ's having wished to be this son of God.

We commonly have no misgivings in requiring of novices in religion a belief in mysteries; for the fact that we do not comprehend them, i.e., that we cannot see into the possibility of their objective existence, could no more justify our refusal to accept them than it could justify our not accepting, say, the procreative capacity of organisms, which likewise no man comprehends yet which we cannot on that account refuse to admit, even though it is and will remain a mystery to us. But we understand very well what this expression means to convey and we have an empirical concept of this capacity, together with the consciousness that it harbors no contradiction. Now we can with justice require of every mystery offered for belief that we understand what it is supposed to mean; and this does not happen when we merely understand the words by which it is designated one by one, i.e., attaching a meaning to each word – rather, these words, taken together in one concept, must admit of another meaning and not, thus taken in conjunction, frustrate all thought. It is unthinkable that God could allow this knowledge to come to us through inspiration whenever we on our part wish earnestly for it; for such knowledge cannot inhere in us at all because our understanding is by nature unsuited to it.

Hence we understand perfectly well what freedom is, practically (when it is a question of duty), whereas we cannot without contradiction even think of wishing to understand theoretically the causality of freedom (or its nature).

* This Spirit, in and through which the love of God, as the Author of salvation (really our own responding love proportioned to His), is combined with the fear of God as Lawgiver, i.e., the conditioned with the condition, and which can therefore be represented as "issuing

forth from both," not only "leads to all truth" (obedience to duty), but is also the real Judge of men (at the bar of conscience). For judgment can be interpreted in two ways, as concerning either merit and lack of merit, or guilt and absence of guilt. God, regarded as love (in His son), judges men so far as merit is attributable to them over and above their indebtedness, and here the verdict is: worthy, or unworthy. He separates out as His own those to whom such merit can still be accredited. Those who are left depart empty-handed. On the other hand the sentence of the Judge in terms of justice (of the Judge properly so called, under the name of the Holy Ghost) upon those for whom no merit is forthcoming, is guilty or not guilty, i.e., condemnation or acquittal. This judging signifies first of all the separation of the deserving from the undeserving, both parties competing for a prize (salvation). By desert is here meant moral excellence, not in relation to the law (for in the eyes of the law no balance of obedience to duty over and above our indebtedness can accrue to us), but only in comparison with other men on the score of their moral disposition. And worthiness always has a merely negative meaning (not unworthiness), that is, the moral receptivity for such goodness.

Hence he who judges in the first capacity (as brabeuta) pronounces a judgment of choice between two persons (or parties) striving for the prize (of salvation); while he who judges in the second capacity (the real judge) passes sentence upon one and the same person before a court (conscience) which declares the final verdict between the prosecution and the defense. If now it is admitted that, though indeed all men are guilty of sin, some among them may be able to achieve merit, then the verdict of Him who judges from love becomes effective. In the absence of this judgment, only a verdict of rejection could follow, whose inescapable consequence would be the judgment of condemnation (since the man now falls into the hands of Him who judges in righteousness). It is thus, in my opinion, that the apparently contradictory passages, "The Son will come again to judge the quick and the dead," and, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John III, 17), can be reconciled, and they can agree with the other passage which reads, "He that believeth not in him is condemned already" (John III, 18), namely, by the Spirit, of whom it is said: "He will judge the world because of sin and righteousness." Anxious solicitude over such distinctions in the domain of bare reason, for whose sake

they have really been instituted here, might well be regarded as a useless and burdensome subtlety; and it would indeed be such if it were directed to an inquiry into the divine nature. But since men are ever prone, in matters of religion, to appeal, respecting their transgressions, to divine benignity, though they cannot circumvent His righteousness, and since a benign judge, as one and the same person, is a contradiction in terms, it is very evident that, even from a practical point of view, men's concepts on this subject must be very wavering and lacking in internal coherence, and that the correction and precise determination of these concepts is of great practical importance.

Book Four

CONCERNING SERVICE AND PSEUDO-SERVICE UNDER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE GOOD PRINCIPLE, OR, CONCERNING RELIGION AND CLERICALISM

The dominion of the good principle begins, and a sign that "the kingdom of God is at hand"1 appears, as soon as the basic principles of its constitution first become public; for (in the realm of the understanding) that is already here whose causes, which alone can bring it to pass, have generally taken root, even though the complete development of its appearance in the sensuous world is still immeasurably distant. We have seen that it is a duty of a peculiar kind (*officium sui generis*) to unite oneself with an ethical commonwealth, and that, if everyone alike heeded his own private duty, we could indeed infer therefrom an accidental agreement of all in a common good, even without the necessity of a special organization; yet, [we must admit] that such a general agreement cannot be hoped for unless a special business be made of their union with one another for the self-same end, and of the establishment of a

COMMONWEALTH under moral laws, as a federated and therefore stronger power to withstand the assaults of the evil principle (for otherwise men are tempted, even by one another, to serve this principle as its tools). We have also seen that such a commonwealth, being a KINGDOM OF GOD, can be undertaken by men only through religion, and, finally, in order that this religion be public (and this is requisite to a commonwealth), that it must be represented in the visible form of a church; hence the establishment of a church devolves upon men as a task which is committed to them and can be required of them.

To found a church as a commonwealth under religious laws seems, however, to call for more wisdom (both of insight and of good disposition) than can well be expected of men, especially since it seems necessary to presuppose the presence in them, for this purpose, of the moral goodness which the establishment of such a church has in view. Actually it is nonsensical to say that men ought to found a kingdom of God (one might as well say of them that they could set up the kingdom of a human monarch); God himself must be the founder of His kingdom. Yet, since we do not know what God may do directly to translate into actuality the idea of His kingdom–and we find within ourselves the moral destiny to become citizens and subjects in this kingdom–and since we do know how we must act to fit ourselves to become members thereof, this idea, whether it was discovered and made public to the human race by reason or by Scripture, will yet obligate us to the establishment of a church of whose constitution, in the last analysis, God Himself, as Founder of the kingdom, is the Author, while men, as members and free citizens of this kingdom, are in all cases the creators of the organization Then those among them who, in accordance with this organization, manage its public business, compose its administration, as servants of the church, while the rest constitute a co- partnership, the congregation, subject to their laws.

Now since a pure religion of reason, as public religious faith, permits only the bare idea of a church (that is, an invisible church), and since only the visible church, which is grounded upon dogmas, needs and is susceptible of organization by men, it follows that service under the sovereignty of the good principle cannot, in the invisible church, be regarded as ecclesiastical service, and that this religion has no legal servants, acting as officials of an ethical commonwealth; every member of this commonwealth receives his orders directly from the supreme legislator. But since, with respect to all our duties (which, collectively, we must at the same time look upon as divine commands); we also stand at all times in the service of God, the pure religion of reason will have, as its servants (yet without their being officials) all right-thinking men; except that, so far, they cannot be called servants of a church (that is, of a visible church, which alone is here under discussion). Meanwhile, because every church erected upon statutory laws can be the true church only so far as it contains within itself a principle of steadily approximating to pure rational faith (which, when it is practical, really constitutes the religion in every faith) and of becoming able, in time, to dispense with the churchly faith (that in it which is historical), we shall be able to regard these laws, and the officials of the church established upon them, as constituting a [true] service of the church (cultus) so far as these officials steadily direct their teachings and regulations toward that final end (a public religious faith). On the other hand, the servants of a church who do not at all have this in view, who rather interpret the maxim of continual approximation thereto as damnable, and allegiance to the historical and statutory element of ecclesiastical faith as alone bringing salvation, can rightly be blamed for the pseudo- service of the church or of what is represented through this church, namely, the ethical commonwealth under the dominion of the good principle. By a pseudo-service (cultus spurius) is meant the persuasion that some one can be served by deeds which in fact frustrate the very ends of him who is being served. This occurs in a commonwealth

when that which is of value only indirectly, as a means of complying with the will of a superior, is proclaimed to be, and is substituted for, what would make us directly well-pleasing to him. Hereby his ends are frustrated.

PART ONE CONCERNING THE SERVICE OF GOD IN RELIGION IN GENERAL

Religion is (subjectively regarded) the recognition of all duties as divine commands.* That religion in which I must know in advance that something is a divine command in order to recognize it as my duty, is the revealed religion (or the one standing in need of a revelation); in contrast, that religion in which I must first know that something is my duty before I can accept it as a divine injunction is the natural religion. He who interprets the natural religion alone as morally necessary, i.e., as duty, can be called the rationalist (in matters of belief; if he denies the reality of all supernatural divine revelation he is called a naturalist; if he recognizes revelation, but asserts that to know and accept it as real is not a necessary requisite to religion, he could be named a pure rationalist; but if he holds that belief in it is necessary to universal religion, he could be named the pure supernaturalist in matters of faith.

The rationalist, by virtue of his very title, must of his own accord restrict himself within the limits of human insight. Hence he will never, as a naturalist, dogmatize, and will never contest either the inner possibility of revelation in general or the necessity of a revelation as a divine means for the introduction of true religion; for these matters no man can determine through reason. Hence the question at issue can concern only the reciprocal claims of the pure rationalist and the supernaturalist in matters of faith, namely, what the one or the other holds as necessary and sufficient, or as merely incidental, to the unique true religion.

When religion is classified not with reference to its first origin and its inner possibility (here it is divided into natural and revealed religion) but with respect to its characteristics which make it capable of being shared widely with others, it can be of two kinds: either the natural religion, of which (once it has arisen) everyone can be convinced through his own reason, or a learned religion, of which one can convince others only through the agency of learning (in and through which they must be guided). This distinction is very important: for no inference regarding a religion's qualification or disqualification to be the universal religion of mankind can be drawn merely from its origin, whereas such an inference is possible from its capacity or incapacity for general dissemination, and it is this capacity which constitutes the essential character of that religion which ought to be binding upon every man.

Such a religion, accordingly, can be natural, and at the same time revealed, when it is so constituted that men could and ought to have discovered it of themselves merely through the use of their reason, although they would not have come upon it so early, or over so wide an area, as is required! Hence a revelation thereof at a given time and in a given place might well be wise and very advantageous to the human race, in that, when once the religion thus introduced is here, and has been made known publicly, everyone can henceforth by himself and with his own reason convince himself of its truth. In this event the religion is objectively a natural religion, though subjectively one that has been revealed; hence it is really entitled to the former name. For, indeed, the occurrence of such a supernatural revelation might subsequently be entirely forgotten without the slightest loss to that religion either of comprehensibility, or of certainty, or of power over human hearts. It is different with that religion which, on account of its inner nature, can be regarded only as revealed. Were it not preserved in a completely secure tradition or in holy books, as records, it would disappear from the world,

and there must needs transpire a supernatural revelation, either publicly repeated from time to time or else enduring continuously within each individual, for without it the spread and propagation of such a faith would be impossible.

Yet in part at least every religion, even if revealed, must contain certain principles of the natural religion. For only through reason can thought add revelation to the concept of a religion, since this very concept, as though deduced from an obligation to the will of a moral legislator, is a pure concept of reason. Therefore we shall be able to look upon even a revealed religion on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a learned religion, and thus to test it and decide what and how much has come to it from one or the other source.

If we intend to talk about a revealed religion (at least one so regarded) we cannot do so without selecting some specimen or other from history, for we must devise instances as examples in order to be intelligible, and unless we take these from history their possibility might be disputed. We cannot do better than to adopt, as the medium for the elucidation of our idea of revealed religion in general, some book or other which contains such examples, especially one which is closely interwoven with doctrines that are ethical and consequently related to reason. We can then examine it, as one of a variety of books which deal with religion and virtue on the credit of a revelation, thus exemplifying the procedure, useful in itself, of searching out whatever in it may be for us a pure and therefore a universal religion of reason. Yet we do not wish thereby to encroach upon the business of those to whom is entrusted the exegesis of this book, regarded as the summary of positive doctrines of revelation, or to contest their interpretation based upon scholarship. Rather is it advantageous to scholarship, since scholars and philosophers aim at one and the same goal, to wit, the morally good, to bring scholarship, through its own rational principles, to the very point which it already expects to reach by another

road. Here the New Testament, considered as the source of the Christian doctrine, can be the book chosen. In accordance with our intention we shall now offer our demonstration in two sections, first, the Christian religion as a natural religion, and, second, as a learned religion, with reference to its content and to the principles which are found in it.

