

Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason

Immanuel Kant

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type.—Some footnotes are presented in the main text instead of at the bottom of the page; this is because of formatting problems; the reasons are aesthetic, and have nothing to do with content.—Passages starting with † were added in the second edition (see page 6).

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Glossary

anschaulich: This is left untranslated on page 30 because no English word or short phrase quite does the job. To make something *anschaulich* is to make it—in this case metaphorically speaking—solid, something we can grab onto, push around, manipulate.

archetype: Translates Kant's *Urbild*, and means 'model' or 'prime example'—something to be followed or copied..

atonement: This English word comes from the notion of two people—e.g. a sinner and God—being *at one*; that goes with Kant's mention on page 63 of *Versöhnung* = 'reconciliation', suggesting that the core notion concerns God's attitude to the sinner, almost how he feels about him. But the word translated—wrongly but unavoidably—as 'atonement' is *Genugthuung*, which comes from *genug* = 'enough', 'sufficient'; the thought is that of reparation, paying a penalty. That is the emphasis all through the third Essay: Kant speaks of it as *legally* undoing what you have done; his phrase *Bezahlung für seine Schuld* means 'reparation for his guilt' and equally well means 'payment of his debt'.

change of heart: This nearly always translated *Sinnesänderung*, literally = 'change in thinking' or 'change of mentality'. On pages 24, 38 and 42 it translates *Herzensänderung*, literally = 'change of heart'. There's no evidence that Kant intended a distinction here, and much that he didn't.

chiliasm: 'The belief that Christ will reign in bodily presence on earth for a thousand years' (OED).

constitutive: A constitutive principle, for Kant, is a principle saying that such-and-such is the case, rather than serving merely as advice or recommendation or the like. (Cf. 'regulative', below.)

debt: This translates *Schuld*, which also means 'guilt'. In many passages Kant clearly means both at once, with 'debt' as a kind of metaphor for 'guilt'.

deduction: In Kant's terminology, the 'deduction' of an idea is an intellectual process in which the idea is introduced and in some way defended or justified.

determine: The basic meaning of 'determine' is *settle, fix, pin down*; thus, to determine what to do next is to decide what to do next, to settle the question. When on page 9 Kant says that in a morally bad action the will can't be 'determined' by anything outside it, the word conveys the notion of *fixed*, which would rule out freedom.

duty: This translates *Pflicht*, which Kant uses as his all-purpose name for what one morally ought to do. Most English-language moral philosophers also use 'I have a duty to do A' to mean 'I morally ought to do A'; but that isn't what it means in good standard English, where the term 'duty' is tightly tied to jobs, roles, social positions. The duties of a janitor; the duties of a landowner.

evil: This as a noun translates *Böse* and means merely 'something bad'. (The corresponding adjective (*böse*) is translated here by 'bad', so as to avoid loading it with all the force 'evil' has in English when used as an adjective.) For the noun, 'evil' is used because we don't have 'bad' as a noun as we have 'good' ('friendship is a good'). This has become a standard philosophical usage—e.g. 'the problem of evil' means 'the problem posed by the existence of bad states of affairs'.

idea: In Kant's terminology an 'idea' is a concept that comes from or belongs to *reason*, as distinct from the concepts

belonging to *the understanding*, which are what we use in thinking about the contingent empirical world.

ideal: As a noun this translates Kant's *Ideal*, a technical term which he explains in the first *Critique* at B 595–7, and is still using in the same sense here. An ideal is an idea [see above] which is the idea of an individual thing. The idea of *perfect moral purity* is not an ideal, the idea of *God* is an ideal. Kant does think of ideals as things we can steer by, try to live up to, etc., but the core meaning is that of 'idea of an individual'. When this word first occurs here (on page 31) Kant moves rapidly between 'idea' and 'ideal'; but that is harmless, because any ideal is an idea.

illumination: 'A doctrine involving belief in or a claim to intellectual or spiritual enlightenment' (OED).

man: This translates Kant's *Mann* and (more often) his *Mensch*. The latter can be translated as 'human being', but in this version 'man' has been preferred as less fussy. On page 21 the biblical narrative of The Fall is of course really about a woman, Eve.

personality: In uses starting on page 12 the word refers to the condition of having respect for the moral law. In the uses starting on page 82 it involves the doctrine of the Trinity—one God, three persons. Kant's uses of *Persönlichkeit* on page 71 clearly concern personal identity, and are translated accordingly.

Pfaffentum: The nearest English is 'priesthood' but that doesn't capture the derogatory tone of it, which Kant explains on page 97. The corresponding down-putting word for priests is **Pfaffen**.

principle: Kant often uses *Princip* in a sense, once common but now obsolete, in which it means 'source', 'cause', 'driver', 'energizer', or the like. The same was true of the French

principe, the Latin *principia*, and the English 'principle'. On page 45 the phrase 'a realm in which the power is held by principles' seems to be using the word in both senses at once. And on page 72 (the last of the **how** items) Kant is clearly talking about a 'principle' as a cause or driver and yet, oddly, the word he uses is not *Princip* but *Grundsatz* = 'basic proposition', which is hardly ever used in that way.

rational: This translates Kant's *rational*, an adjective that occurs only four times in the whole work, once on page 1 and three times on page 65.

regulative: A regulative principle, for Kant, is a principle that serves as advice or recommendation or even command, but not as giving any information. (Cf. 'constitutive', above.)

science: The use of this to translate *Wissenschaft* is practically unavoidable, but it has to be taken broadly as covering all the learned disciplines, so that (e.g.) history and theology are 'sciences'.

statutory: A statutory law is one that comes from someone's *choosing* to make it a law. The idea on page 56 of God's laws as being 'merely statutory' is the idea of their being laws only because God has decreed them.

subtle reasoning: This weakly 'translates' the various cognates of the verb *vernünfteln*, a splendid off-shoot of the noun *Vernunft* = 'reason', meaning: to employ a parade of super-subtle possibly invalid reasoning, weaving webs, splitting hairs, and so on. Neither this nor the corresponding noun *Vernünftelei* has a compact English equivalent.

thaumaturgy: 'The performance of miracles or wonders; magic' (OED).

theodicy: Attempt to reconcile the existence of bad states of affairs with the goodness of God.

vicarious: Acting in place of someone else. A vicarious atonement for my sins is an act of atonement performed by someone other than myself. Kant's reference on page 42 to 'the vicarious ideal of the son of God' means the idea of the son of God as a stand-in for God. In this version the word

translates *stellvertretend* = 'place-taking'. The corresponding noun *Stellvertreter* is translated by 'proxy'.

Weltwesen: Literally 'world-being'; the ten occurrences of this word are left untranslated because the preparer of this version can't get a good sense of what Kant means by it.

Fourth Essay: Service and pseudo-service under the sovereignty of the good principle or: Religion and *Pfaffentum*

[On the word 'principle' as used here and in the titles of the other three Essays, and on the word *Pfaffentum*, see the Glossary.]

The reign of the good principle is starting, and there's a sign that 'the kingdom of God is at hand' [*Matthew* 3:1-2], when the basic principles of that kingdom's constitution first become public. In the realm of the understanding, if the causes that are needed to bring something *x* into existence have generally taken root then *x* is *there*, even if the complete flowering of its appearance in the empirical world is still immeasurably distant. We have seen •that it is a uniquely special duty to unite oneself with an ethical commonwealth; •that if everyone performed his own private duty, that would lead to everyone's *happening* to agree in a common good, with no need for any special organisation; but •that there's no hope of such an agreement unless special arrangements are made for them to come together with a single goal, and a commonwealth under moral laws is established as a united and therefore stronger power to hold off the attacks of the bad principle. . . . We have also seen •that such a commonwealth, being a kingdom of God, can be undertaken by men only through religion; and, finally, •that this religion must be public (this being needed for a commonwealth), and must therefore be represented in the visible form of a church. Thus, the organising of a church is a task that is left to men to perform, and can be required of them.

But to found a church as a commonwealth under religious laws seems to require more wisdom (both of insight and of good disposition) than can be expected of men, especially given that it seems to require them to have *already* the moral goodness that the establishment of such a church aims to bring about. Actually it is nonsensical to say that men ought

to found a kingdom of God (like saying that they could set up the kingdom of a human monarch); God himself must be the founder of his kingdom. But although we don't know

what God may do directly to bring into actuality the idea of his kingdom,

we *do* know

(because we find this within ourselves) •our moral calling to become citizens and subjects in this kingdom, and •what we must do to fit ourselves for this role.

So this idea will oblige us to organise a church. If the idea was discovered and made public through scripture, God himself as founder of the kingdom is the author of its •constitution; whereas men, as members and free citizens of this kingdom, are the authors of the •organisation; and they have *this* task whether the idea came from scripture or was discovered through reason. Those among them who manage this organisation's public business compose its *administration*, as servants of the church, while the others constitute a partnership, the *congregation*, and are subject to the church's laws.

Now since a pure religion of reason as a public religious faith permits only the bare *idea of* a church (i.e. an *invisible* church), and since only the *visible* church that is based on dogmas needs to be and can be organised by men, it follows •that service under the sovereignty of the good principle in the invisible church can't be regarded as ecclesiastical service, and •that this religion has no legal servants acting as officials of an ethical commonwealth; each member of this commonwealth gets his orders directly from the supreme

legislator. [Kant adds that even within the pure religion of reason all right-thinking men are servants of God, but not *officials* and not servants of the visible church. Then he starts a new line of thought, saying that a church based on statutory [see Glossary] laws can be the true church only to the extent that something in it is driving it ever closer to pure faith of reason, so that eventually it will be able to jettison the historical element in its ecclesiastical faith; and when that is the case with a given visible church, its laws and officials can be seen as giving **service** to the church to the extent that] the officials are steadily working towards the final goal of a public religious faith, ·i.e. a faith based on bare reason·. On the other hand, the servants of a church who

- don't aim at this goal,
- hold that the maxim of continually moving towards it is damnable, and
- teach that the only route to salvation is through the historical and statutory element of ecclesiastical faith

can rightly be accused of giving **pseudo-service** to the church or of what is represented through this church, namely, the ethical commonwealth under the sovereignty of the good principle. The term 'pseudo-service' covers every case of persuading someone that he will be helped by doing x when x will in fact block the very help that he seeks. This occurs in a commonwealth when something that 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—a substitution by which the latter's [whose?] intention is thwarted. [Kant also gives Latin words for service and pseudo-service—*cultus* and *cultus spurius*.]

1. The service of God in religion as such

Religion is (subjectively regarded) the recognition of all duties as divine commands.

·START OF A LONG FOOTNOTE·

This definition forestalls many erroneous understandings of the concept of religion—i.e. religion in general. I shall discuss two of these. **(1)** Religion doesn't have to involve any assertions of •theoretical belief, even belief in God's existence, because with our ignorance of suprasensible objects any such assertion might well be hypocritical. The 'belief in God' is merely a problematic hypothesis about the supreme cause of things [and Kant goes on to say that it's something we have in mind in our •practical moral strivings, as promising something about what those strivings may lead to. He continues:] This faith needs only the *idea of God*, to which all morally earnest (and therefore faith-based) work for the good must inevitably lead; it doesn't involve any theoretical knowledge that this idea has a real object. What, subjectively, does every man have a duty to believe? The minimum of knowledge—that it's possible that there may be a God. **(2)** This definition of *religion* in general forestalls the erroneous view of religion as a cluster of special duties relating directly to God. . . . There are no special duties to God in a universal religion, for God can receive nothing from us, and we can't act *for* him *or* on him. To wish to transform guilty awe of him into a special duty is to neglect the fact that *awe* is not a special act of religion but rather the religious frame of mind in all our actions done in conformity with any kind of duty. And when it is said that 'We ought to obey God rather than men' [adapted from *Acts* 5:29] this means only that when

- statutory commands, regarding which men can be legislators and judges,

come into conflict with

- duties that reason prescribes unconditionally, concerning whose observance or transgression God alone can be the judge,

the latter must take precedence. If we accepted ‘Obey God rather than men’ on the understanding that obeying God is obeying the statutory commands given out by a church, that would easily become the war-cry that hypocritical and ambitious *Pfaffen* [see Glossary] often use when they are rebelling against their civil superiors. If something morally permissible is commanded by the civil authorities, it is certainly a duty; but there’s nearly always great uncertainty about the permissibility of something whose moral status we know about only through divine revelation. . . .