SECTION ONE
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AS A NATURAL RELIGION

Natural religion, as morality (in its relation to the freedom of the agent) united with the concept of that which can make actual its final end (with the concept of God as moral Creator of theca world), and referred to a continuance of man which is suited to this end in its completeness (to immortality), is a pure practical idea of reason which, despite its inexhaustible fruitfulness, presupposes so very little capacity for theoretical reason that one can convince every man of it sufficiently for practical purposes and can at least require of all men as a duty that which is its effect. This religion possesses the prime essential of the true church, namely, the qualification for universality, so far as one understands by that a validity for everyone (universitas vel omnitudo distributiva), i.e., universal unanimity. To spread it, in this sense, as a world religion, and to maintain it, there is needed, no doubt, a body of servants (ministerium) of the invisible church, but not officials (officiales), in other words, teachers but not dignitaries, because in the rational religion of every individual there does not yet exist a church as a universal union (omnitudo collectiva), nor is this really contemplated in the above idea.

Yet such unanimity could not be maintained of itself and hence could not, unless it became a visible church, be propagated in its universality; rather is this possible only when a collective unanimity, in other words a union of believers in a (visible) church under the principles of a pure religion of reason, is added; though this church does not automatically

arise out of that unanimity nor, indeed, were it already established, would it be brought by its free adherents (as was shown above) to a permanent status as a community of the faithful (because in such a religion none of those who has seen the light believes himself to require, for his religious sentiments, fellowship with others). Therefore it follows that unless there are added to the natural laws, apprehensible through unassisted reason, certain statutory ordinances attended by legislative prestige (authority), that will still be lacking which constitutes a special duty of men, and a means to their highest end, namely, their enduring union into a universal visible church; and the authority mentioned above, in order to be a founder of such a church, presupposes a realm of fact1 and not merely the pure concepts of reason.

Let us suppose there was a teacher of whom an historical record (or, at least, a widespread belief which is not basically disputable) reports that he was the first to expound publicly a pure and searching religion, comprehensible to the whole world (and thus natural). His teachings, as preserved to us, we can in this case test for ourselves. Suppose that all he did was done even in the face of a dominant ecclesiastical faith which was onerous and not conducive to moral ends (a faith whose perfunctory worship can serve as a type of all the other faiths, at bottom merely statutory, which were current in the world at the time). Suppose, further, we find that he had made this universal religion of reason the highest and indispensable condition of every religious faith whatsoever, and then had added to it certain statutes which provided forms and observances designed to serve as means of bringing into existence a church founded upon those principles. Now, in spite of the adventitiousness of his ordinances directed to this end, and the elements of arbitrariness2 in them, and though we can deny the name of true universal church to these, we cannot deny to him himself the prestige due the one who called men to union in this church; and this without further adding to this faith

burdensome new ordinances or wishing to transform acts which he had initiated into peculiar holy practices, required in themselves as being constituent elements of religion.

After this description one will not fail to recognize the person who can be reverenced, not indeed as the founder of the religion which, free from every dogma, is engraved in all men's hearts (for it does not have its origin in an arbitrary will),1 but as the founder of the first true church. For attestation of his dignity as of divine mission we shall adduce several of his teachings as indubitable evidence of religion in general, let historical records be what they may (since in the idea itself is present adequate ground for its acceptance); these teachings, to be sure, can be no other than those of pure reason, for such alone carry their own proof, and hence upon them must chiefly depend the attestation of the others.

First, he claims that not the observance of outer civil or statutory churchly duties but the pure moral disposition of the heart alone can make man well-pleasing to God (Matthew V, 20-48); that sins in thought are regarded, in the eyes of God, as tantamount to action (V, 28) and that, in general, holiness is the goal toward which man should strive (V, 48); that, for example, to hate in one's heart is equivalent to killing (V, 22); that injury done one's neighbor can be repaired only through satisfaction rendered to the neighbor himself, not through acts of divine worship (V, 24), and that, on the point of truthfulness, the civil device for extorting it, by oath,* does violence to respect for truth itself (V, 34-37); that the natural but evil propensity of the human heart is to be completely reversed, that the sweet sense of revenge must be transformed into tolerance (V, 39, 40) and the hatred of one's enemies into charity (V, 44). Thus, he says, does he intend to do full justice to the Jewish law (V, 17); whence it is obvious that not scriptural scholarship but the pure religion of reason must be the law's interpreter, for taken according to the letter, it allowed the very opposite of all this. Furthermore, he does not leave

unnoticed, in his designations of the strait gate and the narrow way, the misconstruction of the law which men allow themselves in order to evade their truce moral duty and, holding themselves immune through having fulfilled their churchly duty (VII, 13).* He further requires of these pure dispositions that they manifest themselves also in works (VII, 16) and, on the other hand, denies the insidious hope of those who imagine that, through invocation and praise of the Supreme Lawgiver in the person of His envoy, they will make up for their lack of good works and ingratiate themselves into favor (VII, 21). Regarding these works he declares that they ought to be performed publicly, as an example for imitation (V, 16), and in a cheerful mood, not as actions extorted from slaves (VI, 16); and that thus, from a small beginning in the sharing and spreading of such dispositions, religion, like a grain of seed in good soil, or a ferment of goodness, would gradually, through its inner power, grow into a kingdom of God (XIII, 31-33). Finally, he combines all duties (1) in one universal rule (which includes within itself both the inner and the outer moral relations of men), namely: Perform your duty for no motive1 other than unconditioned esteem for duty itself, i.e., love God (the Legislator of all duties) above all else; and (2) in a particular rule, that, namely, which concerns man's external relation to other men as universal duty: Love every one as yourself, i.e., further his welfare from good-will that is immediate and not derived from motives of self-advantage. These commands are not mere laws of virtue but precepts of holiness which we ought to pursue, and the very pursuit of them is called virtue.

Accordingly he destroys the hope of all who intend to wait upon this moral goodness quite passively, with their hands in their laps, as though it were a heavenly gift which descends from on high. He who leaves unused the natural predisposition to goodness which lies in human nature (like a talent entrusted to him) in lazy confidence that a higher moral influence will no doubt supply the moral character and completeness which he

lacks, is confronted with the threat that even the good which, by virtue of his natural predisposition, he may have done, will not be allowed to stand him in stead because of this neglect (XXV, 29).

As regards men's very natural expectation of an allotment of happiness proportional to a man's moral conduct, especially in view of the many sacrifices of the former which must be undergone for the sake of the latter, he promises (V,11, 12) a reward for these sacrifices in a future world, but one in accordance with the differences of disposition in this conduct between those who did their duty for the sake of the reward (or for release from deserved punishment) and the better men who performed it merely for its own sake; the latter will be dealt with in a different manner. When the man governed by self-interest, the god of this world, does not renounce it but merely refines it by the use of reason and extends it beyond the constricting boundary of the present, he is represented (Luke XVI, 3-9) as one who, in his very person [as servant], defrauds his master [self-interest] and wins from him sacrifices in behalf of "duty." For when he comes to realize that sometime, perhaps soon, the world must be forsaken, and that he can take along into the other world nothing of what he here possessed, he may well resolve to strike off from the account what he or his master, self-interest, has a legal right to exact from the indigent, and, as it were, thereby to acquire for himself bills of exchange, payable in another world. Herein he acts, no doubt, cleverly rather than morally, as regards the motives of such charitable actions, and yet in conformity with the moral law, at least according to the letter of that law; and he can hope that for this too he may not stand unrequited in the future.* Compare with this what is said of charity toward the needy from sheer motives of duty (Matthew XXV, 35-40), where those, who gave succor to the needy without the idea even entering their minds that such action was worthy of a reward or that they thereby obligated heaven, as it were, to recompense them, are, for this very reason, because they acted thus without attention

to reward, declared by the Judge of the world to be those really chosen for His kingdom, and it becomes evident that when the Teacher of the Gospel spoke of rewards in the world to come he wished to make them thereby not an incentive to action but merely (as a soul-elevating representation of the consummation of the divine benevolence and wisdom in the guidance of the human race) an object of the purest respect and of the greatest moral approval when reason reviews human destiny in its entirety.

Here then is a complete religion, which can be presented to all men comprehensibly and convincingly through their own reason; while the possibility and even the necessity of its being an archetype for us to imitate (so far as men are capable of that imitation) have, be it noted, been made evident by means of an example without either the truth of those teachings nor the authority and the worth of the Teacher requiring any external certification (for which scholarship or miracles, which are not matters for everyone, would be required). When appeals are here made to older (Mosaic) legislation and prefiguration, as though these were to serve the Teacher as means of confirmation, they are presented not in support of the truth of his teachings but merely for the introduction of these among people who clung wholly, and blindly, to the old. This introduction, among men whose heads, filled with statutory dogmas, have been almost entirely unfitted for the religion of reason, must always be more difficult than when this religion is to be brought to the reason of people uninstructed but also unspoiled. For this reason no one should be astonished to find an exposition, that adapted itself to the prejudices of those times, now puzzling and in need of pains-taking exegesis; though indeed it everywhere permits a religious doctrine to shine forth and, in addition, frequently points explicitly to that which must be comprehensible and, without any expenditure of learning, convincing to all men.

SECTION TWO
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AS A LEARNED RELIGION

To the extent to which a religion propounds, as necessary, dogmas which cannot be known to be so through reason, but which are none the less to be imparted uncorrupted (as regards essential content) to all men in all future ages, it must be viewed (if we do not wish to assume a continuous miracle of revelation) as a sacred charge entrusted to the guardianship of the learned. For even though at first, accompanied by miracles and deeds, this religion, even in that which finds no confirmation in reason, could obtain entry everywhere, yet the very report of these miracles, together with the doctrines which stand in need of confirmation through this report, requires with the passage of time the written, authoritative, and unchanging instruction of posterity.

The acceptance of the fundamental principles of a religion is faith par excellence (fides sacra). We shall therefore have to examine the Christian faith on the one hand as a pure rational faith, on the other, as a revealed faith (fides statutaria). The first may be regarded as a faith freely assented to by everyone (fides elicita), the second, as a faith which is commanded (fides imperata). Everyone can convince himself, through his own reason, of the evil which lies in human hearts and from which no one is free; of the impossibility of ever holding himself to be justified before God through his own life-conduct, and, at the same time, of the necessity for such a justification valid in His eyes; of the futility of substituting churchly observances and pious compulsory services for the righteousness which is lacking, and, over and against this, of the inescapable obligation to become a new man: and to become convinced of all this is part of religion.

But from the point where the Christian teaching is built not upon bare concepts of reason but upon facts, it is no longer called merely the

Christian religion, but the Christian faith, which has been made the basis of a church. The service of a church consecrated to such a faith is therefore twofold: what, on the one hand, must be rendered the church according to the historical faith, and, on the other, what is due it in accordance with the practical and moral faith of reason. In the Christian church neither of these can be separated from the other as adequate in itself; the second is indispensable to the first because the Christian faith is a religious faith, and the first is indispensable to the second because it is a learned faith.

The Christian faith, as a learned faith, relies upon history and, so far as erudition (objectively) constitutes its foundation, it is not in itself a free faith (fides elicita) or one which is deduced from insight into adequate theoretical proofs. Were it a pure rational faith it would have to be thought of as a free faith even though the moral laws upon which it, as a belief in a divine Legislator, is based, command unconditionally–and it was thus presented in Section One. Indeed, if only this believing were not made a duty, it could be a free theoretical faith even when taken as an historical faith, provided all men were learned. But if it is to be a valid for all men, including the unlearned, it is not only a faith which is commanded but also one which obeys the command blindly (fides servilis), i.e., without investigation as to whether it really is a divine command.

In the revealed doctrines of Christianity, however, one cannot by any means start with unconditional belief in revealed propositions (in themselves hidden from reason) and then let the knowledge of erudition follow after, merely as a defense, as it were, against an enemy attacking it from the rear; for if this were done the Christian faith would be not merely a fides imperata, but actually servilis. It must therefore always be taught as at least a fides historice elicita; that is learning should certainly constitute in it, regarded as a revealed credal doctrine, not the rearguard but the vanguard, and then the small body of textual scholars (the clerics),

who, incidentally, could not at all dispense with secular learning, would drag along behind itself the long train of the unlearned (the laity) who, of themselves, are ignorant of the Scripture (and to whose number belong even the rulers of world-states). But if this, in turn, is to be prevented from happening, recognition and respect must be accorded, in Christian dogmatic, to universal human reason as the supremely commanding principle in a natural religion, and the revealed doctrine, upon which a church is founded and which stands in need of the learned as interpreters and conservers, must be cherished and cultivated as merely a means, but a most precious means, of making this doctrine comprehensible, even to the ignorant, as well as widely diffused and permanent.

This is the true service of the church under the dominion of the good principle; whereas that in which revealed faith is to precede religion is pseudo-service. In it the moral order is wholly reversed and what is merely means is commanded unconditionally (as an end).! Belief in propositions of which the unlearned can assure themselves neither through reason nor through Scripture (inasmuch as the latter would first have to be authenticated) would here be made an absolute duty (fides imperata) and, along with other related observances, it would be elevated, as a compulsory service, to the rank of a saving faith even though this faith lacked moral determining grounds of action. A church founded upon this latter principle does not really have servants (ministri), like those of the other organization, but commanding high officials (officiales). Even when (as in a Protestant church) these officials do not appear in hierarchical splendor as spiritual officers clothed with external power–even when, indeed, they protest verbally against all this–they yet actually wish to feel themselves regarded as the only chosen interpreters of a Holy Scripture, having robbed pure rational religion of its merited office (that of being at all times Scripture's highest interpreter) and having commanded that Scriptural learning be used solely in the interest of the churchly faith.

They transform, in this way, the service of the church (ministerium) into a domination of its members (imperium) although, in order to conceal this usurpation, they make use of the modest title of the former. But this domination, which would have been easy for reason, costs the church dearly, namely, in the expenditure of great learning. For, “blind with respect to nature, it brings down upon its head the whole of antiquity and buries itself beneath it."1

The course of affairs, once brought to this pass, is as follows. First, that procedure, wisely adopted by the first propagators of the teaching of Christ in order to achieve its introduction among the people, is taken as a part of religion itself, valid for all times and peoples, with the result that one is obliged to believe that every Christian must be a Jew whose Messiah has come. Yet this does not harmonize with the fact that a Christian is really bound by no law of Judaism (as statutory), though the entire Holy Book of this people is none the less supposed to be accepted faithfully as a divine revelation given to all men. Yet the authenticity of this Book involves great difficulty (an authenticity which is certainly not proved merely by the fact that passages in it, and indeed the entire sacred history appearing in the books of the Christians, are used for the sake of this proof). Prior to the beginning of Christianity, and even prior to its considerable progress, Judaism had not gained a foothold among the learned public, that is, was not yet known to its learned contemporaries among other peoples; its historical recording was therefore not yet subjected to control and so its sacred Book had not, on account of its antiquity, been brought into historical credibility. Meanwhile, apart from this, it is not enough to know it in translations and to pass it on to posterity in this form; rather, the certainty of churchly faith based thereon requires that in all future times and among all peoples there be scholars who are familiar–with the Hebrew language (so far as knowledge is possible of a language in which we have only a single book). And it must be regarded

as not merely a concern of historical scholarship in general but one upon which hangs the salvation of mankind, that there should be men sufficiently familiar with Hebrew to assure the true religion for the world.

The Christian religion has had a similar fate, in that, even though its sacred events occurred openly under the very eyes of a learned people, its historical recording was delayed for more than a generation before this religion gained a foothold among this people's learned public; hence the authentication of the record must dispense with the corroboration of contemporaries. Yet Christianity possesses the great advantage over Judaism of being represented as coming from the mouth of the first Teacher not as a statutory but as a moral religion, and as thus entering into the closest relation with reason so that, through reason, it was able of itself, without historical learning, to be spread at all times and among all peoples with the greatest trustworthiness. But the first founders of the Christian communities1 did find it necessary to entwine the history of Judaism with it; this was managed wisely in view of the situation at the time, and perhaps with reference to that situation alone; thus this history too has come down to us in the sacred legacy of Christianity. But the founders of the church incorporated these episodical means of recommendation among the essential articles of faith and multiplied them either with tradition, or with interpretations, which acquired legal force from the Councils or were authenticated by means of scholarship. As for this scholarship, or its extreme opposite, the inner light to which every layman can pretend, it is impossible to know how many changes the faith will still have to undergo through these agencies; but this cannot be avoided so long as we seek religion without and not within us.

PART TWO
CONCERNING THE PSEUDO-SERVICE OF GOD IN A STATUTORY RELIGION

The one true religion comprises nothing but laws, that is, those practical principles of whose unconditioned necessity we can become aware, and which we therefore recognize as revealed through pure reason (not empirically). Only for the sake of a church, of which there can be different forms, all equally good, can there be statutes, i.e., ordinances held to be divine, which are arbitrary and contingent as viewed by our pure moral judgment. To deem this statutory faith (which in any case is restricted to one people and cannot comprise the universal world-religion) as essential to the service of God generally, and to make it the highest condition of the divine approval of man, is religious illusion* whose consequence is pseudo-service, that is, pretended honoring of God through which we work directly counter to the service demanded by God Himself.

1. Concerning the Universal Subjective Ground of the Religious Illusion

Anthropomorphism, scarcely to be avoided by men in the theoretical representation of God and His being, but yet harmless enough (so long as it does not influence concepts of duty), is highly dangerous in connection with our practical relation to His will, and even for our morality; for here we create a God for ourselves, and we create Him in the form in which we believe we shall be able most easily to win Him over to our advantage and ourselves escape from the wearisome uninterrupted effort of working upon the innermost part of our moral disposition. The basic principle which man usually formulates for himself in this connection is that everything which we do solely in order to be well- pleasing to the Godhead (provided it does not actually run counter to morality, though it may not contribute to it in the very least) manifests to God our willingness to serve Him as obedient servants, well-pleasing to Him through this very obedience; and that thus we also serve God (in potentia). Not only through sacrifices, man believes, can he render this service to God; festivals and

even public games, as among the Greeks and Romans, have often had to perform this function, and still suffice, according to men's illusion, to make the Godhead propitious to a people or even to a single individual. Yet the former (penances, castigations, pilgrimages, and the like) were always held to be more powerful, more efficacious upon the the favor of heaven, and more apt to purify of sin, because they serve to testify more forcefully to unbounded (though not moral subjection to His will. The more useless such self-castigations are and the less they are designed for the general moral improvement of the man, the holier they seem to be; just because they are of no use whatsoever in the world and yet cost painful effort they seem to be directly solely to the attestation of devotion to God. Even though God has not in any respect been served by by the act, men say, He yet sees herein the good will, the heart, which is indeed too weak to obey His moral commands but which, through its attested willingness on this score, makes good that deficiency. Now here is apparent the propensity to a procedure which has no moral value in itself, except perhaps as a means of elevating the powers of sense-imagery to comport with intellectual ideas of the end, or of suppressing them* when they might work counter to these ideas. For in our thinking we attribute to this procedure the worth of the end itself, or what amounts to the same thing, we ascribe to the frame of mind (called devotion) attuned to acquiring dispositions dedicated to God the worth belonging to those dispositions themselves. Such a procedure, therefore, is merely a religious illusion which can assume various forms, in some of which it appears more moral than in others; but in all forms it is not merely an inadvertent deception but is rather a maxim of attributing to a means an intrinsic value instead of the value deriving from the end. Hence the illusion, because of this maxim, is equally absurd in all these forms and, as a hidden bias toward deception, it is reprehensible.

2. The Moral Principle of Religion Opposed to the Religious Illusion

To begin with, I take the following proposition to be a principle requiring no proof :Whatever, over and above good life-conduct, man fancies that he can do to become well-pleasing to God is mere religious illusion and pseudo-service of God. I say, what man believes that he can do; for here it is not denied that beyond all that we can do there may be something in the mysteries of the highest wisdom that God alone can do to transform us into men well-pleasing to Him. Yet even should the church proclaim such a mystery as revealed, the notion that belief in such a revelation, as the sacred history recounts it to us, and acknowledgment of it (whether inwardly or outwardly) are in themselves means whereby we render ourselves well-pleasing to God, would be a dangerous religious illusion. For this belief, as an inner confession of his steadfast conviction, is so genuinely an action which is compelled by fear that an upright man might agree to any other condition sooner than to this; for in the case of all other compulsory services he would at most be doing something merely superfluous, whereas here, in a declaration, of whose truth he is not convinced, he would be doing violence to his conscience. The confession, then, regarding which man persuades himself that in and of itself (as acceptance of a good proffered him) it can make him well-pleasing to God, is something which he fancies he can render over and above good life-conduct in obedience to moral laws which are to be put into practice on earth, on the ground that in this service [of confession] he turns directly to God.

In the first place, reason does not leave us wholly without consolation with respect to our lack of righteousness valid before God. It says that whoever, with a disposition genuinely devoted to duty, does as much as lies in his power to satisfy his obligation (at least in a continual

approximation to complete harmony with the law), may hope that what is not in his power will be supplied by the supreme Wisdom in some way or other (which can make permanent the disposition to this unceasing approximation). Reason says this, however, without presuming to determine the manner in which this aid will be given or to know wherein it will consist; it may be so mysterious that God can reveal it to us at best in a symbolic representation in which only what is practical is comprehensible to us, and that we, meanwhile, can not at all grasp theoretically what this relation of God to man might be, or apply concepts to it, even did He desire to reveal such a mystery to us. Suppose, now, that a particular church were to assert that it knows with certainty the manner in which God supplies that moral lack in the human race, and were also to consign to eternal damnation all men who are not acquainted with that means of justification which is unknown to reason in a natural way, and who, on this account, do not accept and confess it as a religious principle: who, indeed, is now the unbeliever? Is it he who trusts, without knowing how that for which he hopes will come to pass; or he who absolutely insists on knowing the way in which man is released from evil and, if he cannot know this, gives up all hope of this release? Fundamentally the latter is not really so much concerned to know this mystery (for his own reason already teaches him that it is of no use to him to know that regarding which he can do nothing); he merely wishes to know it so that he can make for himself (even if it be but inwardly) a divine service out of the belief, acceptance, confession, and cherishing of all that has been revealed–a service which could earn him the favor of heaven prior to all expenditure of his own powers toward a good life conduct, in a word, quite gratuitously; a service which could produce such conduct, mayhap, in supernatural fashion, or, where he may have acted in opposition, could at least make amends for his transgression.

Second: if man departs in the very least from the above maxim, the pseudo-service of God (superstition) has no other limits, for once beyond this maxim everything (except what directly contradicts morality) is arbitrary. He proffers everything to God, from lip-offerings? which cost him the least, to the donation of earthly goods, which might better be used for the advantage of mankind, yea, even to the immolation of his own person, becoming lost to the world (as a hermit, fakir, or monk)– everything except his moral disposition; and when he says that he also gives his heart to God he means by this not the disposition to a course of life well- pleasing to Him but the heart-felt wish that those sacrifices may be accepted in lieu of that disposition. (Natio gratis adhelans, multa agendo nihil agens. Phaedrus.1)

Finally, when once a man has gone over to the maxim of a service presumed to be in itself well-pleasing to God, and even, if need be, propitiating Him, yet not purely moral, there is no essential difference among the ways of serving Him, as it were, mechanically, which would give one way a priority over another. They are all alike in worth (or rather worthlessness), and it is mere affectation to regard oneself as more excellent, because of a subtler deviation from the one and only intellectual principle of genuine respect for God, than those who allow themselves to become guilty of an assumedly coarser degradation to sensuality. Whether the devotee betakes himself to church according to rule or whether he undertakes a pilgrimage to the sanctuaries in Loretto or in Palestine; whether he brings his formulas of prayer to the court of heaven with his lips, or by means of a prayer-wheel, like the Tibetan (who believes that his wishes will reach their goal just as well if they are set down in writing, provided only they be moved by something or other, by the wind, for example, if they are written on flags, or by the hand, if they are enclosed in a sort of revolving cylinder)– whatever be substituted for the moral service of God, it is all one and all equal in value. What matters here is not

a difference in the external form; everything depends upon the adoption or rejection of the unique principle of becoming well-pleasing to God–upon whether we rely on the moral disposition alone, so far as this disposition exhibits its vitality in actions which are its appearances, or on pious playthings and on inaction.* But is there not also perhaps a dizzying illusion of virtue, soaring above the bounds of human capacity, which might be reckoned, along with the cringing religious illusion, in the general class of self-deceptions? No! The disposition of virtue occupies itself with something real which of itself is well-pleasing to God and which harmonizes with the world's highest good.1 True, an illusion of self-sufficiency may attach itself thereto, an illusion of regarding oneself as measuring up to the idea of one's holy duty; but this is merely contingent. To ascribe the highest worth to that disposition is not an illusion, like faith in the devotional exercises of the church, but is a direct contribution which promotes the highest good of the world.