·END OF FOOTNOTE·

Religion in which if I’m to recognise something as my duty I must first know that it is a divine command is religion that is *revealed* (or needs to be revealed); religion in which if I’m to accept something as a divine command I must first know that it is my duty is *natural* religion.

- (a) Someone who declares that natural religion alone is morally necessary, i.e. is duty, can be called a rationalist (in matters of belief).
- (b) If he denies the reality of all supernatural divine revelation, he is called a naturalist.
- (c) If he recognises revelation, but says that knowing and accepting it as real isn’t necessary for religion, he could be called a pure rationalist.
- (d) If he holds that belief in revelation is necessary for universal religion, he could be called a pure supernaturalist in matters of belief.

The (a) rationalist, by virtue of that very label, must keep himself within the limits of human insight. So he will

never argue as (b) the naturalist does, denying the intrinsic possibility of revelation in general or the need for revelation as a divine means for introducing true religion; for these are issues that can’t be settled by reason. So the only dispute we have going on here is between (c) the pure rationalist and (d) the supernaturalist in matters of faith: what (d) one holds to be necessary and sufficient for the one true religion (c) the other regards as merely incidental in it.

When religion is classified not in terms of its first origin and its intrinsic possibility (which divides it into •natural and •revealed religion), but in terms of characteristics that make it sharable with others, it can be of two kinds: either

- natural religion, of which (once it has arisen) everyone can be convinced through his own reason, or
- scholarly religion, which you can’t convince others of without guiding them through a course of learning.

This distinction is very important: you can’t tell whether a religion is qualified to be the universal religion of mankind merely •from its origin, whereas you can tell this •from whether it is capable of being passed on to everyone; and this capability is the essential character of the religion that is to be binding on everyone.

So a religion can be •natural but also •revealed, by being so constituted that men could and ought to have discovered it unaided, merely through the use of their reason, though they wouldn’t have come upon it so early, or over so wide an area, as is required. Hence a revelation of it at a particular time and place could be. . . .advantageous to the human race. Once the religion has been introduced in that way and made known publicly, everyone can convince himself of its truth by his own reason. In that case, this religion is objectively a natural religion, though subjectively one that has been revealed; so it is really entitled to be called ‘natural’. It could happen that the supernatural revelation that launched it

publicly came to be entirely forgotten, without the slightest loss to the religion's comprehensibility, certainty, or power over human hearts. It is different with a religion that has to be classified as 'revealed', this being an upshot of its intrinsic nature. If a religion of that sort were not preserved in a completely secure tradition or in holy books as records of the revelation, it would disappear from the world unless there were a supernatural revelation—either publicly repeated from time to time or going on continuously within each individual—to enable such a faith to survive and to spread and propagate itself.

But every religion, even revealed ones, must contain certain principles of the natural religion. Why? Because *reason* must be used to link revelation to the concept of a religion, since the latter—being derived from the concept of being-obliged-by-the-will-of-a-moral legislator, is a pure concept of reason. So we can look at even a revealed religion as on one hand a natural religion and on the other a scholarly one, and to probe it to discover how much has come to it from one source and how much from the other.

If we plan to discuss a religion that is revealed or at least regarded as revealed, we have to select a specimen from history; we can't make ourselves clear without some use of examples, and unless we take these from history their possibility might be disputed. We can't do better than to expound our idea of revealed religion in general in terms of some book containing such examples, especially a book that 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 dealing with religion and virtue on the basis of a revelation,

- searching out whatever it contains that may be for us a pure and therefore a universal religion of reason,
- without aiming to push into the business of those

who are entrusted with the interpretation of that same book, regarded as the aggregate of positive doctrines of revelation, or to contest the interpretation they are led to by their scholarship.

Given that scholars and philosophers have the same goal, namely the morally good, it is advantageous to scholarship to have philosophers, using reason, arrive at the very point that scholarship expects to reach by another route. Here the New Testament, considered as the source of the Christian doctrine, can be the book chosen. In accordance with the plan I have described I shall now present two sections regarding the Christian religion—first as a natural religion, second as a scholarly religion, with reference to its content and to the principles it contains.

A. The Christian religion as a natural religion

Natural religion. . . . is a pure practical idea of reason which, despite its infinite fruitfulness, presupposes so little capacity for **theoretical** reason that everyone can be convinced of it well enough for **practical** purposes and can at least be morally required to conform to it. [The ellipsis in that sentence replaces a clause in which natural religion is said to consist of morality combined with the concept of God as the being that can make morality fulfill its purpose; with a mention also of human immortality.] This religion has the prime essential of the true church, namely being qualified to be universal, i.e. to be accepted by everyone. To spread it as a world religion, and to maintain it, there needs to be a body of servants (in Latin, a *ministerium*) of the purely invisible church but not officials—teachers but not headmasters—because

- the reason-religion of every individual doesn't constitute
- a church that is a union of everyone,

and the concept of *individual reason-religion* doesn't involve any thought of a universal church.

Such unanimity couldn't be maintained unaided, so it couldn't be spread to everyone unless it became a visible church. The only way to get universality is for there to be a union of believers in a *visible* church following the **principles** of a pure religion of reason. This church doesn't automatically arise out of that unanimity; and if the church were established, it wouldn't (as I showed above) be brought by its free adherents into the permanent condition of a commonwealth of the faithful, because in such a religion none of those who have seen the light believes that his religious situation requires fellowship with others. It follows that this special duty of men, namely their enduring union into a universal visible church, *won't happen* unless in addition to the natural laws that can be learned through bare reason there are statutory ordinances laid down by a legislative authority), and for this authority be a founder of such a *visible* church it must rest on a *fact* and not merely on *the pure concept of reason*.

Suppose there was a teacher of whom the following was true:

He is said—in an historical record, or at least a general belief that isn't basically disputable—to have been the first to expound publicly a pure and searching religion that everyone in the world could understand (so that it's a *natural* religion), whose teachings we can test for ourselves. He did this in defiance of a dominant ecclesiastical faith that was burdensome and not conducive to moral ends (a faith whose slavish 'service' was typical of all the merely statutory faiths that were current at the time). He made this universal religion of reason the highest and indispensable condition of every religious faith whatsoever, and then *added* to it

certain arrangements for ceremonies and observances designed to serve as means to bringing into existence a church founded on those **principles**.

Despite the contingent and *chosen* nature of these arrangements, we can't deny the label 'true universal church' to the church they are aimed at; and we can't deny to this teacher the prestige due to the one who called men to come together in this church—which he did without *loading* the faith with new regulations or *trying* to turn his original ceremonies into special holy practices that are essential in religion.

Given this description, you'll recognise the person who can be revered as the founder of the first true *church*; but not of the *religion* which, free from every dogma, is engraved in all men's hearts, because that wasn't *chosen* by anyone *and therefore doesn't have a founder*. What's the evidence for his dignity as someone sent by God? I'll answer that not by appealing to historical records but by citing some of his teachings as unchallengeable documents of religion in general; the very content of these is adequate ground for their acceptance; the teachings in question are those of pure reason—they are the only ones that carry their own proof, so that the credibility of the others has to depend on them.

[We now meet many references to *Matthew 5–7*, the 'Sermon on the Mount'. For the whole sermon, see pages 115–119.]

First, he holds

- that to make men well-pleasing to God what is needed is not *doing* their outer civil or statutory-church duties but *the pure moral disposition of the heart alone* (*Matthew 5:20–48*);
- that in God's eyes sins in thought are on a par with *sins of action* (5:28) and that holiness is, over-all, the goal men should work to reach (5:48);
- that to hate in one's heart is equivalent to killing (5:22) (this is just one example);

- that if you have harmed your neighbour, setting this right is between you and him, not through acts of divine worship (5:24);
- that the civil procedure for enforcing truthfulness, namely by making people speak under oath, harms respect for truth itself (5:33–37);¹
- that the human heart's natural but bad propensity should be completely reversed—the sweet sense of revenge being transformed into tolerance (5:39, 40) and hatred of one's enemies into charity (5:44).

What he intends by this, he says, is to fulfill the Jewish law (5:17); so obviously that law is being interpreted not through scriptural scholarship but through the pure religion of reason; because the law interpreted literally is flatly opposed to all those teachings. Furthermore, he doesn't neglect the misconstruction of the law that men allow themselves in order to evade their true moral duty and make up for this by performing their church duty; that misconstruction is the topic when he speaks of 'the strait gate' and 'the narrow way' (7:13).² He requires these pure dispositions to be shown in actions (7:16); and as for those who imagine that by invocation and praise of the supreme lawgiver in the person of his envoy they will win his favour despite their lack of good

works, he dashes their hopes (7:21). Good works, he says, should be performed •publicly, as an example for others to copy (5:16), and •cheerfully, not like actions extorted from slaves (6:16); and in this way (he says) religion, from a small beginning in the sharing and spreading of such dispositions, should through its inner power grow into a kingdom of God—like a grain of seed in good soil. . . . (13:31–33). Finally, he pulls all duties together into

- (1) one universal rule (covering men's **inner and outer** moral relations), namely: Perform your duty from no other incentive than *esteem for duty itself*, i.e. love God (the legislator of all duties) above all else; and
- (2) one more restricted rule (laying down a universal duty governing men's **outer** relations to one another), namely: Love everyone as yourself, i.e. further his welfare because of good-will that is •immediate and not •derived from thoughts of advantage to yourself.

These commands are not mere laws of virtue but precepts of holiness that we ought to strive for, and merely striving for it is called 'virtue'. Thus he destroys the hope of those who passively *wait*, hands in laps, for this moral goodness to come to them, as though it were a heavenly gift descending from on high. To anyone who doesn't *use* the natural predis-

¹ It's hard to see why religious teachers don't give more weight to this clear prohibition of that method—based on mere superstition, not on any appeal to conscience—of forcing confession before a civil tribunal. *Does it mainly rely on superstition?* Yes, for consider: a man who isn't trusted to tell the truth in a solemn statement affecting a decision concerning the rights of a human being (the holiest of beings in this world) is yet expected to be persuaded to speak truthfully by the use of an oath! All the oath adds to the original statement is the man's calling down on himself divine punishments (which he can't escape if he lies, oath or no oath), as though it were *up to him* whether that supreme tribunal would judge him. In the passage of Scripture cited above [*Matthew* 5:33–37], this procedure of confirmation by oath is represented as absurdly presumptuous, an attempt to bring about, as though by magical words, something that is really not in our power. But it is easy to see that the wise teacher, who here says that whatever goes beyond Yes, Yes! and No, No! in assurances of truth comes from evil, •also• had in view the bad *effect* of the use of oaths—namely that attaching importance to oaths comes close to permitting ordinary lies.

² The strait gate and narrow way that lead to life are the gate and way of good conduct in life; the wide gate and broad way, walked by many, is the church. He's not saying •that the church and its statutes are responsible for men being lost, but •that •they are misled by the assumption that going to church, acknowledging its statutes, and participating in its ceremonies are how God really wishes to be served.

position to goodness that lies in human nature (like a sum of money entrusted to him), lazily confident that no doubt a higher moral influence will make up for his deficiencies of moral character and completeness, the teacher says that even the good that his natural predisposition may have led him to do won't help to make up for this neglect (25:14–28) [taking Kant's citation of 25:29 to be a mistake].