Furthermore, it is customary (at least in the church) to give the name of nature to that which men can do by dint of the principle of virtue, and the name of grace to that which alone serves to supplement the deficiency of all our moral powers and yet, because sufficiency of these powers is also our duty, can only be wished for, or hoped for, and solicited; to regard both together as active causes of a disposition adequate for a course of life well-pleasing to God; and not only to distinguish them from one another but even to set them over against one another.

The persuasion that we can distinguish the effects of grace from those of nature (virtue) or can actually produce the former within ourselves, is fanaticism; for we cannot, by any token, recognize a supersensible object in experience, still less can we exert an influence upon it to draw it down to us; though, to be sure, at times there do arise stirrings of the heart making for morality, movements which we cannot explain and regarding which we must confess our ignorance: "The wind bloweth where it listeth

... but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, etc."1 To wish to observe such heavenly influences in ourselves is a kind of madness, in which, no doubt, there can be method (since those supposed inner revelations must always be attached to moral, and hence to rational, ideas), but which none the less remains a self-deception prejudicial to religion. To believe that there may be works of grace and that perhaps these may even be necessary to supplement the incompleteness of our struggle toward virtue–that is all we can say on this subject; beyond this we are incapable of determining anything concerning their distinctive marks and still less are we able to do anything to produce them.

The illusion of being able to accomplish anything in the way of justifying ourselves before God through religious acts of worship is religious superstition, just as the illusion of wishing to accomplish this by striving for what is supposed to be communion with God is religious fanaticism. It is a superstitious illusion to wish to become well-pleasing to God through actions which anyone can perform without even needing to be a good man (for example, through profession of statutory articles of faith, through conformity to churchly observance and discipline, etc.). And it is called superstitious because it selects merely natural (not moral) means which in themselves can have absolutely no effect upon what is not nature (i.e., on the morally good). But an illusion is called fanatical when the very means it contemplates, as supersensible, are not within man's power, leaving out of account the inaccessibility of the supersensible end aimed at by these means; for this feeling of the immediate presence of the Supreme Being and the distinguishing of this from every other, even from the moral feeling, would constitute a receptivity for an intuition for which there is no sensory provision in man's nature. Because the superstitious illusion contains the means, available to many an individual, enabling him at least to work against the obstacles in the way of a disposition well-pleasing to God, it is indeed thus far allied to reason, and is only

contingently objectionable in transforming what is no more than a means into an object immediately well-pleasing to God. The fanatical religious illusion, in contrast, is the moral death of reason; for without reason, after all, no religion is possible, since, like all morality in general, it must be established upon basic principles.

So the basic principle of an ecclesiastical faith, a principle that remedies or prevents all religious illusion, is this, that such a faith must contain within itself, along with the statutory articles with which it cannot as yet wholly dispense, still another principle, of setting up the religion of good life-conduct as the real end, in order, at some future time, to be able entirely to dispense with the statutory articles.

3. Concerning Clericalism as a Government in the Pseudo-Service of the Good Principle

The veneration of mighty invisible beings, which was extorted from helpless man through natural fear rooted in the sense of his impotence, did not begin with a religion but rather with a slavish worship of a god (or of idols). When this worship had achieved a certain publicly legalized form it was a temple service,1 and it became a church worship1 only after the moral culture of men was gradually united with its laws. An historical faith constituted the basis of both of these, until man finally came to regard such a faith as merely provisional, and to see in it the symbolic presentation, and the means of promotion, of a pure religious faith.

We can indeed recognize a tremendous difference in manner, but not in principle, between a shaman of the Tunguses and a European prelate ruling over church and state alike, or (if we wish to consider not the heads and leaders but merely the adherents of the faith, according to their own mode of representation) between the wholly sensuous Wogulite who in the morning places the paw of a bearskin upon his head with the short

prayer, “Strike me not dead!” and the sublimated Puritan and Independent in Connecticut: for, as regards principle, they both belong to one and the same class, namely, the class of those who let their worship of God consist in what in itself can never make man better (in faith in certain statutory dogmas or celebration of certain arbitrary observances). Only those who mean to find the service of God solely in the disposition to good life-conduct distinguish themselves from those others, by virtue of having passed over to a wholly different principle and one which is far nobler than the other, the principle, namely, whereby they confess themselves members of an (invisible) church which includes within itself all right-thinking people and, by its essential nature, can alone be the true church universal.

The intention of all of them is to manage to their own advantage the invisible Power which presides over the destiny of men; they differ merely in their conceptions of how to undertake this feat. If they hold that Power to be an intelligent Being and thus ascribe to Him a will from which they await their lot, their efforts can consist only in choosing the manner in which, as creatures subjected to His will, they can become pleasing to Him through what they do or refrain from doing. If they think of Him as a moral Being they easily convince themselves through their own reason that the condition of earning His favor must be their morally good life-conduct, and especially the pure disposition as the subjective principle of such conduct. But perhaps the Supreme Being may wish, in addition, to be served in a manner which cannot become known to us through unassisted reason, namely, by actions wherein, in themselves, we can indeed discover nothing moral, but which we freely1 undertake, either because He commanded them or else in order to convince Him of our submissiveness to Him. Under either mode of procedure, if it provides for us a unified whole of systematically ordered activities, our acts constitute in general a service of God. Now if the two are to be united, then each of

them must be regarded as a way in which one may be well-pleasing to God directly, or else one of them must be regarded as but a means to the other, the real service of God. It is self-evident that the moral service of God (officium liberum) is directly well-pleasing to Him. But this service cannot be recognized as the highest condition of divine approval of man (this approval is already contained in the concept of morality) if it be possible for hired service officium mercenarium) to be regarded as, alone and of itself, well-pleasing to God; for then no one could know which service was worthier in a given situation, in order to decide thereby regarding his duty, or how they supplemented each other. Hence actions which have no moral value in themselves will have to be accepted as well-pleasing to Him only so far as they serve as means to the furtherance of what, in the way of conduct, is immediately good (i.e., so far as they promote morality), or in other words, so far as they are performed for the sake of the moral service of God.

Now the man who does make use of actions, as means, which in themselves contain nothing pleasing to God (i.e., nothing moral), in order to earn thereby immediate divine approval of himself and therewith the attainment of his desires, labors under the illusion that he possesses an art of bringing about a supernatural effect through wholly natural means. Such attempts we are wont to entitle sorcery. But (since this term carries with it the attendant concept of commerce with the evil principle, whereas the above-mentioned attempt can be conceived to be undertaken, through misunderstanding, with good moral intent) we desire to use in place of it the word fetishism, familiar in other connections. A supernatural effect induced by a man would be one whose possibility would rest, as he conceives the matter, upon a supposition that he works on God and uses Him as a means to bring about a result in the world for which his own powers, yea, even his insight into whether this result may be well-pleasing

to God, would, of themselves, not avail. But this involves an absurdity even in his own conception of it.

But if a man, not only by means which render him immediately an object of divine favor (by the active disposition to good life conduct) but also through certain formalities, seeks to make himself worthy of the supplementation of his impotence through supernatural assistance, and if he thinks that he is merely making himself capable of receiving the object of his good moral desires by conforming, with this intent, to observances which indeed have no immediate value but yet serve as means to the furthering of the moral disposition–then, to be sure, he is counting on something supernatural to supplement his natural impotence, yet not on what is effected by man (through influence upon the divine will) but on what is received, on what he can hope for but can not bring to pass. But if it is his idea that actions, which in themselves, so far as we can see, contain nothing moral or well-pleasing to God, are to serve as a means, nay as a condition, whereby he can expect the satisfaction of his wishes directly from God, then he is a victim of illusion; viz., the illusion that, though he possesses neither physical control over, nor yet moral receptivity for, this supernatural assistance, he can yet produce it through natural acts, which in themselves are in no way related to morality (and the performance of which calls for no disposition well-pleasing to God, and which can be put into practice by the most wicked man quite as well as by the best)–through formulas of invocation, through profession of a mercenary faith, through churchly observances, and so on–and that he can thus, as it were, conjure up divine assistance by magic. For between solely physical means and a morally efficacious cause there is no connection whatsoever according to any law of which reason can conceive, in terms of which the moral cause could be represented as determinable to specific activities through the physical.

Hence whoever assigns priority to obedience to statutory laws, requiring a revelation, as being necessary to religion, and regards this obedience not merely as a means to the moral disposition but as the objective condition of becoming immediately well-pleasing to God, and whoever thus places endeavor toward a good course of life below this historical faith (instead of requiring the latter, which can be well-pleasing to God only conditionally, to adapt itself to the former, which alone is intrinsically well-pleasing to Him)–whoever does this transforms the service of God into a mere fetishism and practises a pseudo-service which is subversive to all endeavors toward true religion. So much depends, when we wish to unite two good things, upon the order in which they are united ! True enlightenment lies in this very distinction; therein the service of God becomes first and foremost a free and hence a moral service. If man departs from it there is laid upon him, in place of the freedom of the children of God,1 the yoke of a law (the statutory law), and this yoke, as an unconditional requirement of belief in what can only be known historically and therefore cannot be an object of conviction for everyone, is for a conscientious man a far heavier yoke* than all the lumber of piously ordained observances could ever be. For the solemnization of these suffices to secure a man’s conformity with an established churchly commonwealth, and he need not either inwardly or outwardly profess the belief that he regards them as institutions founded by God; and it is by confession of the latter sort that conscience is really burdened.

Clericalism, therefore, is the constitution of a church to the extent to which a fetish-worship dominates it; and this condition is always found wherever, instead of principles of morality, statutory commands, rules of faith, and observances constitute the basis and the essence of the church. Now there are, indeed, various types of church in which the fetishism is so manifold and so mechanical that it appears to crowd out nearly all of

morality, and therefore religion as well, and to seek to occupy their place; such fetishism borders very closely on paganism. But it is not a question of more or less here, where worth or worthlessness rests on the nature of the principle which is supremely binding. When this principle imposes not free homage, as that which first and foremost must be paid to the moral law, but submission to precepts as a compulsory service; then, however few the imposed observances, so long as these are laid down as unconditionally necessary the faith remains a fetish-faith through which the masses are ruled and robbed of their moral freedom by subservience to a church (not to religion). The structure of this hierarchy can be monarchical or aristocratic or democratic; this is merely a matter of organization; its constitution is and ever remains despotic in all these forms. Wherever credal statutes find a place among the laws of the constitution, a clergy rules which believes that it can actually dispense with reason and even, finally, with Scriptural learning, because it has authority, as the uniquely authorized guardian and interpreter of the will of the invisible Legislator, exclusively to administer the prescriptions of belief and so, furnished with this power, needs not convince but merely command. But since aside from the clergy all that remains is the laity (the head of the political commonwealth not excepted), the church in the end rules the state not exactly with force but through its influence upon men’s hearts, and in addition through a dazzling promise of the advantage which the state is supposed to be able to draw from an unconditioned obedience to which a spiritual discipline has inured the very thought of the people. Thus, however, the habit of hypocrisy undermines, unnoticed, the integrity and loyalty of the subjects, renders them cunning in the simulation of service even in civil duties and, like all erroneously accepted principles, brings about the very opposite of what was intended.

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Now all this is the inevitable consequence of what at first sight appears to be a harmless transposition of the principles of the uniquely saving religious faith, since it was a question of which one should be assigned first place as the highest condition (to which the other is subordinated). It is fair, it is reasonable, to assume that not only “wise men after the flesh,"1 the learned or sophisticated, will be called to this enlightenment touching their true welfare–for the entire human race is to be susceptible of this faith; “the foolish things of the world"2 as well, even those who are most ignorant and most circumscribed conceptually, must be able to lay claim to such instruction and inner conviction. It does indeed seem as though an historical faith, especially if the concepts which it requires for the understanding of its documents are wholly anthropological and markedly suited to sense-perception, satisfies this description perfectly. For what is easier than to take in so sensuously depicted and simple a narrative and to share it with others, or to repeat the words of mysteries when there is no necessity whatsoever to attach a meaning to them! How easily does such a faith gain universal entrance, especially in connection with great promised advantage, and how deeply rooted does belief in the truth of such a narrative become, when it bases itself, moreover, upon a report accepted as authentic for a long time past! Such a faith, therefore, is indeed suited even to the commonest human capacities. Now even though the announcement of such an historical event, as well as the faith in rules of conduct based upon it, cannot be said to have been vouchsafed solely or primarily to the learned or the wise of the world, these latter are yet not excluded from it; consequently there arise so many doubts, in part touching its truth, and in part touching the sense in which its exposition is to be taken, that to adopt such a belief as this, subjected as it is to so many controversies (however sincerely intentioned), as the supreme condition of a universal faith alone leading to salvation, is the most absurd course of action that can be conceived of.

There exists meanwhile a practical knowledge which, while resting solely upon reason and requiring no historical doctrine, lies as close to every man, even the most simple, as though it were engraved upon his heart–a law, which we need but name to find ourselves at once in agreement with everyone else regarding its authority, and which carries with it in everyone's consciousness unconditioned binding force, to wit, the law of morality. What is more, this knowledge either leads, alone and of itself, to belief in God, or at least determines the concept of Him as that of a moral Legislator; hence it guides us to a pure religious faith which not only can be comprehended by every man but also is in the highest degree worthy of respect. Yea, it leads thither so naturally that, if we care to try the experiment we shall find that it can be elicited in its completeness from anyone without his ever having been instructed in it. Hence to start off with this knowledge, and to let the historical faith which harmonizes with it follow, is not only an act of prudence; it is also our duty to make such knowledge the supreme condition under which alone we can hope to become participants in whatever salvation a religious faith may promise. So true is this that only as warranted by the interpretation which pure religious faith gives to the historical can we hold the latter to be universally binding or are we entitled to allow its validity (for it does contain universally valid teaching); meanwhile the moral believer is ever open to historical faith so far as he finds it furthering the vitality of his pure religious disposition. Only thus does historical faith possess a pure moral worth, because here it is free and not coerced through any threat (for then it can never be honest).

Now even when the service of God in a church is directed preeminently to the pure moral veneration of God in accordance with the laws prescribed to humanity in general, we can still ask whether, in such a service, the doctrine of godliness alone or that of virtue as well, or peculiarly the one or the other, should constitute the content of religious

teaching. The first of these appellations, that is, the doctrine of godliness, perhaps best expresses the meaning of the word religio (as it is understood today) in an objective sense.

Godliness comprises two determinations of the moral disposition in relation to God: fear of God is this disposition in obedience to His commands from bounden duty (the duty of a subject), i.e., from respect for the law; love of God, on the other hand, is the disposition to obedience from one's own free choice and from approval of the law (the duty of a son). Both involve, therefore, over and above morality, the concept of a supersensible Being provided with the attributes which are requisite to the carrying out of that highest good which is aimed at by morality but which transcends our powers. Now if we go beyond the moral relation of the idea of this Being to us, to a concept of His nature, there is always a danger that we shall think of it anthropomorphically and hence in a manner directly hurtful to our basic moral principles. Thus the idea of such a Being cannot subsist of itself in speculative; reason; even its origin, and still more its power, are wholly grounded in its relation to our self-subsistent determination to duty. Which, now, is the more natural in the first instruction of youth and even in discourses from the pulpit: to expound the doctrine of virtue before the doctrine of godliness, or that of godliness before that of virtue (without perhaps even mentioning the doctrine of virtue at all)? Both obviously stand in necessary connection with one another. But, since they are not of a kind, this is possible only if one of them is conceived of and explained as end, the other merely as means. The doctrine of virtue, however, subsists of itself (even without the concept of God), whereas the doctrine of godliness involves the concept of an object which we represent to ourselves, in relation to our morality, as the cause supplementing our incapacity with respect to the final moral end. Hence the doctrine of godliness cannot of itself constitute the final goal of moral endeavor but can merely serve as a means of

strengthening that which in itself goes to make a better man, to wit, the virtuous disposition, since it reassures and guarantees this endeavor (as a striving for goodness, and even for holiness) in its expectation of the final goal with respect to which it is impotent. The doctrine of virtue, in contrast, derives from the soul of man. He is already in full possession of it, undeveloped, no doubt, but not needing, like the religious concept, to be rationalized into being by means of logistics. In the purity of this concept of virtue, in the awakening of consciousness to a capacity which otherwise we would never surmise (a capacity of becoming able to master the greatest obstacles within ourselves), in the dignity of humanity which man must respect in his own person and human destiny, toward which he strives, if he is to attain it - in all this there is something which so exalts the soul, and so leads it to the very Deity, who is worthy of adoration only because of His holiness and as Legislator for virtue, that man, even when he is still far from allowing to this concept the power of influencing his maxims, is yet not unwillingly sustained by it because he feels himself to a certain extent ennobled by this idea already, even while the concept of a World-Ruler who transforms this duty into a command to us, still lies far from him. But to commence with this latter concept would incur the danger of dashing man's courage (which goes to constitute the essence of virtue) and transforming godliness into a fawning slavish subjection to a despotically commanding might. The courage to stand on one's own feet is itself strengthened by the doctrine of atonement, when it follows the ethical doctrine, in that this doctrine portrays as wiped out what cannot be altered, and opens up to man the path to a new mode of life; whereas, when this doctrine is made to come first, the futile endeavor to render undone what has been done (expiation), the fear regarding appropriation of this atonement, the idea of his complete incapacity for goodness, and the anxiety lest he slip back into evil must rob* a man of his courage and reduce him to a state of sighing moral passivity in which nothing great or good is undertaken and everything is expected from the mere wishing for

it. In that which concerns the moral disposition everything depends upon the highest concept under which one subsumes one's duties. When reverence for God is put first, with virtue therefore subordinated to it, this object [of reverence] becomes an idol, that is, He is thought of as a Being whom we may hope to please not through morally upright conduct on earth but through adoration and ingratiation; and religion is then idolatry. But godliness is not a surrogate for virtue, whereby we may dispense with the latter; rather is it virtue's consummation, enabling us to be crowned with the hope of the ultimate achievement of all our good ends.

4. Concerning the Guide of Conscience in Matters of Faith

The question here is not, how conscience ought to be guided (for conscience needs no guide; to have a conscience suffices), but how it itself can serve as a guide in the most perplexing moral decisions.

Conscience is a state of consciousness which in itself is duty. But how is it possible to conceive of such a state of consciousness, since the consciousness of all our representations seems to be necessary only for logical purposes and therefore only in a conditioned manner (when we want to clarify our representations), and so cannot be unconditioned duty?

It is a basic moral principle, which requires no proof, that one ought to hazard nothing that may be Wrong (quod dubitas, ne feceris! Pliny1). Hence the consciousness that an action which I intend to perform is right, is unconditioned duty. The understanding, not conscience, judges whether an action is really right or wrong. Nor is it absolutely necessary to know, concerning all possible actions, whether they are right or wrong. But concerning the act which I propose to perform I must not only judge and form an opinion, but I must be sure that it is not wrong; and this requirement is a postulate of conscience, to which is opposed

probabilism,1 i.e., the principle that the mere opinion that an action may well be right warrants its being performed. Hence conscience might also be defined as follows: it is the moral faculty of judgment, passing judgment upon itself; only this definition would stand in great need of a prior elucidation of the concepts contained in it. Conscience does not pass judgment upon actions as cases which fall under the law; for this is what reason does so far as it is subjectively practical (hence the casus conscientiae and casuistry, as a kind of dialectic of conscience). Rather, reason here judges itself, as to whether it has really undertaken that appraisal of actions (as to whether they are right or wrong) with all diligence, and it calls the man himself to witness for or against himself whether this diligent appraisal did or did not take place.

Take, for instance, an inquisitor, who clings fast to the uniqueness of his statutory faith even to the point of [imposing] martyrdom, and who has to pass judgment upon a so-called heretic (otherwise a good citizen) charged with unbelief. Now I ask whether, if he condemns him to death, one might say that he has judged according to his conscience (erroneous though it be), or whether one might not rather accuse him of absolute lack of conscience, be it that he merely erred, or consciously did wrong; for we can tell him to his face that in such a case he could never be quite certain that by so acting he was not possibly doing wrong. Presumably he was firm in the belief that a supernaturally revealed Divine Will (perhaps in accord with the saying, compellite intrare1) permitted him, if it did not actually impose it as a duty, to extirpate presumptive disbelief together with the disbelievers. But was he really strongly enough assured of such a revealed doctrine, and of this interpretation of it, to venture, on this basis, to destroy a human being? That it is wrong to deprive a man of his life because of his religious faith is certain, unless (to allow for the most remote possibility) a Divine Will, made known in extraordinary fashion, has ordered it otherwise. But that God has ever uttered this terrible

injunction can be asserted only on the basis of historical documents and is never apodictically certain. After all, the revelation has reached the inquisitor only through men and has been interpreted by men, and even did it appear to have come to him from God Himself (like the command delivered to Abraham to slaughter his own son like a sheep) it is at least possible that in this instance a mistake has prevailed. But if this is so, the inquisitor would risk the danger of doing what would be wrong in the highest degree; and in this very act he is behaving unconscientiously. This is the case with respect to all historical and visionary faith; that is, the possibility ever remains that an error may be discovered in it. Hence it is unconscientious to follow such a faith with the possibility that perhaps what it commands or permits may be wrong, i.e., with the danger of disobedience to a human duty which is certain in and of itself.

And further: even were an act commanded by (what is held to be) such a positive revealed law allowable in itself, the question arises whether spiritual rulers or teachers, after presumably becoming convinced of it themselves, should impose it upon the people as an article of faith for their acceptance (on penalty of forfeiting their status). Since assurance on this score rests on no grounds of proof other than the historical, and since there ever will remain in the judgment of the people (if it subjects itself to the slightest test) the absolute possibility of an error which has crept in through their interpretation or through previous classical exegesis, the clergyman would be requiring the people at least inwardly to confess something to be as true as is their belief in God, i.e., to confess, as though in the presence of God, something which they do not know with certainty. Such, for instance, would be the acknowledgment, as a part of religion directly commanded by God, of the setting aside of a certain day for the periodic public cultivation of godliness; or, again, the confession of firm belief in a mystery which the layman does not even understand. Here the layman’s spiritual superior would himself go counter to conscience in

forcing others to believe that of which he himself can never be wholly convinced; he should therefore in justice consider well what he does, for he must answer for all abuse arising out of such a compulsory faith. Thus there may, perhaps, be truth in what is believed but at the same time untruthfulness1 in the belief (or even in the mere inner confession thereof), and this is in itself damnable.

Although, as was noted above,2 men who have made but the merest beginning in the freedom of thought,* because previously they were under a slavish yoke of belief (e.g., the Protestants), forthwith hold themselves to be, as it were, the more ennobled the less they need to believe (of what is positive and what belongs to clerical precepts); the exact contrary holds concerning those who have so far not been able, or have not wished, to make an attempt of this kind, for their principle is: It is expedient to believe too much rather than too little, on the ground that what we do over and above what we owe will at least do no harm and might even help. Upon this illusion, which makes dishonesty in religious confessions a basic principle (to which one subscribes the more easily since religion makes good every mistake, and hence that of dishonesty along with the rest), is based the so- called maxim of certainty in matters of faith (argumentum a tuto): If that which I profess regarding God is true, I have hit the mark; if it is untrue, and in addition not something in itself forbidden, I have merely believed it superfluously and have burdened myself with what was indeed not necessary but was after all only an inconvenience, not a transgression. The hypocrite regards as a mere nothing the danger arising from the dishonesty of his profession, the violation of conscience, involved in proclaiming even before God that something is certain, when he is aware that, its nature being what it is, it cannot be asserted with unconditional assurance. The genuine maxim of certainty, which alone is compatible with religion, is just the reverse of the former: Whatever, as the means or the condition of salvation, I can know

not through my own reason but only through revelation, and can incorporate into my confession only through the agency of an historical faith, and which, in addition, does not contradict pure moral principles– this I cannot, indeed, believe and profess as certain, but I can as little reject it as being surely false; nevertheless, without determining anything on this score, I may expect that whatever therein is salutary will stand me in good stead so far as I do not render myself unworthy of it through defect of the moral disposition in good life-conduct. In this maxim there is genuine moral certainty, namely, certainty in the eye of conscience (and more than this cannot be required of a man); on the other hand, the greatest danger and uncertainty attend the supposedly prudential device of craftily evading the harmful consequences which might accrue to me from non-profession, in that, through seeking the favor of both parties, I am liable to incur the disfavor of both.