As regards men's very natural expectation of an allotment of happiness proportional to a man's moral conduct, especially given the many sacrifices of happiness that had to be made for the sake of morality, he promises (5:11–12) a reward for these sacrifices in a future world; but this will depend on differences of disposition between •those who did their duty for the sake of the reward (or to escape deserved punishment) and •the better men who did it merely because it was their duty; the latter will be dealt with differently. Speaking of

a man governed by self-interest (the god of this world) who doesn't renounce self-interest but only refines it by the use of reason, extending it beyond the constricting boundary of the present,

the teacher says that this man has on his own initiative defrauded his master [self-interest] and gets him to make sacrifices on behalf of 'duty' (*Luke* 16:3–9). He has come to realise •that some time, perhaps soon, he must leave the world, and •that he can't take with him into the next world anything that he possesses here; so he decides to strike off from the account anything that he or his master (self-interest) is entitled to demand from needy people, getting,

in exchange for this, cheques (as it were) that can be cashed in the next world. His motive in these charitable actions is clever rather than moral, but it does conform with the letter of the moral law, and he may hope that this won't go unrewarded in the future.¹ Compare with this what is said of charity toward the needy from sheer motives of duty (*Matthew* 25:35–40), where those who

helped the needy without the idea even entering their minds that their action was worthy of a reward or that it obliged Heaven, as it were, to reward them

are. . . .declared by the judge of the world to be those really chosen for his kingdom, and it becomes evident that the teacher of the Gospel in speaking of rewards in the world to come wasn't trying to •make them an incentive to action, but merely to •present them. . . .as an object of the purest respect and greatest moral approval when reason views human life as a whole.

What we have here is a *complete religion* that can be presented to all men through their own reason, so that they'll understand it and accept it. It can and indeed ought to be an archetype for us to imitate (so far as that is humanly possible); and this is made evident to us through *an example*, with no need for external authentication of the truth of those teachings or the authority and worth of the teacher. (External authentication would have to involve scholarship or miracles, which are not matters for everyone; •so the religion couldn't be universally accepted.) When the teacher brings in older (Mosaic) legislation and example-giving as though to confirm what he is saying, he is really using them only as aids

¹ We know nothing of the future, and we oughtn't to try to know more than what reason ties to the incentives of morality and their goal. This includes the belief •that every good action will in the next world have good consequences for the person who performs it; •that therefore a man near the end of his life, however badly he has acted down the years, shouldn't be deterred from doing *at least one* more good deed that is in his power; and •that in doing this he has reason to hope that this deed, in proportion as his intention in it is purely good, will be worth more than those *actionless absolutions* that are supposed to compensate for the deficiency of good deeds without providing anything for the lessening of the guilt.

to introducing his teachings to people clinging wholly and blindly to what is old. These were men whose heads, filled with statutory [see Glossary] dogmas, were almost impervious to the religion of reason; bringing this religion to *them* was bound to be harder than bringing it to the reason of men who are uninstructed but also unspoiled. So it shouldn't seem strange that an exposition adapted to the prejudices of those times should now be puzzling and in need of painstaking interpretation; though everywhere in it a religious doctrine shines through, and is often pointed to explicitly—a doctrine that must be comprehensible and convincing to all men without any expenditure of scholarship.

B. The Christian religion as a scholarly religion

When a religion propounds, as necessary, dogmas that can't be known to be so through reason, but are nevertheless to be passed along to all men in all future ages without any corruption of their essential content, we must either

- rely on a continuous miracle of revelation, or
- regard the preservation of these dogmas as a sacred charge entrusted to the care of the scholars.

Even if at first this religion—including the parts of it that aren't confirmed by reason—was accepted everywhere on the strength of miracles and deeds, in later years the report of these miracles (along with the doctrines that stand or fall with it) will require an authentic and unchanging written instruction of posterity.

The acceptance of the fundamental principles of a religion is what is best called *faith*. So we'll have to examine the Christian faith on the one hand as

- a pure rational faith, which can be regarded as a faith freely assented to by everyone,
- and on the other as

- as a revealed faith that can be regarded as a commanded faith.

Everyone can convince himself, through his own reason, of •the evil that lies in the human heart and that no-one is free from; of •the need for him to be justified in God's eyes, and the impossibility of his ever achieving this through his own life-conduct; of •the futility of making up for his lack of righteousness by church observances and pious compulsory services, and of •his inescapable obligation to become a new man. To convince oneself of all this is part of *religion*.

But from the point where Christian doctrine is built not on bare concepts of reason but on *facts*, it can now be called not only 'the Christian religion' but 'the Christian *faith*'—on which a church has been built. The service of a church consecrated to such a faith is therefore twofold: •service owed to the church according to the historical faith, and •service due to it in accordance with the practical and moral faith of reason. In the Christian church both of these are needed: the first because the Christian faith is a scholarly faith, the second because it is a religious faith.

[Kant now presents two wickedly obscure paragraphs about the Christian faith considered as a scholarly faith that isn't vitally associated with a reason-based religion. After a puzzling remark about what the situation would be 'if all men were learned', i.e. were scholars, he presents two possible versions of this kind of Christian faith:

- (i) A faith that starts from unconditional belief in revealed propositions, with scholarship coming in merely as 'a defence against an enemy attacking from the rear';
- (ii) A faith in which scholarship determines what the revealed doctrine is, so that it's not the rearguard but the vanguard.

Kant takes a dim view of both of these, (i) because it would be a faith that was not merely •commanded but •servile,

and (ii) because in it] the small body of textual scholars (the clerics). . . . would drag along behind it the long train of the unlearned (the laity) who have no other access to the contents of Scripture. . . . [Kant squeezes into that sentence the remark that the ignorant laity include *die weltbürgerlichen Regenten*, which literally = ‘the cosmopolitan rulers’.]

The only alternative to these is a Christian faith in which the supreme commanding principle [see Glossary] in matters of doctrine is *universal human reason*, . . . and the revealed doctrine on which a church is founded—standing in need of scholars as interpreters and conservers—is 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 sovereignty of the good principle; whereas the ‘service’ in which •revealed faith takes precedence over •religion is *pseudo-service*. It completely reverses the moral order, commanding unconditionally as though it were an **end** something that is really only a **means**. Belief in propositions that the unlearned can’t become sure of through reason or through Scripture (because Scripture would first have to be authenticated) would here be made an absolute duty and, along with other related observances, it would be elevated to the rank of a saving faith—one from which moral determining grounds of action were absent! It would be a slavish faith. A church based on this latter principle doesn’t genuine servants (*ministri* [Latin]), as does the other kind

of church; rather, it has commanding high officials. Even when (as in a Protestant church) these officials don’t appear in hierarchical splendour as spiritual officers clothed with external power—even when, indeed, they protest verbally *against* all that—they want to be regarded as the only chosen interpreters of a holy scripture, having •deprived the pure reason-based religion of its rightful role as *always* the scripture’s supreme interpreter, and •commanded that scriptural scholarship be used solely in the interests of the ecclesiastical faith. In this way they transform the service of the church (*ministerium* [Latin]) into a domination of its members (*imperium*), though they try to hid what they are up to by giving themselves the modest title ‘minister’. But this domination, which would have been easy for reason, costs the church dearly, namely, in the expenditure of much scholarship. . . .

The outcome of this state of affairs is as follows. The first propagators of Christ’s teaching described him as ‘the Messiah’, this being an intelligent device for getting the people to take in what they were saying; but this came to be taken to be a part of religion itself, valid for all times and peoples, creating an obligation to believe that *every Christian must be a Jew whose Messiah has come*. This doesn’t square with the fact that a Christian is not really bound by any law of Judaism (whose laws are all *statutory*), though this people’s entire holy book is supposed to be accepted faithfully as a divine revelation given to all men.¹ There’s great difficulty about the authenticity of this book (which isn’t anything

¹ † Mendelssohn ingeniously uses this weak spot in the customary presentation of Christianity to wholly reject every demand that a son of Israel change his religion. For, he says, since the Christians themselves say that the Jewish faith is the ground floor on which the upper floor of Christianity rests, the demand for conversion is like expecting someone to demolish the ground floor of a house in order to settle in on the second storey. [Kant then proceeds with a confident conjecture about what Mendelssohn’s real intention is here; he mixes this with comments of his own, without clearly separating the different ingredients. We can afford to let this go.] [In this footnote Kant is referring to Moses Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*, of which this is a version: www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/mendjeru.pdf.]

like proved by the fact that Christians include passages from it. . . . in their books, in an effort to show its authenticity !). Before Christianity began, and even after that but before it had made much progress, Judaism hadn't gained a foothold among the scholarly public, i.e. it wasn't yet known to its scholarly contemporaries among other peoples; so its history wasn't yet subjected to cross-checks, as it were, and its sacred book owed its ·supposed· historical credibility sheerly to its antiquity. And there's another matter: it's not enough to know the book in translations and to pass it on to posterity in this form; the ecclesiastical faith based on it can't be certain unless there are, at all future times and among all peoples, scholars who are familiar with the Hebrew language (so far as a language *can* be known when we have only one book written in it). And these scholars will be needed not merely •to serve the interests of historical scholarship in general but •to assure the true religion for the world—a task with the salvation of mankind depending on it.

The Christian religion has had a similar fate: although its sacred events occurred openly under the very eyes of a scholarly people, its historical record was delayed for more than a generation before this religion gained a foothold among this people's scholarly public; so the authentication of the record must do without the corroboration of contemporaries. But Christianity has a great advantage over Judaism, namely that it is represented as •coming from the mouth of the first teacher not as a statutory [see Glossary] religion but as a moral one, and as thus •entering into the closest relation with reason, which enabled it, without help from historical learning, to be spread at all times and among all peoples with the greatest trustworthiness. But the founders of the first Christian communities found that they had to entwine the history of Judaism with them; this was a good idea in that situation—though perhaps only there—and this

·Jewish· history has come down to us in the sacred legacy of Christianity. But the founders of the church classified these opportunistic preaching devices as essential articles of faith, and added to their number by appealing either to •tradition or to •interpretations that acquired legal force from the councils or were authenticated through scholarship. As for •this scholarship, or at the opposite end of the scale •the 'inner light' that any layman can *say* he has, it is impossible to know how many changes the faith will still have to undergo through these ·two· agencies; but that's unavoidable if we seek religion outside us instead of within us. [This search 'within us' is, of course, consultation with one's own reason. We can understand Kant's putting that in a different box from the 'inner light' that fanatics claim to steer by (see page 46 above); but his classifying the latter as 'outside us' is a bit puzzling.]

2. The pseudoservice of God in a statutory religion

The one true religion contains nothing but **laws**, i.e. practical principles whose unconditional necessity we can become aware of, and which we therefore recognise as revealed ·to us· not empirically but through pure reason. Only for the sake of a *church* can there be **statutes**, i.e. ordinances that are held to be divine, and can be seen from the standpoint of our pure moral judgment to be contingent affairs that someone has *chosen*. [Kant works into that sentence a clause saying that there can be different forms of church, all equally good.] The view that this statutory faith (which in any case is restricted to one people, and can't be the universal world-religion) is essential to the service of God generally, and is what mainly counts towards someone's being a God-pleasing man, is religious illusion whose consequence is pseudo-service, i.e. pretended honouring of God through which we work directly against the service demanded by God himself.

·START OF FOOTNOTE·

Illusion is the deception involved in regarding the mere representation of a thing as equivalent to the thing itself. Thus a rich miser is subject to the illusion that •his thought of being able to use his riches whenever he wants to is an adequate substitute for •actually using them. The illusion of *honour* ascribes to praise by others, which is basically just their outward expression of a respect that they may not actually have, the worth that ought to be attached solely to the respect itself. Similarly with the passion for titles and orders: these are only outward representations of a superiority over others. Even madness has this name because it commonly takes a mere representation (of the imagination) for the presence of the thing itself and values it accordingly. [*Wahn* = 'illusion'; *Sinn* = 'mind'; *Wahnsinn* = 'madness'.] Now, if you are aware of having a means M to some end E (but haven't yet used it), you have only a representation of E; hence to content yourself with M as though it could take the place of E is a practical illusion; and that is my present topic.