Let the author of a creed, or the teacher of a church, yea, let every man, so far as he is inwardly to acknowledge a conviction regarding dogmas as divine revelations, ask himself: Do you really trust yourself to assert the truth of these dogmas in the sight of Him who knows the heart and at the risk of losing all that is valuable and holy to you? I must needs have a very disparaging conception of human nature (which is, after all, not wholly unsusceptible of goodness) not to anticipate that even the boldest teacher of faith would have to tremble at such a question. But if this is so, how is it consistent with conscientiousness to insist, none the less, upon such a declaration of faith as admits of no reservation, and even to proclaim that the very audacity of such an asseveration is in itself a duty and a service to God, when thereby human freedom, which is absolutely required in all moral matters (such as the adoption of a religion) is wholly crushed under foot and no place is even left for the good will, which says: “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief!”

GENERAL OBSERVATION

Whatever good man is able to do through his own efforts, under laws of freedom, in contrast to what he can do only with supernatural assistance, can be called nature, as distinguished from grace. Not that we understand by the former expression a physical property distinguished from freedom; we use it merely because we are at least acquainted with the laws of this capacity (laws of virtue), and because reason thus possesses a visible and comprehensible clue to it, considered as analogous to [physical] nature; on the other hand, we remain wholly in the dark as to when, what, or how much, grace will accomplish in us, and reason is left, on this score, as with the supernatural in general (to which morality, if regarded as holiness, belongs), without any knowledge of the laws according to which it might occur.

The concept of a supernatural accession to our moral, though deficient, capacity and even to our not wholly purified and certainly weak disposition to perform our entire duty, is a transcendent concept, and is a bare idea, of whose reality no experience can assure us. Even when accepted as an idea in nothing but a practical context it is very hazardous, and hard to reconcile with reason, since that which is to be accredited to us as morally good conduct must take place not through foreign influence but solely through the best possible use of our own powers. And yet the impossibility thereof (i.e., of both these things occurring side by side) cannot really be proved, because freedom itself, though containing nothing supernatural in its conception, remains, as regards its possibility, just as incomprehensible to us as is the supernatural factor which we would like to regard as a supplement to the spontaneous but deficient determination of freedom.

Now we at least know the laws of freedom (the moral laws), according to which it is to be determined. But we cannot know anything at all about supernatural aid–whether a certain moral power, perceptible to us, really comes from above or, indeed, on what occasions and under what

conditions it may be expected. Hence, apart from the general assumption that grace will effect in us what nature cannot, provided only we have made the maximum use of our own powers, we will not be able to make any further use of this idea, either as to how (beyond a constant striving after a good life) we might draw down to us its cooperation, or how we might determine on what occasions to expect it. This idea is wholly transcendent; and it is even salutary to hold it, as a sacred thing, at a respectful distance, lest, under the illusion of performing miracles ourselves or observing miracles within us, we render ourselves unfit for all use of reason or allow ourselves to fall into the indolence of awaiting from above, in passive leisure, what we should seek within.

Now means are all the intermediate causes, which man has in his power, whereby a certain purpose may be achieved. There is no other means (and there can be no other) of becoming worthy of heavenly assistance than earnest endeavor to better in every possible way our moral nature and thus render ourselves susceptible of having the fitness of this nature perfected for divine approval, so far as this perfecting is not in our power; for that divine aid, which we await, itself really aims at nothing but our morality. It was already to be expected a priori that the impure man would not seek this aid here but rather in certain sensuous contrivances (which he does, indeed, have in his power but which, in themselves, cannot make a man better, and yet herein are supposed to achieve this very result in supernatural fashion); and this is what actually happens. The concept of a so-called means of grace, although it is internally self-contradictory (in accordance with what has just been said), serves here none the less as a means of self-deception which is as common as it is detrimental to true religion.

The true (moral) service of God, which the faithful must render as subjects belonging to His kingdom but no less as citizens thereof (under laws of freedom), is itself, indeed, like the kingdom, invisible, i.e., a

service of the heart (in spirit and in truth). It can consist solely in the disposition of obedience to all true duties as divine commands, not in actions directed exclusively to God. Yet for man the invisible needs to be represented through the visible (the sensuous); yea, what is more, it needs to be accompanied by the visible in the interest of practicability and, though it is intellectual, must be made, as it were (according to a certain analogy), perceptual. This is a means of simply picturing to ourselves our duty in the service of God, a means which, although really indispensable, is extremely liable to the danger of misconstruction; for, through an illusion that steals over us, it is easily held to be the service of God itself, and is, indeed, commonly thus spoken of.

This alleged service of God, when brought back to its spirit and its true meaning, namely, to a disposition dedicating itself to the kingdom of God within us and without us, can be divided, even by reason, into four observances of duty; and certain corresponding rites, which do not stand in a necessary relation to these observances, have yet been associated with them, because the rites are deemed to serve as schemata1 for the duties and thus, for ages past, have been regarded as useful means for sensuously awakening and sustaining our attention to the true service of God. They base themselves, one and all, upon the intention to further the morally good and are: (l) (private prayer)–firmly to establish this goodness in ourselves, and repeatedly to awaken the disposition of goodness in the heart; (2) (church-going)–the spreading abroad of goodness through public assembly on days legally dedicated thereto, in order that religious doctrines and wishes (together with corresponding dispositions) may be expressed there and thus be generally shared; (3) (in the Christian religion, baptism)–the propagation of goodness in posterity through the reception of newly entering members into the fellowship of faith, as a duty; also their instruction in such goodness; (4) (communion)–the maintenance of this fellowship through a repeated public formality which makes enduring

the union of these members into an ethical body and this, indeed, according to the principle of the mutual equality of their rights and joint participation in all the fruits of moral goodness.

Every initiatory step in the realm of religion, which we do not take in a purely moral manner but rather have recourse to as in itself a means of making us well-pleasing to God and thus, through Him, of satisfying all our wishes, is fetish-faith. This is the persuasion that what can produce no effect at all according either to natural laws or to moral laws of reason, will yet, of itself, bring about what is wished for, if only we firmly believe that it will do so, and if we accompany this belief with certain formalities. Even where the conviction has taken hold that everything in religion depends upon moral goodness, which can arise only from action, the sensuous man still searches for a secret path by which to evade that arduous condition, with the notion, namely, that if only he honors the custom (the formality), God will surely accept it in lieu of the act itself. This would certainly have to be called an instance of transcendent grace on God's part, were it not rather a grace dreamed of in slothful trust, or even in a trust which is itself feigned. Thus in every type of public belief man has devised for himself certain practices, as means of grace, though, to be sure, in all these types the practices are not, as they are in the Christian, related to practical concepts of reason and to dispositions conformable to them. (There are, for instance, the five great commands in the Mohammedan type of belief: washing, praying, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Of these, almsgiving alone would deserve to be excepted were it to take place from a truly virtuous and at the same time religious disposition, as a human duty, and would thus really merit regard as a genuine means of grace; but the fact is, on the contrary, that it does not deserve to be thus distinguished from the rest because, under this faith, almsgiving can well go hand in hand with the extortion from others of what, as a sacrifice, is offered to God in the person of the poor.)

There can, indeed, be three kinds of illusory faith that involve the possibility of our overstepping the bounds of our reason in the direction of the supernatural (which is not, according to the laws of reason, an object either of theoretical or practical use). First, the belief in knowing through experience something whose occurrence, as under objective laws of experience, we ourselves can recognize to be impossible (the faith in miracles). Second, the illusion of having to include among our rational concepts, as necessary to our best moral interests, that of which we ourselves can form, through reason, no concept (the faith in mysteries). Third, the illusion of being able to bring about, through the use of merely natural means, an effect which is, for us, a mystery, namely, the influence of God upon our morality (the faith in means of grace). We have dealt with the first two of these artificial modes of belief in the General Observations following the two immediately preceding Books of this work. It still remains, therefore, for us to treat of the means of grace (which are further distinguished from works of grace, i.e., supernatural moral influences in relation to which we are merely passive; but the imagined experience of these is a fanatical illusion pertaining entirely to the emotions).

1. Praying, thought of as an inner formal service of God and hence as a means of grace, is a superstitious illusion (a fetish-making); for it is no more than a stated wish directed to a Being who needs no such information regarding the inner disposition of the wisher; therefore nothing is accomplished by it, and it discharges none of the duties to which, as commands of God, we are obligated; hence God is not really served. A heart-felt wish to be well-pleasing to God in our every act and abstention, or in other words, the disposition, accompanying all our actions, to perform these as though they were being executed in the service of God, is the spirit of prayer which can, and should, be present in us “without ceasing."1 But to clothe* this wish (even though it be but

inwardly) in words and formulas can, at best, possess only the value of a means where- by that disposition within us may be repeatedly quickened, and can have no direct bearing upon the divine approval; and for this very reason it cannot be a duty for everyone. For a means can be prescribed only to him who needs it for certain ends; but certainly not all men stand in need of this means (of conversing within and really with oneself, but ostensibly of speaking the more intelligibly with God). Rather must one labor to this end through continued clarification and elevation of the moral disposition, in order that this spirit of prayer alone be sufficiently quickened within us and that the letter of it (at least as directed to our own advantage) finally fall away. For the letter, like everything which is aimed at a given end indirectly, rather weakens the effect of the moral idea (which, taken subjectively, is called devotion). Thus the contemplation of the profound wisdom of the divine creation in the smallest things, and of its majesty in the great–which may indeed have already been recognized by men in the past, but in more recent times has grown into the highest wonder–this contemplation is a power which cannot only transport the mind into that sinking mood, called adoration, annihilating men, as it were, in their own eyes; it is also, in respect of its own moral determination, so soul-elevating a power that words, in comparison, even were they those of the royal suppliant David (who knew little of all those marvels), must needs pass away as empty sound because the emotion arising from such a vision of the hand of God is inexpressible. Men, are prone, moreover, when their hearts are disposed to religion, to transform what really has reference solely to their own moral improvement into a courtly service, wherein the humiliations and glorifications usually are the less felt in a moral way the more volubly they are expressed. It is therefore the more necessary carefully to inculcate set forms of prayer in children (who still stand in need of the letter), even in their earliest years, so that the language (even language spoken inwardly, yea, even the attempts to attune the mind to the comprehension of the idea of God,

which is to be brought nearer to intuition) may possess here no value in itself but may be used merely to quicken the disposition to a course of life well-pleasing to God, those words being but an aid to the imagination. Otherwise all these devout attestations of awe involve the danger of producing nothing but hypocritical veneration of God instead of a practical service of Him–a service which never consists in mere feelings.

2. Church-going, thought of as the ceremonial public service of God in a church, in general, is, considered as a sensuous representation of the community of believers, not only a means to be valued by each individual for his own edification* but also a duty directly obligating them as a group, as citizens of a divine state which is to appear here on earth; provided, that this church contains no formalities which might lead to idolatry and so burden the conscience, e.g., certain prayers to God, with His infinite mercy personified under the name of a man–for such sensuous representation of God is contrary to the command of reason: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, etc."1 But to wish to use it as, in itself, a means of grace, as though thereby God were directly served and as though He had attached special favors to the celebration of this solemnity (which is merely a sensuous representation of the universality of religion), is an illusion which does, indeed, well comport with the cast of mind of a good citizen in a political commonwealth, and with external propriety, yet which not only contributes nothing to the character of such a man, as a citizen in the kingdom of God, but rather debases it, and serves, by means of a deceptive veneer, to conceal the bad moral content of his disposition from the eyes of others, and even from his own eyes.

3. The ceremonial initiation, taking place but once, into the church-community, that is, one’s first acceptance as a member of a church (in the Christian church through baptism) is a highly significant ceremony which lays a grave obligation either upon the initiate, if he is in a position himself to confess his faith, or upon the witnesses who pledge themselves

to take care of his education in this faith. This aims at something holy (the development of a man into a citizen in a divine state) but this act performed by others is not in itself holy or productive of holiness and receptivity for the divine grace in this individual; hence it is no means of grace, however exaggerated the esteem in which it was held in the early Greek church, where it was believed capable, in an instant, of washing away all sins–and here this illusion publicly revealed its affinity to an almost more than heathenish superstition.

4. The oft-repeated ceremony (communion of a renewal, continuation, and propagation of this churchly community under laws of equality, a ceremony which indeed can be performed, after the example of the Founder of such a church (and, at the same time, in memory of him), through the formality of a common partaking at the same table, contains within itself something great, expanding the narrow, selfish, and unsociable cast of mind among men, especially in matters of religion, toward the idea of a cosmopolitan moral community; and it is a good means of enlivening a community to the moral disposition of brotherly love which it represents. But to assert that God has attached special favors to the celebration of this solemnity, and to incorporate among the articles of faith the proposition that this ceremony, which is after all but a churchly act, is, in addition, a means of grace–this is a religious illusion which can do naught but work counter to the spirit of religion. Clericalism in general would therefore be the dominion of the clergy over men's hearts, usurped by dint of arrogating to themselves the prestige attached to) exclusive possession of means of grace.

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All such artificial self-deceptions in religious matters have a common basis. Among the three divine moral attributes, holiness, mercy, and justice, man habitually turns directly to the second in order thus to avoid

the forbidding condition of conforming to the requirements of the first. It is tedious to be a good servant (here one is forever hearing only about one's duties); man would therefore rather be a favorite, where much is overlooked or else, when duty has been too grossly violated, everything is atoned for through the agency of some one or other favored in the highest degree– man, meanwhile, remaining the servile knave he ever was. But in order to satisfy himself, with some color of truth, concerning the feasibility of this intention of his, he has the habit of transferring his concept of a man (including his faults) to the Godhead; and just as, even in the best ruler of our race, legislative rigor, beneficent grace, and scrupulous justice do not (as they should) operate separately, each by itself, to produce a moral effect upon the actions of the subject, but mingle with one another in the thinking of the human ruler when he is making his decisions, so that one need only seek to circumvent one of these attributes, the fallible wisdom of the human will, in order to determine the other two to compliance; even so does man hope to accomplish the same thing with God by applying himself solely to His grace. (For this reason it was important for religion that the attributes, or rather the relations of God to man, which were conceived of, should be separated through the idea of a triune personality, wherein God is to be thought of analogously to this idea in order that each attribute or relation be made specifically cognizable.) To this end man busies himself with every conceivable formality, designed to indicate how greatly he respects the divine commands, in order that it may not be necessary for him to obey them; and, that his idle wishes may serve also to make good the disobedience of these commands, he cries: "Lord, Lord," so as not to have to "do the will of his heavenly Father." Thus he comes to conceive of the ceremonies, wherein certain means are used to quicken truly practical dispositions, as in themselves means of grace; he even proclaims the belief, that they are such, to be itself an essential part of religion (the common man actually regards it as the whole of religion); and he leaves it to all-gracious

Providence to make a better man of him, while he busies himself with piety (a passive respect for the law of God) rather than with virtue (the application of one's own powers in discharging the duty which one respects)–and, after all, it is only the latter, combined with the former, that can give us the idea which one intends by the word godliness (true religious disposition).

When the illusion of this supposed favorite of heaven mounts to the point where he fanatically imagines that he feels special works of grace within himself (or even where he actually presumes to be confident of a fancied occult intercourse with God), virtue comes at last actually to arouse his loathing, and becomes for him an object of contempt. Hence it is no wonder that the complaint is made publicly, that religion still contributes so little to men's improvement, and that the inner light ("under a bushel"2) of these favored ones does not shine forth outwardly in good works also, yea, (as, in view of their pretensions, one could rightly demand) preeminently, above other men of native honesty who, in brief, take religion unto themselves not as a substitute for, but as a furtherance of, the virtuous disposition which shows itself through actions, in a good course of life. Yet the Teacher of the Gospel has himself put into our hands these external evidences of outer experience as a touchstone, [by telling us that] we can know men by their fruits and that every man can know himself. But thus far we do not see that those who, in their own opinion, are extraordinarily favored (the chosen ones) surpass in the very least the naturally honest man, who can be relied upon in social intercourse, in business, or in trouble; on the contrary, taken as a whole, the chosen ones can scarcely abide comparison with him, which proves that the right course is not to go from grace to virtue but rather progress from virtue to pardoning grace.

* By means of this definition many an erroneous interpretation of the concept of a religion in general is obviated. First, in religion, as regards the theoretical apprehension and avowal of belief, no assertorial knowledge is required (even of God's existence), since, with our lack of insight into supersensible objects, such avowal might well be dissembled; rather is it merely a problematical assumption (hypothesis) regarding the highest cause of things that is presupposed speculatively, yet with an eye to the object toward which our morally legislative reason bids us strive–an assertorial faith, practical and therefore free, and giving promise of the realization of this its ultimate aim. This faith needs merely the idea of God, to which all morally earnest (and therefore confident) endeavor for the good must inevitably lead; it need not presume that it can certify the objective reality of this idea through theoretical apprehension. Indeed, the minimum of knowledge (it is possible that there may be a God) must suffice, subjectively, for whatever can be made the duty of every man. Second, this definition of a religion in general obviates the erroneous representation of religion as an aggregate of special duties having reference directly to God; thus it prevents our taking on (as men are otherwise very much inclined to do) courtly obligations over and above the ethico-civil duties of humanity (of man to man) and our seeking, perchance, even to make good the deficiency of the latter by means of the former. There are no special duties to God in a universal religion, for God can receive nothing from us; we cannot act for Him, nor yet upon Him. To wish to transform a guilty awe of Him into a duty of the sort described is to forget that awe is not a special act of religion but rather the religious temper in all our actions done in conformity with duty. And when it is said: "We ought to obey God rather than men," this means only that when statutory commands, regarding which men can be legislators and judges, come into conflict with duties which reason prescribes unconditionally, concerning whose observance or transgression God alone can be the judge, the former must yield precedence to the latter. But were we willing to regard the statutory commands, which are given out by a church as coming from God, as constituting that wherein God must be obeyed more than man, such a principle might easily become the war-cry, often heard, of hypocritical and ambitious clerics in revolt against their civil superiors. For that which is permissible, i.e., which the civil authorities command, is certainly duty; but whether something which is indeed permissible in itself, but cognizable by us only through

divine revelation, is really commanded by God–that is (at least for the most part) highly uncertain.

* It is hard to understand why this clear prohibition against this method of forcing confession before a civil tribunal of religious teachers–a method based upon mere superstition, not upon conscientiousness–is held as so unimportant. For that it is superstition whose efficacy is here most relied on is evident from the fact that the man whom one does not trust to tell the truth in a solemn statement, on the truthfulness of which depends a decision concerning the rights of a human being (the holiest of beings in this world) is yet expected to be persuaded to speak truly, by the use of a formula through which, over and above that statement, he simply calls down upon himself divine punishments (which in any event, with such a lie, he cannot escape) just as though it rested with him whether or not to render account to this supreme tribunal. In the passage of Scripture cited above, the mode of confirmation by oath is represented as an absurd presumption, the attempt to make actual, as though with magical words, what is really not in our power. But it is clearly evident that the wise Teacher who here says that whatever goes beyond Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay, in the asseveration of truth comes of evil, had in view the bad effect which oaths bring in their train–namely, that the greater importance attached to them almost sanctions the common lie.

* The strait gate and the narrow way, which leads to life, is that of good life-conduct; the wide gale and the broad way, found by many, is the church. Not that the church and its doctrines are responsible for men being lost, but that the entrance into it and the knowledge of its statutes or celebration of its rites are regarded as the manner in which God really wishes to be served.

* We know nothing of the future, and we ought not to seek to know more than what is rationally bound up with the incentives of morality and their end. Here belongs the belief that there are no good actions which will not, in the next world, have their good consequences for him who performs them; that, therefore, however reprehensible a man may find himself at the end of his life, he must not on that account refrain from doing at least one more good deed which is in his power, and that, in so doing, he has reason to hope that, in proportion as he possesses in this action a purely good intent, the act will be of greater worth than those actionless absolutions which are supposed to

compensate for the deficiency of good deeds without providing anything for the lessening of the guilt.

Mendelssohn very ingeniously makes use of this weak spot in the customary presentation of Christianity wholly to reject every demand upon a son of Israel that he change his religion. For, he says, since the Jewish faith itself is, according to the avowal of Christians, the substructure upon which the superstructure of Christianity rests, the demand that it be abandoned is equivalent to expecting someone to demolish the ground floor of a house in order to take up his abode in the second story. His real intention is fairly clear. He means to say: First wholly remove Judaism itself out of your religion (it can always remain, as an antiquity, in the historical account of the faith); we can then take your proposal under advisement. (Actually nothing would then be left but pure moral religion unencumbered by statutes.) Our burden will not be lightened in the least by throwing off the yoke of outer observances if, in its place, another yoke, namely confession of faith in sacred history–a yoke which rests far more heavily upon the conscientious–is substituted in its place.

In any case, the sacred books of this people will doubtless always be preserved and will continue to possess value for scholarship even if not for the benefit of religion: since the history of no other people dates back, with some color of credibility, so far as does this, into epochs of antiquity (even to the beginning of the world) in which all secular history known to us can be arranged; and thus the great hiatus, which must be left by the latter, is filled by the former.

* Illusion [*Wahn*] is the deception of regarding the mere representation of a thing as equivalent to the thing itself. Thus a rich miser is subject to the covetous illusion of holding the idea of being able sometime or other to make use of his riches, when he may wish to do so, as an adequate substitute for never using them. The illusion of honor ascribes to praise by others, which is at bottom merely the outward expression of their regard (perhaps inwardly not entertained by them at all) the worth which ought to be attached solely to the regard itself. Here too belongs the passion for titles and orders, since these are but outward representations of a superiority over others. Even madness is so named [Wahnsinn] because it commonly takes a mere representation (of the imagination) for the presence of the thing itself and values it accordingly. Now the consciousness of possessing

a means to some end or other (before one has availed oneself of this means) is the possession of the end in representation only; hence to content oneself with the former, just as though it could take the place of the latter, is a practical illusion, which is all we are speaking of here.

Though it does indeed sound dangerous, it is in no way reprehensible to say that every man creates a God for himself, nay, must make himself such a God according to moral concepts (and must add those infinitely great attributes which characterize a Being capable of exhibiting, in the world, an object commensurate with Himself), in order to honor in Him the 0ne who created him. For in whatever manner a being has been made known to him by another and described as God, yea, even if such a being had appeared to him (if this is possible), he must first of all compare this representation with his ideal in order to judge whether he is entitled to regard it and to honor it as a divinity. Hence there can be no religion springing from revelation alone, i.e., without first positing that concept, in its purity, as a touchstone. Without this all reverence for God would be idolatry.

* For those who believe that the critique of pure reason contradicts itself whenever my distinctions between the sensuous and the intellectual are not wholly congenial to them, I here remark that, when mention is made of sensuous means furthering what is intellectual (of the pure moral disposition), or of the former opposing the latter, the influence of two such heterogeneous principles must not be thought of as direct. That is, as sensuous beings we can work against the law, or for its behoof, only in the appearances of the intellectual principle, i.e., in the determination of our physical powers through free choicew which expresses itself in actions; so that cause and effect may be represented as actually homogeneous. But in what concerns the supersensible (the subjective principle of morality in us, that which lies hidden in the incomprehensible attribute of freedom), for example, the pure religious disposition, we have insight only into its law (though this, indeed. suffices) touching the relation of cause and effect in man; that is, we cannot explain to ourselves the possibility of actions, as events in the sensuous world, in terms of the moral constitution of man, as imputable to him, just because these are free acts and because the grounds of explanation of all events must be derived from the sensuous world.

* It is a psychological phenomenon that the adherents of a denomination wherein somewhat less of the statutory is offered for belief, feel themselves, by virtue of this fact, somewhat ennobled and more enlightened, even though they have still retained so much of this statutory belief that they are not entitled to look down with contempt (as they actually do), from their fancied heights of purity, upon their brothers in churchly illusion. The reason for this is that, because of this difference of belief, however slight it be, they find themselves a little nearer to pure moral religion, even though they remain attached to the illusion of wishing to supplement it by means of pious observances in which reason is only less passive.

This name (Pfaffentum), signifying merely the authority of a spiritual father (pappa), possesses a censorious meaning as well, only because of the attendant concept of a spiritual despotism, to be found in all forms of ecclesiasticism, however unpretentious and popular they may declare themselves. I do not by any means want to be understood as desiring, in my comparison of the sects, to treat with contempt one of them, with its practices and ordinances, as contrasted with another. All deserve the same respect so far as their forms are the attempts of poor mortals to render perceptible to the senses the kingdom of God on earth, but also the same blame when they take the form of the representation of this idea (in a visible church) to be the thing itself.