·END OF FOOTNOTE·

A. The Universal Subjective Basis of the Religious Illusion

Anthropomorphism is almost inevitable when men are thinking about God and his being in **theoretical** contexts; it's harmless enough (if it doesn't influence concepts of duty);

but it is extremely dangerous in connection with our **practical** relation to God's will, and even for our morality; for here we create a God for ourselves,¹ and we create him in the form in which we think we'll find it easiest to •win him over to our advantage and •escape from the wearying continuous effort of working on the innermost part of our moral disposition. The principle that a man usually formulates for himself in this connection is this:

Everything that we do solely so as to be well-pleasing to the divinity (if it doesn't flatly *conflict with* morality. . . .) shows God our willingness to serve him as obedient servants, pleasing him by this obedience. . . .

[When is anthropomorphism supposed to go to work in this scenario? Not at 'we create a God for ourselves', because the footnote says that we have to do this, however 'pure' (and thus non-anthropomorphic) our concept of God is. Then perhaps at 'we create him in the form in which we think. . . .' etc.; but then one would expect Kant to insist that we decide what will please God by thinking about what pleases us; and that emphasis doesn't appear.] It's not just through sacrifices that men think they can render this service to God; ceremonies and even (as with the Greeks and Romans) public games have often had to play this role and make the divinity favourable to a people or even to one individual—according to men's illusion! But the sacrifices (penances, castigations, pilgrimages, etc.) were always held to be more powerful, more effective in winning the favour of Heaven, and more suitable for purifying sin, because they testify more strongly to unlimited (though not moral) subjection to God's will. The

¹ † Though it sounds dubious, there's nothing wrong with saying that every man creates a God for himself—indeed, *must* make himself a God according to moral concepts (bringing in the infinitely great attributes that go with the power to exhibit in the world an object that fits those concepts), in order to honour in him the one who created him. If someone else tells him about a being that he calls 'God', or even—if it were possible—such a being appears to him, he must first compare this representation—this telling or this appearance—with his ideal [see Glossary] in order to judge whether he is entitled to regard it and to honour it as a divinity. So there can't be a religion that *starts* from revelation alone; *before* any revelation could take effect there would have to a consultation with that concept, in its purity, as a touchstone. Without this all reverence for God would be idolatry.

more useless such self-torments are, and the less they are designed for the over-all moral improvement of the man who performs them, the holier they seem to be; just because they are utterly useless in the world and yet take great effort, they seem to be directly solely to the expression of devotion to God. Men say:

Although that act hasn't done God any good, he sees in it the good will, the heart, which is indeed too weak to *actually obey* his moral commands but makes up for that by its display of *willingness to do so*.

We see here the attraction of a procedure that has no moral value except perhaps as a means of elevating the powers of sense-imagery to go with intellectual ideas of the goal, or of suppressing them when they might go against these ideas.¹ We credit this procedure with having the worth of the goal itself, which is to say that we ascribe to •the frame of mind of leaning towards acquiring dispositions dedicated to God the worth of •those dispositions themselves. Such a procedure, therefore, is merely a religious illusion. It can take various forms, in some of which it appears more moral than in others; but in none of its forms is it a mere unintentional mistake. What is at work here is a *maxim* of attributing to the means an intrinsic value that really belongs to the end. Because of this maxim the illusion is equally absurd in all its forms, and as a hidden bias towards deception it's a very bad thing.

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

I take the following proposition to be a principle requiring no proof:

Anything other than good life-conduct that a man supposes that he can do to become well-pleasing to God is mere religious illusion and pseudo-service of God.

I say 'believes that *he* can do'; I'm not denying that. . . .there may be something in the mysteries of supreme wisdom that *God* can do to transform us into men well-pleasing to him. But even if the church proclaimed that such a mystery has been revealed, it would be a dangerous religious illusion to think that we can make ourselves well-pleasing to God by •believing in this revelation as sacred history reports it to us, and inwardly or outwardly •acknowledging it. For this belief, as an inner declaration of one's firm conviction, is so thoroughly an action compelled by fear that an upright man wouldn't perform it. He might agree to do other things •demanded by the church•, because with any of *them* he would at worst be doing something superfluous; but in *this* one, declaring something whose truth he is not convinced of, he would be doing violence to his conscience. We're thinking about a man who makes that confession and convinces himself that, because in it he is acknowledging a good that has

¹ I have something to say here to those who, whenever they are stumbling over the distinction between the sensuous and the intellectual, think they find contradictions in *The Critique of Pure Reason*: When •sense-related items are said to further or hinder the pure moral disposition, which is an •intellectual item, these two utterly unlike principles mustn't be thought of as being in *direct* causal contact. As beings in the world of the senses, we can work *for* or *against* the law only •by working on• the *appearances* of the intellectual principle, i.e. on how we use our physical powers. . . .to produce actions; so that cause and effect can be represented as being of the same kind. [In that sentence the ellipsis replaces 'through free will', a puzzling phrase in that place.] But in what concerns the suprasensible (the subjective principle of morality in us, hidden in the incomprehensible attribute of freedom)—e.g. in the pure religious frame of mind—we have no insight into the relation of cause and effect in man. . . .; that is, we can't explain to ourselves the possibility of •actions, as events in the world of the senses, in terms of •man's moral constitution, as items for which he is accountable. Why not? Because •these are free acts and •the grounds of explanation of all events must come from the world of the senses.

been offered to him, it can make him well-pleasing to God; in his view it is something additional to good life-conduct in obedience to moral laws, because in it he is giving service *directly* to God.

(a) Reason doesn't leave us wholly without comfort regarding our not being (by God's standards) righteous. It tells us:

Anyone who with a disposition genuinely devoted to duty does as much as he can to fulfill his obligations (in a manner that at least continually *approximates to* complete harmony with the law), may hope that what is not in his power will be made up for *somehow* by the supreme wisdom (making permanent the disposition to this continual approximation).

But reason says this without presuming to say how this make-up will be given or to know what it will consist in; it may be so mysterious that God can't reveal it to us except in a symbolic representation of which we understand only what is **practical**, having no **theoretical** grasp what this relation of God to man might be. . . . [That is, we can't understand what this divine intervention *is*, only what it *can do for us*.] Suppose, now, that a particular church •claims to know with certainty *how* God makes up for that moral lack in the human race, and •consigns to eternal damnation all men who don't accept this story and acknowledge it as a religious principle (because they don't know anything about this supposed make-up, which isn't known to reason in a natural way)—who is here the unbeliever? Is it the one who *trusts*, without knowing how what he hopes for will happen; or the one who insists on knowing how man is released from evil and, if he can't know this, gives up all hope of this release? Basically, the latter isn't really much concerned to know this mystery (for his own reason tells him that it is useless to know something that he can't do anything about); he merely wants to know it so

as to make for himself a (perhaps inward) divine service out of believing, accepting, acknowledging, and valuing all that has been revealed—a service that could earn him Heaven's favour without his putting any effort into living a morally good life. . . .

(b) If a man departs *at all* from the above maxim [i.e. from the indented 'principle' at the start of this section], there are no limits to how much further the pseudo-service of God (superstition) may take him; because once this maxim has been left behind, it's for him to *choose* how to 'serve' God, as long as it's not something that directly contradicts morality. He offers everything to God, from

- lip-service, which costs him the least, to
- the donation of earthly goods that might better be used for the advantage of mankind, and even to
- the offering up 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 is talking not about

- the disposition to live in a manner well-pleasing to God but
- the heartfelt wish that those offerings may be accepted in place of that disposition. . . .

(c) Once one has adopted the maxim of offering to God a 'service' that is supposed to please him and even (if need be) to propitiate him [i.e. get him to be forgiving], but isn't purely moral, there's no essential difference among the (as it were) mechanical ways of 'serving' him—nothing to make any of them preferable to any others. They are all alike in worth (or rather worthlessness); they are all deviations from the one and only intellectual principle of genuine respect for God, and it's mere affectation to regard oneself as more select because one's deviation is more *refined* than the deviations of those are guilty of a supposedly coarser degradation to sensuality. Whether the devotee

- goes regularly to church, or undertakes a pilgrimage to the sanctuaries in Loreto 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 as the Tibetans do [Kant adds some detail about this]

it is all one, all equal in value, all a ·worthless· substitute for the moral service of God. What matters here is not a difference in the external form; everything depends on how we go about becoming well-pleasing to God—on whether we rely on •the moral disposition alone, exhibiting its vitality in actions that are its appearances, or on •pious posturing and donothingry.¹ But isn't there also a dizzying illusion of virtue, **soaring** above the limits of human capacity, that might be counted, along with the **creeping** religious illusion, as belonging to the general class of self-deceptions? No! The disposition towards virtue is concerned with something *real* which really is well-pleasing to God and is in harmony with the world's highest good. Admittedly, it may be accompanied by a conceited illusion that one actually measures up to the idea of one's holy duty; but this doesn't have to happen. . . .

It is customary, at least in the church,

- to give the name *nature* to what men can do by the power of the principle of virtue;
- to give the name *grace* to what serves to make up for the deficiency of our moral powers, and. . . .can only be wished for, or hoped for and asked for;
- to regard the two together as active causes of a disposition adequate for a God-pleasing course of life; and

- not only to distinguish them from one another but even to contrast them.

The conviction that we can distinguish the effects of grace from those of nature (those of virtue), or can actually produce the former within ourselves, is fanaticism. In fact we can't possibly recognise a suprasensible element in experience; still less can we influence something suprasensible so as to draw it down to us; though it's true that there sometimes arise stirrings of the heart making for morality, movements that we can't explain and must admit we are ignorant about: 'The wind blows where it likes, but you cannot tell where it comes from, etc.' [John 3:8]. To think one *observes* such heavenly influences in oneself is a kind of madness; no doubt there can be method in it (because those supposed inner revelations must always be attached to moral ideas and thus to ideas of reason); but all the same it's a self-deception that is harmful to religion. All we can say on this subject is:

There may be works of grace, which may be needed to make up for the short-fall in our effort to be virtuous.

We aren't capable of determining anything concerning the distinctive marks of such works of grace, let alone of doing anything to produce them.

The illusion of being able to move towards justifying ourselves before God through religious acts of worship is **(i)** religious superstition, just as the illusion of thinking one can accomplish this by working for a supposed communion with God is **(ii)** religious fanaticism. It is a **(i)** superstitious illusion to try to become well-pleasing to God through actions that anyone can perform without being a good man (by

¹ As a matter of psychological fact, the adherents of a denomination where rather less statutory [see Glossary] stuff is offered for belief feel that this makes them nobler and more enlightened, although they have retained so much statutory belief that they are not entitled to their contemptuous condescension—from their fancied heights of purity—towards their brothers in ecclesiastical illusion. Why do they have this attitude? It's because this difference of belief, slight as it may be, has them thinking of themselves as a little nearer to pure moral religion—despite their remaining attached to the illusion of thinking they can supplement it by means of pious observances in which reason is ·still passive·, only *less* passive.

professing statutory articles of faith, by conforming to church observance and discipline, etc.). It is called 'superstitious' because it chooses merely natural (not moral) means that can have absolutely no effect on what is not nature (i.e. on the morally good). An illusion is called **(ii)** 'fanatical' when the **means** it plans to use, being suprasensible, are not within man's power—never mind the inaccessibility of the suprasensible **end** aimed at by these means. Why are the means inaccessible? Because •having this feeling of the immediate presence of the supreme being, and •distinguishing it from every other feeling (even the moral feeling), would involve having an intuition for which there is no sensory provision in human nature. Because **(i)** the superstitious illusion involves means that many individuals can use, enabling them at least to work against the obstacles to forming a disposition well-pleasing to God, it is to that extent like reason, and is only contingently objectionable in transforming a mere means into an object immediately well-pleasing to God. The **(ii)** fanatical religious illusion, in contrast, is the moral death of reason; because without reason religion can't happen, since religion like all morality must be established on basic principles.