* “That yoke is easy, and the burden is ligh” where the duty, which binds every man, can be regarded as imposed on him by himself and through his own reason; and that yoke he therefore so far takes upon himself freely as his own. Only the moral laws, however, taken as divine commands, are of this sort; of these alone the Founder of the true church could say, “My commandments are not grievous."3 This expression merely means that these commands are not burdensome because everyone of himself perceives the necessity of their obedience and so nothing is here forced upon him; whereas despotically imperative ordinances, in which we can see no use, though they are imposed upon us for our best interests (yet not through our own reason), are a kind of vexation (drudgery) to which we subject ourselves only under compulsion. In themselves, however, the actions, regarded in the purity of their source, which are commanded by those moral laws, are precisely those which man finds the hardest, and in place of which he would gladly undertake the most

burdensome pious drudgery were it possible to offer this in payment for the other.

* The various kinds of belief among peoples seem to give them, after a time, a character, revealing itself outwardly in civil relations, which is later attributed to them as though it were universally a temperamental trait. Thus Judaism in its original economy, under which a people was to separate itself from all other peoples by means of every conceivable, and some arduous, observances and was to refrain from all intermingling with them, drew down upon itself the charge of misanthropy. Mohammedanism is characterized by arrogant pride because it finds confirmation of its faith not in miracles but in victories and the subjugation of many peoples, and because its devotional practices are all of the spirited sort. The Hindu faith gives its adherents the character of pusillanimity for reasons which are directly opposed to those productive of the temper just mentioned [the Mohammedan].

Now surely it is not because of the inner nature of the Christian faith but because of the manner in which it is presented to the heart and mind, that a similar charge can be brought against it with respect to those who have the most heartfelt intentions toward it but who, starting with human corruption, and despairing of all virtue, place their religious principle solely in piety (whereby is meant the principle of a passive attitude toward a godliness which is to be awaited from a power above). Such men never place any reliance in themselves, but look about them, in perpetual anxiety, for a supernatural assistance, and in this very self-abnegation (which is not humility) fancy themselves to possess a means of obtaining favor. The outward expression of this (in pietism or in spurious devotion) signalizes a slavish cast of mind.

This remarkable phenomenon (of the pride of an ignorant though intelligent people in its faith) may also originate from the fancy of its founder that he alone had once again renewed on earth the concept of God’s unity and of His supersensible nature. He would indeed have ennobled his people by release from image-worship and the anarchy of polytheism could he with justice have credited himself with this achievement. As regards the characteristic of the third type of religious fellowship [the Christian], which is based upon a misconceived humility, the depreciation of self-conceit in the

evaluation of one's own moral worth, through consideration of the holiness of the law, should bring about not contempt for oneself but rather the resolution, conformable to this noble predisposition in us, to approach ever nearer to agreement with this law. Instead of this, however, virtue, which really consists in the courage for this improvement, has, as a name already suspected of self-conceit, been exiled into paganism, and sycophantic courting of favor is extolled in its place.

Devotional hypocrisy (bigotry, devotia spuria) consists in the habit of identifying the practice of piety not with well-pleasing actions (in the performance of all human duties) but with direct commerce with God through manifestations of awe. This practice must then be classed as compulsory service (opus operatum), except that it adds to this superstition the fanatical illusion of imagined supersensible (heavenly) feelings.

* I grant that I cannot really reconcile myself to the following expressions made use of even by clever men: "A certain people (engaged in a struggle for civil freedom) is not yet ripe for freedom"; "The bondmen of a landed proprietor are not yet ready for freedom"; and hence, likewise; "Mankind in general is not yet ripe for freedom of belief." For according to such a presupposition, freedom will never arrive, since we cannot ripen to this freedom if we are not first of all placed therein (we must be free in order to be able to make purposive use of our powers in freedom). The first attempts will indeed be crude and usually will be attended by a more painful and more dangerous state than that in which we are still under the orders and also the care of others; yet we never ripen with respect to reason except through our own efforts (which we can make only when we are free). I raise no protest when those who hold power in their hands, being constrained by the circumstances of the times, postpone far, very far, into the future the sundering of these three3 bonds. But to proceed on the principle that those who are once subjected to these bonds are essentially unfit for freedom and that one is justified in continually removing them farther from it is to usurp the prerogatives of Divinity itself, which created men for freedom. It is certainly more convenient to rule in state, household, and church if one is able to carry out such a principle. But is it also more just?

The very man who has the temerity to say: He who does not believe in this or that historical doctrine as a sacred truth, that man is damned, ought to be able to say also: If what I am now telling you is not true, let me be damned! Were there anyone who could make such a dreadful declaration, I should advise the conduct toward him suggested by the Persian proverb concerning a hadji: If a man has been in Mecca once (as a pilgrim), move out of the house in which he is living; if he has been there twice, leave the street on which he is to be found; but if he has been there three times, forsake the city, or even the land, which he inhabits!

O sincerity! Thou Astraea, that hast fled from earth to heaven, how mayst thou (the basis of conscience, and hence of all inner religion) be drawn down thence to us again? I can admit, though it is much to be deplored, that candor (in speaking the whole truth which one knows) is not to be found in human nature. But we must be able to demand sincerity (that all that one says be said with truthfulness), and indeed if there were in our nature no predisposition to sincerity, whose cultivation merely is neglected, the human race must needs be, in its own eyes, an object of the deepest contempt. Yet this sought for quality of mind is such that it is exposed to many temptations and entails many a sacrifice, and hence calls for moral strength, or virtue (which must be won); moreover it must be guarded and cultivated earlier than any other, because the opposed propensity is the hardest to extirpate if it has been allowed firmly to root itself. And if now we compare with the kind of instruction here recommended our usual mode of upbringing, especially in the matter of religion, or better, in doctrines of faith, where fidelity of memory in answering questions relating to these doctrines, without regard to the fidelity of the confession itself (which is never put to the test) is accepted as sufficient to make a believer of him who does not even understand what he declares to be holy, no longer shall we wonder at the lack of sincerity which produces nothing but inward hypocrites.

* In the heart-felt wish which is the spirit of prayer, man seeks but to work upon himself (for the quickening of his disposition by means of the idea of God); whereas, in the other, where he declares himself in words, and so outwardly, he tries to work upon God. In the first sense, a prayer can be offered with perfect sincerity even though the man praying does not presume to be able to affirm that the existence of God is wholly certain; in its second form, as an address, he supposes

this Supreme Being to be present in person, or at least he adopts an attitude (even inwardly) as though he were convinced of His presence, with the idea that, even if this be not so, his acting thus can at least do him no harm and is more likely to get him favor. Hence such complete sincerity cannot be found in the latter (verbal) prayer as it can in the former (the pure spirit of prayer).

Anyone will find the truth of this last remark confirmed if he conceives of a pious and well-meaning man, but one who is circumscribed in respect of these purified religious concepts, whom some one else takes unawares, I will not say in praying aloud, but merely in behavior indicative of prayer. Everyone will of himself, of course, without my saying so, expect a man thus surprised to fall into confusion or embarrassment, as though in a situation whereof he should of ashamed. But why? It is because a man caught talking aloud to himself is suspected for the moment of having a slight attack of madness; and thus do we also judge a man (and not altogether unjustly) when we find him, all alone, in an occupation or attitude which can properly belong only to one who sees some one else before him– and in the example we have given this is not the case.

Now the Teacher of the Gospel has expressed the spirit of prayer most admirably in a formula which has at once rendered dispensable not only all this, but also the prayer itself (as a verbal utterance). One finds in it nothing but the resolution to good life-conduct which, taken with the consciousness of our frailty, carries with it the persistent desire to be a worthy member in the kingdom of God. Hence it contains no actual request for something which God in His wisdom might well refuse us, but simply a wish which, if it is genuine (active), of itself achieves its object (to become a man well-pleasing to God). Even the wish for the means of sustaining our existence (for bread) for one day, since this wish is expressly not directed to its continuance but is the effect of a felt need which is merely animal, is more a confession of what nature in us demands than a special deliberate request for what the man [in us] wills. The latter’s request would be for bread for another day; but this is here clearly enough ruled out.

A prayer of the kind described above arises in the moral disposition (animated solely by the idea of God), and, as the moral spirit of prayer, brings about its object (being well-pleasing to God) of itself.

Only such a prayer can be prayed with faith, and by this faith we mean the assurance that the prayer will be heard. But only morality in us gives rise to this assurance, for even were the petition to be for this day's bread alone, no one can be assured that it will be heard, i.e., that its granting stands in necessary conjunction with God's wisdom; it may perhaps comport better with this wisdom to let the suppliant die today for lack of bread. It is, further, not only a preposterous but also a presumptuous illusion to try to divine whether, through the persistent importunity of one's request, God cannot be diverted (to our present advantage) from the plan of His wisdom. Hence we cannot hold that any prayer which is for a non-moral object is sure to be heard, that is, we cannot pray for such an object in faith. Nay, more: even were the object indeed moral, but yet possible only through supernatural influence (or at least awaited by us from this source alone because we do not wish to trouble ourselves to bring it about–as, for example, the change of heart, the putting on of the new man, called rebirth) it is at least so very uncertain that God will find it conformable to His wisdom to supplement in supernatural fashion our (self-incurred) deficiency that we have reason, rather, to expect the opposite. Man cannot therefore pray even for this in faith.

In the light of the foregoing we can explain what might be the status of a miracle-working faith (which would at the same time always be united with an inner prayer). Since God can lend man no power to bring about effects supernaturally (for that is a contradiction), and since man, on his part, cannot determine, according to the concepts which he forms for himself of good ends possible on earth, what the divine Wisdom judges in these matters, and so cannot, by means of the wish he himself nurtures within him, make use of the divine Power for his purposes, it follows that a gift of miracles, I mean, a gift wherein it rests with man himself whether he has it or not ("If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, etc."1), is, taken literally, not to be thought of. Such a faith, therefore, if it is to mean anything at all, is simply an idea of the overwhelming importance of man's moral nature, were he to possess it in its entire God-pleasing completeness (which, indeed, he never does), greater than all other moving causes which God in His supreme wisdom may have [at His disposal]; it is therefore a basis upon which we can be confident that, were we now, or eventually, to become wholly what we ought to be and (in continued approximation) could be, nature would have to heed our

wishes, which, under these circumstances, however, would by the same token never be unwise.

As regards the edification sought in attendance at church, here too public prayer is indeed no means of grace, yet it is a moral ceremony, whether it consists in united singing of the hymn of faith, or in the address formally directed to God, through the mouth of the clergyman and in the name of the whole congregation, and embracing all the moral concerns of men. Such an address, since it presents these last as a public concern, wherein the wish of each individual ought to be represented as united with the wishes of all toward the same ends (the ushering in of the kingdom of God), cannot only raise the feelings to the point of moral exaltation (whereas private prayers, because they are uttered without this sublime idea, lose little by little, through habituation, their influence upon the heart); it also possesses in itself a more rational basis than does private prayer for clothing the moral wish, which constitutes the spirit of prayer, in a formal mode of address–and it does this without picturing the Supreme Being as present, or thinking of the special power of this rhetorical device as a means of grace. For here there is a special purpose, namely, to set in more active motion the moral motivating forces of each individual through a public ceremony, representing the union of all men in a common desire for the kingdom of God; and this cannot be accomplished more appropriately than by speaking to the Head of this kingdom just as though He were specially present in that very place.

* If we seek for a meaning proper to this term, probably none can be ascribed to it other than that it is to be understood as the moral result produced upon the subject by devotion. Now this result does not consist in feelings (this is already comprised in the very concept of devotion), even though most men, presumed to be devout (and therefore called devotees), identify it entirely with such feelings; hence the word edification [Erbauung] must signify the result of devotion in the actual improvement of the man. But this improvement becomes actual only if man systematically sets to work, lays deep in his heart firm basic principles squaring with well- understood concepts, erects thereupon dispositions measurable to the differing weight of the duties connected with these principles, strengthens and secures them against the onslaughts of the desires, and thus, as it were, builds up a new man as a temple of God.1 One can easily see that this building can progress but slowly; yet it must at least be

possible to see that something has been accomplished. But men believe themselves to be mightily edified [erbaut] (through listening or reading and singing) while absolutely nothing has been built up [gebauet], yea, where no hand has been put to the work. They believe this, presumably, because they hope that this moral edifice will rise up of itself, like the walls of Thebes, to the music of sighs and yearning wishes.