So the principle that an ecclesiastical faith must have to remedy or prevent all religious illusion is this: The faith must contain within itself, along with the statutory articles that it can't yet completely do without, a principle *to establish the religion of morally good life-conduct as the real goal*, so as eventually to be able entirely to do without the statutory articles.

C. *Pfaffentum* as a Government in the Pseudoservice of the Good Principle

[† In a footnote linked to that heading, Kant explains that the word *Pfaffentum* [see Glossary] benignly signifies •the authority of a spiritual father while also censoriously implying •the spiritual despotism that is found in all ecclesiastical forms, however modest and popular they declare themselves to be. He adds that when he compares different sects he doesn't mean to treat the customs and regulations of any one of them as worse than those of any other. The note concludes:] All deserve the same •respect, in that their forms are the attempts of poor mortals to represent the kingdom of God on earth as something perceivable through the senses, but also the same •rebuke when they take the. . . .representation of this idea in a visible church to be the thing itself. [•Spiritual despotism and •taking the representation to be the thing itself—you might think about how Kant sees these as connected.]

The veneration of powerful invisible beings that was extorted from helpless man through natural fear rooted in the sense of his weakness didn't begin with a religion but rather with servile worship of a god or of idols. When this worship took a certain publicly legalised form it became a •*temple service*, and it didn't become an *ecclesiastical worship*—a •*church worship*—until its laws had gradually come to be tied in with men's moral education. An historical faith was the basis for both of these, until people finally came to see this faith as merely provisional—a symbolic presentation of a pure religious faith, and and a means of promoting it.

We can recognise a tremendous difference in •manner but not in •principle between

•a Tungus shaman and •a European prelate ruling over church and state alike,

or, setting aside the faiths' heads and leaders and focusing

on how their adherents present themselves, between

- the wholly sensuous Vogul who starts the day with a bear's paw on his head and the short prayer 'Strike me not dead!' and
- the utterly *unsensuous* Puritan in Connecticut;

because their principles put them in the same class, namely the class of those who let their worship of God consist in faith in certain statutory dogmas or the performance of certain arbitrary rites—things that can never bring any moral improvement. The only ones outside that class are those who aim to find the service of God solely in the disposition to live a morally good life; what distinguishes them from the others is their having moved on to a wholly different principle which is far nobler than the others have, namely a principle by which they acknowledge themselves members of an (invisible) church whose members include all well-meaning people—a church whose essential nature fits it, and it alone, to be the true universal church.

All of them—i.e. all the faiths I have been criticising—aim to manage to their own advantage the invisible power that presides over men's destiny; they differ only in their conceptions of how to achieve this. If they think that this power is a thinking being whose *will* determines their fate, all they can do is to decide *how* they can become pleasing to him through what they do or allow. If they think of him as a moral being, their reason easily convinces them that the way to earn his favour must be their morally good life-conduct, and especially the pure disposition as the subjective principle of such conduct. But perhaps the supreme being wants also to be served in some way that we can't know through bare reason—by actions that we can't see any intrinsic moral value in but that we willingly perform either •because he commanded them or •in order to convince him of our submissiveness to him. . . . If these two are to be united—i.e.

if we are serve God both •by living morally with the right disposition and •by doing other things that we think he has commanded or would be pleased by—then necessarily either

- each of them is regarded as a way of pleasing God directly, or
- one of them is regarded as a means to the other, the real service of God.

It is self-evident that the moral service of God is directly well-pleasing to him. But this service can't be recognised as the highest condition of divine approval of man. . . .if the other kind of service is also regarded as in itself directly pleasing to God; for if that were the case then no-one could know what his duty was because no-one could know which service was worthier in a given case, or how the two would supplement each other. So actions with no intrinsic moral value should be accepted as well-pleasing to God only as means to furthering morally good conduct, i.e. only as done for the sake of the moral service of God.

Now the man who performs actions with nothing intrinsically God-pleasing (nothing moral) about them, as a means to earning immediate divine approval of himself and thereby the attainment of his desires, is under the illusion that he possesses an art of bringing about a supernatural effect by wholly natural means. I'll call such attempts *fetishism*. (A more usual term is *sorcery*; but that suggests dealings with the devil, whereas the attempt I am discussing can be conceived to be undertaken, through misunderstanding, with good moral intent.) Someone who thinks he can produce a supernatural effect must believe that

he has an effect on God, using him as a means to bring about in the world a result for which his own unaided powers—even his insight into whether this result would be well-pleasing to God—would not be adequate.

Even in his own conception of it, what he is attempting is absurd.

But if a man tries, not only •by means that make him immediately an object of divine favour (i.e. by the active disposition to live in a morally good way) but •by performing certain ceremonies, to make himself worthy of supernatural help to supplement his impotence; and if his aim in performing them is solely to make *himself* capable of receiving that help by improving his moral disposition—then he is indeed counting on something supernatural to make up for his natural impotence, but not as something he can •bring about by influencing God’s will but only as something he can •receive, something he can hope for but can’t bring to pass. But if he thinks that •ceremonial• actions that in themselves seem to contain nothing moral or well-pleasing to God will serve as a means—even as a condition—of getting the satisfaction of his wishes directly from God, then he is a victim of illusion; viz., the illusion that though he doesn’t have physical control over supernatural help or moral receptivity for it, he can still *produce* it. He thinks he can do this by natural acts that have no connection with morality. . . .and could be performed by the most wicked man as well as by the best. . . . In making this use of ecclesiastical ceremonies and the like he is trying to conjure up divine assistance by magic, as it were. There’s no conceivable law according to which •physical events could make a difference to the workings of a •moral cause.

Thus, anyone who

- gives priority to obedience to statutory laws, requiring a revelation as being necessary to religion, and
- regards this obedience not merely as •a means to having a moral disposition but as •what is needed to become *immediately* well-pleasing to God;
- making the attempt to live a morally good life sec-

ondary to this historical faith (instead of vice-versa), transforms the service of God into mere fetishism, and practises a pseudo-service that undercuts all work toward true religion. When we’re trying to unite two good things, so much depends on the order in which they are united! Distinguishing these two •and getting them the right way around• is what the real Enlightenment consists in: it make the service of God primarily a free service and hence a moral service. If someone deviates from this distinction •or reverses the priority of the two kinds of service• then for him •the freedom of the children of God is replaced by •the yoke of a law, the statutory law. Because this law unconditionally requires belief in something that can only be known historically and therefore *can’t* be convincing to everyone, it is for a conscientious man a far heavier yoke¹ than all the lumber of piously ordained ceremonies could ever be. If a man wants to conform with an established ecclesiastical commonwealth, all he needs is to *perform* these ceremonies; he needn’t to confess inwardly or outwardly a belief that they are institutions founded by God; and it’s that

¹ ‘That yoke is easy, and the burden is light’ [Matthew 11:30] where the duty that binds every man is imposed on him by himself through his own reason, so that it’s something he takes upon himself freely. Only the moral laws, taken as divine commands, are of this sort; of these alone the true church’s founder could say ‘My commands are not hard to obey’ [1 John 5:3]. This means only that these commands are not burdensome because everyone sees for himself the necessity of obeying them, so that nothing is here forced on him; whereas despotic commands to do things that we can see no value in, though imposed on us for our best interests (but not through our own reason), are a kind of drudgery that no-one submits to unless compelled to do so. •But the heaviness-of-yoke comparison also goes the other way•. The actions. . . .commanded by those moral laws are precisely the ones that a man finds the hardest; he would cheerfully replace them by the most burdensome pious drudgery if it the latter could count as equivalent to the others.

sort of confession that really burdens the conscience of a conscientious person.

Pfaffentum [see Glossary], therefore, is the constitution of a church dominated by fetish-service; and that's the situation in every church whose basis and essence consists not of principles of morality but of statutory commands, rules of faith, and ceremonies. In some types of church the fetishism involves so many performances carried out so mechanically that it seems to crowd out nearly all of morality and religion along with it, and to be trying to *replace* them—a fetishism that borders closely on paganism. But despite my speaking of 'so many' and 'bordering closely' what we have here is not a matter of *more* or *less*: the difference between worthy and worthless depends on the nature of the supremely binding principle. If this principle imposes submission to a statute as a slavish service rather than the free homage that ought to be paid to the moral law, and if this submission is unconditionally necessary, then—however few or many ceremonies and rituals it involves—this faith is 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 church (its hierarchy) can be monarchic or aristocratic or democratic; that's merely a matter of organisation; with any of those forms the underlying *constitution* is always despotic. Wherever the laws of a church's constitution include statutes laying down what is to be believed, a *clergy* rules—one that thinks it can actually dispense with reason and even, eventually, with scriptural learning. Its basis for that is its belief that

as the uniquely authorised guardian and interpreter of the will of the invisible legislator, it has the sole authority to administer the prescriptions of belief and so, furnished with this power, it doesn't need to convince but merely to command.

Aside from the clergy there is only the laity (including the head of the political commonwealth); so the church eventually rules the state, not exactly with force but through its influence on men's hearts, and also through a dazzling promise of the advantage the state is supposed to get from the unconditional obedience that the people have become accustomed to by the influence of spiritual discipline on their thought. Thus the habit of hypocrisy surreptitiously undermines the integrity and loyalty of the subjects, makes them cunning in the pretence of service not only in church duties but even in civic duties, and like all mistakenly accepted principles brings about the exact opposite of what was intended.

* * * * *

All this inevitably results from something that at first sight looks harmless—a switch in the order of the uniquely saving religious faith's principles, a change in which principle was given first place as the highest condition of salvation with the other subordinated to it. It is appropriate, it is reasonable, to assume that not only . . . scholars or subtle reasoners will be called to this enlightenment regarding their true welfare—for the entire human race should be capable of having this faith, even . . . those who are most ignorant and have the smallest conceptual resources must be able to lay claim to such instruction and inner conviction. [The first ellipse in that sentence replaces 'wise men after the flesh'; the second replaces 'the foolish things of the world' [1 *Corinthians* 1:26,27].] It does indeed seem as though an historical faith—especially if the concepts needed to understand its narratives are wholly anthropological and markedly suited to sense-perception—is of just this kind. For what is easier than to take in such a sense-based and simple narrative and to share it with others, or to repeat the words of mysteries when there's

no need to attach a meaning to them? How easily such a faith gains entrance into everyone's mind, especially given the great advantage it promises! How deeply rooted does belief in such a narrative's truth become, based as it is on a report accepted as authentic for a long time past! Thus, such a faith is indeed suited even to the most ordinary human capacities. However, although the announcement of such an historical event, as well as the acceptance of the rules of conduct based on it, are not mainly (let alone exclusively) the preserve of scholars and philosophers, these are not excluded from it; so doubts arise, partly about its truth and partly about how to interpret it; so many doubts that it would be utterly absurd to adopt such a faith as this—subject as it is to so many controversies (however well-meant)—as the supreme condition of a universal faith, the only one leading to salvation.

But there is an item of *practical* knowledge which rests solely on reason and requires no historical doctrine, and yet

- lies as close to every man, even the most simple, as though it were literally engraved on his heart;
- is a law that has only to be named to get everyone to agree about its authority; and
- carries with it in everyone's consciousness an unconditionally binding force;

namely the law of morality. What is more, this knowledge, unaided, either •leads to belief in God or at least •shapes the concept of him as a moral legislator; so it guides us to a pure religious faith that is not only comprehensible by everyone but also in the highest degree worthy of respect. It leads to this faith so naturally that if you care to try the experiment you'll find that the complete faith can be elicited from anyone just by asking him questions, without giving him any instruction in it. So it's not only **prudent** to start with this knowledge and let the historical faith that

harmonises with it follow; it is also our **duty** to make it the supreme condition under which alone we can hope to share in whatever salvation a religious faith may promise. The historical faith can be regarded as universally binding and admitted to have some validity (for it does contain universally valid teaching) but only as warranted by the interpretation it gets from pure religious faith. And in the other direction, the moral believer can get input from the historical faith when he finds it adding to the vitality of his pure religious disposition. In this way (and no other) the historical faith can have a pure moral worth, because here it is free and not coerced through any threat (for then it can never be sincere).

Now, given that the service of God in a given church is directed primarily to the pure *moral* veneration of God in accordance with the laws prescribed to humanity in general, the question arises: in that church should the content of religious preaching concern •the doctrine of godliness alone or •the doctrine of virtue alone? The doctrine of godliness is perhaps the best candidate for the referent of the word *religio* as it is understood today.

Godliness involves two states 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 is the disposition to obedience from one's own free choice and from approval of the law (the duty of a son).

So both involve, along with morality, the concept of an overseeing suprasensible being with the attributes needed for carrying out the highest good that morality aims at but is beyond our powers. If we go beyond our moral relation to the idea of this being and try to form a concept of his nature, there's always a danger that we shall think of it

anthropomorphically and hence in a manner directly hurtful to our moral principles. Thus the idea of such a being can't subsist by itself in speculative reason; even its origin, and still more its power, are wholly based on its relation to our . . . determination to duty. Now, in the first instruction of youth and even in sermons, which is more natural:

- to expound the doctrine of virtue before the doctrine of godliness? or
- to expound the doctrine of godliness before that of virtue (perhaps without mentioning the doctrine of virtue at all)?

The two doctrines obviously stand in necessary connection with each other. But, since they aren't things of one kind, this is possible only if one of them is conceived and explained as •end, the other merely as •means. The doctrine of virtue, however, subsists on its own (even without the concept of God), whereas the doctrine of godliness involves the concept of something that we represent to ourselves as the cause making up for our short-fall with respect to the final moral goal. So the doctrine of godliness can't on its own constitute the final goal of moral endeavour, but can only serve as a means of strengthening that which in itself *does* make a better man, namely the virtuous disposition. It does this by reassuring and guaranteeing this endeavour (as a striving for goodness, and even for holiness) in its expectation of the final goal that it can't achieve by itself. The doctrine of virtue, in contrast, is taken from the human soul. *Man already has it all*, though in an undeveloped form; it doesn't have to be extracted through inferences using subtle reasoning [see Glossary], as does the religious concept.

- In the purity of this concept of virtue,
- in our awakening awareness of our ability to master the greatest obstacles within ourselves, a capacity that otherwise we wouldn't have guessed that we had,

•in the human dignity that a man must respect in his own person and in his own efforts to achieve it
—in all this there's something that so exalts the soul, leading it to the very deity who is worthy of adoration only because of his holiness and as legislator for virtue, that man is willing to be *sustained* by it because he feels himself to a certain extent ennobled by this idea. This happens before he gives this concept the power of influencing his maxims—long before he reaches the concept of a world-ruler who transforms this duty into a command to us. If he *started* with this latter concept, there would be a risk of •dashing his courage (which is of the essence of virtue) and •transforming godliness into a fawning slavish subjection to a despotically commanding power. The courage to stand on one's own feet is itself strengthened by the doctrine of atonement when it **comes after** the ethical doctrine: it portrays as wiped out what can't be altered, and opens up to us the path to a new mode of life. If this doctrine ·of atonement· is made to **come first**, then

- the futility of trying to undo what has been done (expiation),
- a man's fear about whether he *qualifies* for this atonement [see page 64],
- his view of himself as completely incapable of goodness, and
- his anxiety about sliding back into evil

must rob a man of his courage. . . . [resumed on page 103]

·START OF A LONG FOOTNOTE·

The various kinds of faith among peoples seem gradually to give them a character—revealing itself outwardly in civil relations—which is later attributed to them as though it were a feature of the national temperament. Thus **Judaism** in its original set-up in which a people was to separate itself from all other peoples through every conceivable observance (some

of them very arduous) and to refrain from all intermingling with them, drew down on itself the charge of *misanthropy*. **Mohammedanism** is characterised by *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 *faint-heartedness*, for reasons opposite to those of the Moslems.—Now surely it is not because of the inner nature of the **Christian** faith but because of how it is presented to the heart and mind that the charge of faint-heartedness can also be brought against it in regard to those who have the most heartfelt intentions towards it but who, starting with human corruption and despairing of all virtue, place their religious principle solely in *piety* (meaning the principle of a passively waiting for godliness to be given by a higher power). Such men never place any reliance in themselves, but look about them in perpetual anxiety for supernatural help, and regard this very self-contempt (which is not humility) to be a means of obtaining favour. . . .

[This paragraph is a sub-footnote, tagged to the above remarks about Mohammedanism.] † This remarkable phenomenon (of an ignorant though intelligent people's pride in its faith) may also come from its founder's fancy that he alone had renewed on earth the concept of God's unity and of his suprasensible nature. He would indeed have ennobled his people by rescuing them idolatry and the anarchy of polytheism if he was entitled to credit himself with this achievement! As regards the characteristic of the third type of religious fellowship, the Christian, which is based on a misconceived humility: when someone's consideration of the holiness of the law leads him to lower his self-conceit in evaluating his own moral worth, the upshot of that should not be •contempt for himself but rather •a resolve. . . .to approach ever nearer to agreement with this law. [The note ends with remarks

about how the name 'virtue' has fallen out of favour, and about the deep wrongness of 'hypocritical devotion'.]

•END OF FOOTNOTE•

. . . [picking up from page 102] and reduce him to a state of sighing moral passivity that doesn't tackle anything great or good, and only looks for what it can get by merely wishing for it.—In what concerns the moral disposition, everything depends on the highest concept under which one subsumes one's duties. When reverence for God is put first, with virtue second, this object of reverence becomes an idol, i.e. he is thought of as a being whom we may hope to please not through morally upright conduct on earth but through adoration and ingratiating; and religion is then idolatry. But godliness is not a *substitute* for virtue, . . .but virtue's completion, enabling us to be crowned with the hope of the ultimate achievement of all our good purposes.

D. The Guide of Conscience in Matters of Faith

[In the next few pages 'conscience' translates *Gewissen*; and 'certain' and 'certainly' translate *gewiß*, which can also be written *gewiss*. The latter words are in bold type, to help you to decide whether that overlap is significant.]

The question here is not •how conscience ought to be guided (you don't need to guide your conscience; you just need to have one), but •how it can serve as a guide in the most perplexing moral decisions.

Conscience is a state of consciousness that in itself is duty. But how can this be? The consciousness of all our representations seems to be necessary only for logical purposes, and therefore only in a conditional manner when we want to clarify our representations; so (it seems) a state of consciousness can't be unconditional duty.

One oughtn't to venture anything that risks being wrong—that is a moral principle that needs no proof. Hence the consciousness that an action that I intend to perform is right is an unconditional duty. Whether an action is over-all right or wrong is judged by the understanding, not by conscience. And it's not absolutely necessary to know, concerning all possible actions, whether they are right or wrong. But concerning the action that I am planning to perform I must not only •judge and form an opinion that it is not wrong but •be **certain** of this; and this requirement is a postulate of conscience, to which is opposed probabilism, i.e. the principle that the mere opinion that an action may well be right is a good enough reason for performing it. So conscience could also be defined as follows:

Conscience is the moral faculty of judgment [*Urtheilskraft* = 'power of forming beliefs or opinions or conclusions'] passing judgment [*richtende* = 'passing judgment in the legal sense'] on itself;

except that this definition wouldn't be much use with a prior explanation of the concepts it involves. Conscience doesn't pass judgment on actions as cases falling under the law; that's what *reason* does in its subjectively practical role. . . . What happens when conscience is at work is that *reason passes judgement on itself*: it •asks whether it really has carefully undertaken that appraisal of actions (as to whether they are right or wrong), and it calls on the man as a witness for or against himself, on the question of whether this careful appraisal did or didn't take place.

Take, for instance, an inquisitor who clings tightly to the uniqueness of his statutory faith

next phrase: *bis allenfalls zum Märtyrthume,*

literally meaning: even to the point of martyrdom,

perhaps meaning: even to the point of condemning to death

people who don't share it,

but perhaps instead meaning: even to the point of undergoing martyrdom himself in defence of it,

and who has to pass judgment on a so-called heretic (otherwise a good citizen) who is charged with unbelief. Now if he condemns this man to death, I ask which of these we should say:

(a) He has judged according to his conscience (erroneous though it is),

or, whether he •merely erred or •consciously did wrong,

(b) He is guilty of an absolute lack of conscience.

In support of (b) we can tell him to his face that in such a case he could never be quite **certain** that by acting in this way he wasn't acting wrongly. Presumably he was firm in his belief that a supernaturally revealed divine will. . . .permitted him, if it didn't actually impose it as a duty, to wipe out the supposed unbelief along with the unbeliever. But was he really strongly enough convinced of such a revealed doctrine, and of this interpretation of it, to venture on this basis to kill a man? 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 some extraordinary way has ordered it otherwise. But if the inquisitor thinks that God *did* once utter this terrible command, he can't be absolutely **certain** of this, because he has it only on the basis of historical documents; this 'revelation' has reached him only through men, and has been interpreted by men, and even did it appear to have come from God himself it's at least possible that in this instance someone made a mistake (as when Abraham thought God had commanded him to slaughter his own son like a sheep). So the inquisitor ·in condemning the heretic to death· would *risk* doing something extremely wrong, and that would be

acting without his conscience coming into play. That's how it is with every historical faith, every faith based on appearances: there is always a possibility of error in it. So it shows a lack of conscience to follow such a faith when what it commands or permits *may* be wrong, i.e. may conflict with a human duty that is **certain** in and of itself.

[Kant adds that even if actions of some kind are morally permissible, it is wrong for clerics to insist—on the basis of 'revelation', i.e. of mere history—that the faithful must perform them or else be thrown out of the church. In developing this point, he edges across from actions to beliefs. The trouble with requiring the laity to believe something that the clerics believe on historical grounds is that it leaves thoughtful folk having to profess something that they know isn't **certain**. In conclusion:] Here the layman's spiritual superior goes against conscience by forcing others to believe something that he himself can't be wholly convinced of. . . . There may be truth in what is believed but also untruthfulness in believing it (or even in the mere inner profession of it), and this is in itself damnable.

As I noted in the footnote on page 96, men who have made even the slightest beginning in freedom of thought,¹ having previously been under a slavish yoke of belief (e.g. the Protestants), immediately regard themselves as more ennobled (as it were) the less in the way of clerically pre-

scribed stuff they are required to believe. The exact opposite holds with those who haven't yet been able to, or wanted to, to make an attempt of this kind. Their principle is: *It is advisable to believe too much rather than too little*, on the ground that what they do over and above the call of duty at least can't hurt and might even help. This illusion makes a principle of *insincerity* in religious confessions—a principle that is made easier to accept by the expectation of religion's making up for every mistake, including insincerity along with the rest. It gives rise to the so-called 'security maxim' in matters of faith, namely:

If what I profess regarding God is true, I have hit the mark; if it is untrue but not in itself forbidden, I haven't done anything wrong, but have merely believed it superfluously and burdened myself with an unnecessary inconvenience.

The hypocrite regards as *nothing* the risk arising from the insincerity of his profession, the violation of conscience, involved in proclaiming even before God that something is **certain** when knows that it's not of a kind that could possibly merit unconditional confidence. The genuine security maxim—the only one compatible with religion—is just the reverse of that:

If something x can be known to me as the means or the condition of salvation not through my own reason

¹ Even quite able people say such things as that a certain (1) people struggling for legal freedom, or (2) the bondmen of a landed proprietor, 'aren't yet ripe for freedom'; and more broadly that (3) mankind in general 'isn't yet ripe for freedom of belief'. I confess that I don't know what to make of such talk. It implies that *freedom will never arrive*, because one can't *ripen* to this freedom without *being* free already (one must be free if one is to make efficient use of one's powers in struggling for more freedom). The first attempts will be crude, of course, and usually will put the freedom-seekers in a more painful and more perilous situation than they were in when still under orders from others but also under their care; but that has to be put up with, because they'll never ripen with respect to reason except through their own efforts (which they can make only when they are free). When those who hold power in their hands, constrained by the circumstances of the times, postpone until very far into the future the removal of (1-3) these three bonds, I have nothing to say against them. But to make it a principle that those who are once subjected to them are not fit for freedom, and that one is justified in keeping them from it indefinitely, is to usurp the prerogatives of God who created men for freedom. Ruling in (1) state, in (2) household, and in (3) church is certainly *easier* if one adopts this principle; but is it *more just*?

but only through revelation, and can be brought into my belief-system only on the strength of an historical faith, and if x doesn't contradict pure moral principles, then I can't indeed believe and profess it as **certain**, but nor can I reject it as being **certainly** false. Still, without settling that question I expect that whatever is valuable in x will bring benefit to me as long as I don't disqualify myself by morally bad life-conduct based on a bad moral disposition.

In this maxim there is genuine moral security, namely security in the eye of conscience (and more than this can't be required of a man); whereas the greatest danger and insecurity attend the supposedly prudential tactic of craftily evading any harmful consequences of not professing, because the person who adopts it, by siding with both parties risks incurring the disfavour of both.

Let the author of a creed, let the teacher of a church, indeed let *any* man who is convinced that some dogmas are divine revelations, ask himself:

Do you really dare to assert the truth of these dogmas in the presence of him who knows the heart, at the risk of losing all that is valuable and holy to you?

I would need a very dim conception of human nature. . . .not

to anticipate that even the boldest teacher of faith would have to tremble at such a question.¹

But if this is so, how is it consistent with conscientiousness •to insist on a declaration of faith that admits of no restriction, and •to proclaim that the boldness of such an assertion is in itself a duty and a service to God? Taking this line strikes to the ground the human freedom that is absolutely required in all moral matters, such as the adoption of a religion; and doesn't leave room even for the good will that says 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief!' [Mark 9:24]²

General Remark

[On page 27 Kant says that this General remark could be entitled 'Means of Grace'.]

Anything good that a man can do through his own efforts under laws of freedom can be called *nature*, in contrast to what he can do only with supernatural assistance, which is called *grace*. We aren't using 'nature' here—as we do in other contexts—to refer to a physical property distinguished from freedom; we use it here merely because we at least recognise the laws of this capacity (laws of virtue), which

¹ The man who has the audacity to say that anyone who doesn't believe in this or that historical doctrine as a sacred truth 'is *damned*' ought to be able to say also: 'If what I'm now telling you is not true, let me be damned!'. . . .

² † [This note begins with a flowery invocation of sincerity, and then a distinction between sincerity and candour (roughly, distinguishing (said → believed) from (believed → said)). Then:] We have in our nature a predisposition to sincerity, though its cultivation is neglected; if we didn't have that, the human race would be, in its own eyes, an object of the deepest contempt. But this quality of mind is exposed to many temptations and entails many sacrifices, and hence calls for moral strength, i.e. virtue (which has to be worked for); it must be guarded and cultivated earlier than any other, because the opposed propensity is the hardest to eradicate once it has been allowed take root. Now compare •that •care for the protection and development of sincerity• with •our usual manner of upbringing—especially in regard to. . . .doctrines of faith—where accuracy [*Treue*] of memory in answering questions relating to these doctrines, without regard to the sincerity [*Treue*] of the confession itself (which is never put to the test), is accepted as sufficient to make a believer of someone who doesn't even understand what he declares to be holy! Having made that comparison, you won't be surprised by the insincerity that produces nothing but inward hypocrites.

gives reason a visible and comprehensible clue to it, analogous to our knowledge of nature in the other sense of the word. In contrast to that, we're wholly in the dark about when, what, or how much, *grace* will achieve in us, and reason is left with no clue about the laws according to which grace might occur—as about the supernatural in general (and morality, regarded as holiness, is supernatural).

The concept of something supernatural joining up with our deficient moral capacity, and even with our disposition (not wholly purified, and certainly weak) to perform our entire duty, is transcendent; it is a mere idea [see Glossary], and no experience can assure us that there's something real corresponding to it. And even taken as an idea in a merely practical context it is still very risky, and hard to reconcile with reason, because anything that is to count as morally good conduct on our part must happen not through *outside* influence but solely through the best possible use of *our own* powers. But there's no *proof* that the two can't be reconciled, because although there's nothing supernatural in the concept of freedom itself, the *possibility* of freedom is just as incomprehensible to us as is the supernatural factor that we would like to assume as a supplement to the workings—which are indeed *ours*, but are deficient—of our freedom.

We at least know, regarding freedom, the *moral laws* according to which it ought to be determined. But we can't *know anything at all* about •supernatural aid—whether a certain moral power that we detect in ourselves really comes from •it, or on what occasions and under what conditions •it may be expected. Thus, apart from the general assumption that

what nature can't achieve in us will be effected by grace, provided we have made the maximum use of our own powers,

we can't make any use of this idea, either as to •how (beyond a continuous effort to live a morally good life) we might draw its help down on us, or •how we might determine on what occasions to expect it. This idea is wholly transcendent; and we would do well to keep it at a respectful distance as something sacred, so as to avoid two dangers: •under the illusion of performing miracles ourselves or observing miracles within us, we make ourselves unfit for any use of reason; •we allow ourselves to be drawn into the slack attitude of waiting in idle passivity to receive from above something that we ought to look for within ourselves.

Now, *means* are all intermediate causes that a man has in his power to achieve a certain purpose; and he doesn't—he *can't have*—any means of becoming worthy of heavenly assistance except an earnest attempt to improve his moral nature in every way that is possible *for him*, thus making himself capable of receiving divine aid in completing that improvement; for the divine aid he is waiting for is aimed purely at *his* morality. It was to be expected *a priori* that the impure man wouldn't seek this aid *there* but rather in certain sensuous arrangements (that he does have in his power but that can't make him better, though he looks to them to achieve this very result in supernatural fashion); and this is what actually happens. . . .

The true (moral) service of God, which the faithful must offer as •subjects in his kingdom but no less as •citizens of it (under laws of freedom), is itself invisible just as the kingdom is. That is, it's a service of the heart ('in spirit and in truth' [John 4:24]). It can only consist in •the disposition to obey all true duties as divine commands, not in •actions aimed directly at God. But for a man the invisible needs to be *represented through* something that is visible (perceptible through the senses); indeed, for practical purposes it needs to be *accompanied by* something sense-perceptible. . . . This

is a means of simply picturing to ourselves our duty in the service of God; it wouldn't be easy for us to do without it, but it's extremely likely to be misunderstood: through an illusion that steals over us, it is easily held—and often *is* held—to be the service of God itself.

This alleged service of God, when reduced to its spirit and its true meaning—namely, to a disposition dedicating itself to the kingdom of God within us and outside us—can be divided. . . .into four observances of duty; and certain corresponding rites that aren't necessarily connected to these observances but have been associated with them because they (the rites). . . .have long been regarded as useful means arousing and sustaining our attention to the true service of God. The observances are all based on the intention to further the morally good.

- (1) Firmly establishing this goodness in ourselves, and repeatedly arousing in our mind the disposition towards it (**private prayer**);
- (2) Spreading goodness abroad by coming together on days legally assigned for this, in order that religious doctrines and wishes (along with corresponding dispositions) may be expressed there and thus be generally shared (**churchgoing**);
- (3) Passing goodness on to posterity by receiving new members into the fellowship of faith, as a duty; also instructing them in goodness (**baptism**, in the Christian religion);
- (4) Maintaining this fellowship through a repeated public ceremony which makes *enduring* the union of these members into an ethical body, according to the principle of the equality of their rights and of their shares in all the fruits of moral goodness (**communion**).

When someone undertakes something in the realm of religion not as purely moral but as a means of making himself well-pleasing to God and thus, through God, of satisfying all his wishes, this is *fetish-faith*. It is the conviction that

something that can produce no effect at all according to natural laws or to moral laws of reason will unaided bring about what is wished for, if we firmly believe that it will do so and accompany this belief with certain ceremonies.

Even where the conviction has taken hold that everything in religion depends on moral goodness, which can arise only from action, the sensual man still looks for a secret path by which to evade that arduous condition: if only he honours the custom (performs the ceremony), he thinks, God may well accept it as a substitute for the act itself. . . . Thus in every kind of faith man has devised for himself certain practices as means of grace, though in some faiths the practices are not—as they are in the Christian faith—related to practical concepts of reason and to dispositions conforming to them. (There are, for instance, the five great commands in the Mohammedan faith: washing, praying, fasting, almsgiving, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. [Kant adds that almsgiving (not the others) would be morally acceptable, like the Christian practices, if it were done with a virtuous motive, but it isn't:] In this faith, almsgiving is consistent with *extorting from others* what is then offered as a sacrifice to God in the person of the poor.)

There can be three kinds of illusory belief that involve the possibility of our overstepping the bounds of our reason in relation to the supernatural (which is not, according to the laws of reason, an object of either theoretical or practical use).

- (a) The belief in miracles. The belief that we can encounter in experience something whose occurrence

we ourselves can recognise—according to the objective laws of experience—to be impossible.

(b) The belief in mysteries. The illusion that our best moral interests require us to include among our concepts of reason something that our reason can't form any concept of.

(c) The belief in means of grace. The illusion of being able to bring about by natural means something that is for us a mystery, namely, the influence of God on our morality.

I have dealt with **(a)** and **(b)** in the General Remarks following the second and third Essays in this work [pages 46 and 77]. So now it remains for me to discuss **(c)** the means of grace. (Not to be confused with *works* of grace,¹ i.e. supernatural moral influences in relation to which we are merely passive; the imagined experience of these is a fanatical illusion that is all a matter of feelings.

(1) Prayer, thought of as an internal ceremonial service of God and hence as a means of grace, is a superstitious illusion (a fetish-making); for it is merely a declared wish directed to a being who doesn't need to be *told* about the inner disposition of the wisher. It doesn't accomplish anything, and it doesn't discharge any of the duties which, as commands of God, we are obliged to fulfill; so God is not really served by it. A heartfelt wish to be well-pleasing to God in all our doings and allowings—i.e. the disposition in all our actions to perform them as though this were in the service of God—is the spirit of prayer that can and should be present in us 'without ceasing' [1 *Thessalonians* 5:171]. But clothing this wish (even if only inwardly) in words and formulas. . . . [continued on page 111]

·START OF LONG FOOTNOTE ON PRAYER·

In **(i)** the wish that is the spirit of prayer, the man is trying only to affect *himself* (to enliven his disposition by means of the idea of God); whereas in **(ii)** the other wish, where he declares himself in words, and so outwardly, he tries to affect *God*. In **(i)**, a prayer can be offered with perfect sincerity by someone who doesn't presume to be able to affirm that the existence of God is wholly certain; in **(ii)** prayer that reports a wish to God, he supposes this supreme being to be present in person, or at least he adopts (even inwardly) a frame of mind *as though* he were convinced of God's presence—his thought being that even if this isn't so, pretending that it is at least can't harm him and may win him some favour. Thus, complete sincerity can't be found in **(ii)** the verbal prayer as it can in **(i)** the pure spirit of prayer.

You'll find the truth of this last remark confirmed if you think about a man who is pious and well-meaning but limited in regard to these purified religious concepts, whom someone else takes unawares (not praying aloud, but merely) behaving in a way that indicates prayer. You don't need prompting from me to expect this man to fall into confusion or embarrassment, as if he were in a situation he should be ashamed of. 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 the same suspicion arises (not altogether unjustly) if a man is found, *all alone*, in an occupation or attitude that is appropriate only if he sees *someone else*—which the man in our example doesn't.

Now the teacher of the Gospel has expressed the spirit of prayer most admirably in a formula—[known as 'the Lord's Prayer'; see page 117, verses 9–13]—that has made all verbal prayer dispensable, including the verbal praying of this very

¹ † See the General Remark after the first Essay, page 22.

prayer. There's nothing in it but the resolution to live a morally good life; and that, combined with our awareness of our frailty, carries with it the persistent wish to be a worthy member of the kingdom of God. So it doesn't contain any request for something that God in his wisdom might well refuse us, but simply a wish which, if it is genuine (active), *of itself* achieves its object of becoming a man well-pleasing to God. Even the wish for the means of staying alive (the wish for bread) *for one day* and expressly not for longer is the effect of a felt need that is merely animal, and is more •a confession of what *nature* wills in us than •a special deliberate request for what *the man* wills. It would be of the latter kind if the request were for bread *for another day*, and that is what this prayer clearly enough does *not* ask for.

A prayer of this sort is made in the moral frame of mind (animated solely by the idea of God), and as the moral spirit of prayer it brings about its object (being well-pleasing to God) *of itself*; so it is the only kind of prayer that can be prayed with faith, meaning *prayed with assurance that the prayer will be heard*, because only morality *in us* gives rise to this assurance. Even with a request for this day's bread alone, no-one can be assured that it will be heard, i.e. that God's wisdom necessitates its being granted; it may perhaps square better with this wisdom to let the suppliant die today for lack of bread. The project of trying to divert God from the plan of his wisdom (in our favour) by insistently battering him with requests—that is not only a preposterous but also a presumptuous illusion! Hence we can't hold, of any prayer for a non-moral object, that it is sure to be heard, which means that we can't pray for such an object *in faith*. [Kant adds that even prayer for a moral object (such as one's own improvement), when it's an attempt to get God to do what we ought to do for ourselves, may well not be granted, and so] a man can't pray even for this in faith.

In the light of all this we can explain what might be going on in a miracle-working faith (which would always be united with an inner prayer). From these two truths—

- God can't lend a man any power to bring about effects supernaturally (for that is a contradiction); and
- a man can't work out, on the basis of the concepts he forms for himself of good ends that are possible on earth, what divine wisdom judges in these matters, and so he can't use the wish he nurtures within himself to steer the divine power for his purposes;

—it follows that a gift of miracles, I mean a gift where it's up to the man himself whether he has it ('If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, etc.' [Matthew 17:20]), is, taken literally, unthinkable. If such a faith is to mean anything at all, it is simply an idea of the overwhelming importance that the man's moral nature would have if he had it (as we never do) in its entire God-pleasing completeness, a greater importance than all other causes that God in his supreme wisdom may have at his disposal. It is therefore a basis for confidence that if we were ever to become wholly what we ought to be and (in continued approximation) could be, nature would have to heed our wishes—but under these circumstances those wishes would never be unwise.

As for the uplift that is sought in churchgoing, public prayer is not a means of grace but an ethical ceremony, whether it consists in •united singing of the hymn of faith, or •a formal address 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 as a public concern in which each individual's wish should be represented as united with everyone else's toward the same goal (the ushering in of the kingdom of God), is better than private prayer in two ways:

- (a) It raises feelings to the point of moral exaltation (whereas private prayers, because they are made without this sublime idea, gradually lose through habituation their influence on the mind);
- (b) It has in itself a more rational basis than private prayer does for clothing the moral wish that constitutes the spirit of prayer in a formal address;

and it does its work without thinking of 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 energize 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 can't be done better than by speaking to this kingdom's sovereign just as though he were present in that particular place.

·END OF LONG FOOTNOTE·

[picking up from page 109] can, at best, possess only the value of a *means* by which that disposition of ours may be repeatedly enlivened, and can have no direct bearing on the divine approval; and for this very reason it can't be a duty for everyone. Why not? Because a means can be prescribed only to someone who needs it for certain purposes, and not all men *need* this means (in which a man who is really conversing internally with himself purports to be speaking more intelligibly with God). What we should be doing is to work for this goal ·of moral improvement· by continually clarifying and elevating our moral disposition, so that this *spirit of prayer* may be thoroughly enlivened within us and the verbal form of prayer (at least as directed to our own advantage) finally fall away. The verbal prayer—like everything that is aimed at a given goal indirectly—rather *weakens* the

effect of the moral idea (which, taken subjectively, is called 'devotion'). Thus the contemplation of the divine creation's •wisdom in the smallest things and of its •majesty in the great—which isn't a new thing but has recently grown into the highest wonder—is a power such that the mind

- is put by it into the *sinking* mood called *worship*, where the man shrinks almost to nothing in his own eyes; and also
- in the light of its own moral determination is put into such an *elevated* state that mere words. . . . would have to pass away as empty sound because the emotion arising from such a vision of the hand of God is inexpressible.

In the religious part of their life men are prone to transform something that really concerns only their own moral improvement into something involving attendance at court, ·so to speak·, in which usually the humiliations and glorifications are the less felt in a moral way the more they are expressed in words. So it is all the more necessary to teach children (who still stand in need of words), in their earliest years, that the language used (even if used only inwardly. . . .) has no value in itself and serves only to enliven the child's disposition to a course of life well-pleasing to God—the words being merely an aid to the imagination. If this isn't understood, all these devout declarations of awe risk producing nothing but hypocritical veneration of God instead of a practical service of him—a service that never consists in mere feelings.

(2) **Churchgoing**, thought of as the ceremonial public service of God in a church, is as a visible representation of the community of believers not only •a means to be valued by each individual for his own edification¹ but also •a duty directly obliging them as a group, as citizens of a divine state to be presented here on earth; provided that this church doesn't involve ceremonies that might lead to idolatry and thus burden the conscience—e.g. certain prayers to God, with his infinite mercy personified under the name of a man; for such representation of God as something perceptible is contrary to the command of reason: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, etc.' [Exodus 2:4]. But the desire to use it as in itself a means of grace, as though God were directly served by our churchgoing and had attached special favours to the celebration of this solemnity (which is merely a sense-perceptible representation of the universality of religion), is an illusion that fits the cast of mind of a good citizen in a political commonwealth. . . .but contributes nothing to the character of such a man as a citizen in the kingdom of God—indeed it debases that character by functioning as a deceptive veneer that conceals the bad moral content of the man's disposition from the eyes of others, and even from his own eyes.

(3) The one-time ceremonial initiation into the church-community—i.e. someone's first acceptance as a member of a church (in the Christian church through **baptism**)—is a highly significant ceremony that lays a grave obligation •on the initiate (if he is in a position to confess his faith) or •on the witnesses who pledge themselves to take care of his education in this faith. This aims at something holy (developing a man into a citizen of a divine state); but this act. . . .is not in itself holy or a means to this person's holiness or receptivity to divine grace in this individual; so it is not a *means of grace*, however exaggerated the early Greek church's esteem for it was—they thought that it could instantly wash away all sins. At this point the illusion publicly revealed its kinship with an almost more-than-pagan superstition.

(4) Then there is **communion**—the often-repeated ceremony of renewal, continuation, and propagation of this ecclesiastical community under laws of equality, a ceremony that can be performed after the example of the church's founder (and also in memory of him), through the formality of sharing a meal at the same table. This contains within itself something great, expanding the narrow, selfish, and quarrelsome cast of mind among men, especially in matters of religion, toward the idea of a world-wide moral community;

¹ [In this footnote, 'edification' translates *Erbauung*; each means 'moral improvement', and each can also mean 'construction (of a building)'; this ambiguity is at work in the footnote.] The best meaning we can assign to this word seems to be: *the moral effect that a person's devotion has on him*. This effect isn't a matter of feelings, because *they* are already comprised in the concept of *devotion*; though most of those who are supposed to be devoted (and therefore called 'devotees') think that feelings are *all* it's a matter of. So the word 'edification' must signify *devotion's effect in actually improving the man*. This improvement actually happens only if the man systematically sets to work, •lays deep in his heart firm principles couched in well-understood concepts, •erects on that basis dispositions to perform the duties connected with these principles (the strength of each disposition being proportional to the importance of the duty), •strengthens and secures these dispositions against the onslaughts of the desires, and thus as it were •*builds* a new man as a temple of God. It's easy to see that this building can't go up quickly; but it must at least be evident that *something* has been accomplished. But men believe themselves to be greatly edified (through listening or reading and singing) when absolutely nothing has been built, indeed when no hand has been put to the work; 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.

and it is a good means of enlivening a community's disposition towards the brotherly love that it represents. But to assert that God has attached special favours to the celebration of this ceremony, and to make it an article of faith that this ceremony, this mere •church action, is also a •means of grace—this is a religious illusion that can only work *against* the spirit of religion. ·If it were accepted·, *Pfaffentum* [see Glossary] would be the dominion of the clergy over men's minds, usurped by claiming that they were entitled to exclusive possession of the means of grace.

* * * * *

There's a common basis for all such contrived self-deceptions in religious matters. Among the three divine moral attributes

holiness — mercy — justice

men usually turn directly to the second, so as to avoid having to face the daunting task of conforming to the requirements of the first. It is troublesome to be a good •servant (always hearing only about one's 'duties'); a man would rather be a •favourite, where much is overlooked and, when duty has been too grossly violated, everything is atoned for through the agency of someone who is favoured in the highest degree—while the man remains the slack servant that he was. But in order to satisfy himself that his plan has at least some chance of working, the man transfers his concept of *man* (including his faults) to the deity. ·Here is how that works for him·:

Even with the best ruler of our race, •legislative rigour, •beneficent mercy and •scrupulous justice don't (as they should) operate separately to produce a moral effect on the subject's actions, but *minge* in the human ruler's thinking when reaching his decisions, so that

one has only to circumvent one of these attributes, the frail wisdom of the human will, to get the other two to go the way one wants; and our man hopes to achieve the same thing with God by applying himself solely to his mercy.

(That's why it was important for religion that God's attributes—or rather his relations to man—should be kept separate through the idea of a threefold personality, this being applied analogously to God so as to make each attribute or relation separately recognisable.) To this end the man busies himself with every conceivable ceremony designed to mark how greatly he •respects the divine commands, so that he won't have to •obey them; and in order that his mere wishes may serve also to *make good* his disobedience of these commands, he cries 'Lord! Lord!' so as not to have to 'do the will of his heavenly father' [both phrases from *Matthew* 7:21]. In this way he comes to conceive of the ceremonies in which certain means are used to enliven truly practical dispositions as being in themselves means of grace; he even proclaims that the belief that they are such is an essential part of religion (the common man thinks it is 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 divine law) rather than with •virtue (using his own powers to fulfilling the duty he ·says he· respects). What is meant by the word 'godliness' (the true religious disposition) is the *combination* of piety and virtue.

When the illusion of this supposed favourite of Heaven rises to the point where he fanatically imagines feeling special works of grace within himself (or even imagines that he has been in secret conversation with God!), he at last comes to hate virtue and to hold it in contempt. So it's no wonder that religion is openly criticised for still doing so little for men's improvement, and that the inner light ('under a

bushel' [*Matthew* 5:15]) of these 'favourites' doesn't shine forth outwardly in good works. . . . The teacher of the gospel has himself told us of the empirical evidence by which every man can know others, namely *by their fruits*, and every man can know himself in the same way. But up to now we haven't seen that those who think they are extraordinarily favoured (the chosen ones) are *any* better than the naturally honest man who can be relied on in social intercourse, in business, and in trouble; on the contrary, the chosen ones as a group can hardly stand comparison with him—which proves that the right course is not to go from pardoning grace to virtue but rather from virtue to pardoning grace.

THE END

The Sermon on the Mount [see page 87 above.]**Matthew Chapter 5**

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other

also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew Chapter 6

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew Chapter 7

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.