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# THE MEANING OF FAITH IN THE THOUGHT OF KANT

## SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The objective of this exercise is to give as full as possible an explanation of Kant's famous statement: "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith".<sup>1</sup> While this statement occupies an important and significant place in Kant's introduction to the second edition of his great KRV, it seldom has much respect paid to it by Kant commentators. Kant is generally characterised as the critic of metaphysics or the establisher of the autonomy of science or ethics, but seldom as a defender of the faith. This enquiry concerns Kant's claim to have found grounds for affirming that room has to be made for faith in human understanding. It centres upon both the nature of the faith he seeks to defend, and the manner in which he defends it.

However, before such a position can be reached, two diametrically opposed lines of Kant interpretation require to be discussed. The first would preclude the possibility of this enquiry at all, by affirming that Kant embraced no religious faith whatsoever. Since this view is held either explicitly or implicitly by many Kant scholars, its claim to truth must be carefully examined. This examination is conducted in terms of the detailed case argued by Hans Vaihinger.

The second, and opposing view, if defensible,

<sup>1</sup> B p. xxx.

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would produce great confusion in the field of Kant studies. It recognises Kant's attempt to defend faith. However, it wrongly defines the nature of the faith Kant sought to defend, by relating it to romanticist expressions of religious faith. The views are examined of some who have tried to read Kant in this manner.

Both extremes having been rejected, Kant's movement in thought is followed from his rejection of the theology of the rationalists to his own doctrine of rational faith. The argument commences in the KPV, where Kant's distinction between Phenomena and Noumena is identified as the key to the possibility of future discussion, after limits have been set upon human knowledge. In the KPV, Kant is thus enabled to speak with the voice of practical reason about matters upon which the voice of theoretical reason must be silent. Practical Reason postulates certain Ideas. The epistemic mode of holding them is practical faith. This position leads to the necessity to study R, in order to see the full movement of Kant's thought.

While developing the concept of faith implied in the KPV, R expands and amplifies it by first enlarging Kant's conception of freedom. It then develops the notion of faith as both rational and moral. The nature of faith as involved in the act of willing, the ultimate expression of human freedom, is defined.

Having established that Kant did indeed have a religious faith for which to make room, and having attempted to define it, the question is raised of what

this faith has in common with Christian Faith. Are there any identifiable 'Christian' elements in this faith? It is maintained that Kant's position should not be regarded as mere ethical Theism. A point by point comparison between any classic statement of the Church's faith and the elements of Kant's faith is rejected as a means of answering this question. The argument turns on the fact that there is within the history of Christian thought, a tension which starts with the opposition between Law and Gospel and runs through the long history of theology. The tension represents a basic conflict of ideas between those who have tried to restrict the manner in which the faith of the Church is expressed, and those who have tried to 'universalise' it. Those who have engaged in 'universalist' experiments have often been accused of heresy. Kant attempted to erect a Christian universalism on the basis of moral experience, and in doing so, fell foul of both the Aufklärung and the Prussian Church. The fact that he encountered opposition from two opposed groups illustrates the tension within himself between dogmatism and scepticism, a balance between which, he tried to maintain on philosophical grounds.

The originality of this work I would claim lies in three directions. First, it attempts to establish that Kant's religious faith was an integral part of his whole critical programme. Secondly, it tries to argue for the unity of thought which leads to the establishment of this faith. Thirdly, it attempts to interpret Kant's view of faith, not as mere ethical theism, but as a representative of a valid expression of Christian

thought. Kant's Christian universalism has many inherent problems, which are recognised, but it is the culmination of his system. Only from this vantage point is it possible to have proper and adequate perspective of the entire territory of his thought.

The last chapter deals with the relevance and significance of Kant's view of faith. His alleged impact ~~on~~ theology in certain directions is examined. Finally, my own views are set out concerning those philosophers and theologians who, whether or not acknowledging any debt to Kant, I regard as most closely attempting to continue the task which Kant left for philosophy and theology.

## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

### GERMAN TEXT OF KANT.

- D - Text of "KANT WERKE" Edition Wissenschaftliche  
Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt 1968 (10 Volumes)  
BA - Text of "Kant Schriften" Berlin Academy Edition.

### ENGLISH TEXT.

- KRV - "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" tr. by Norman Kemp  
Smith "Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason"  
(Macmillan 1968)  
A - text of 1781 edition.  
B - text of 1787 edition.  
KPV - "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft" tr. by Lewis  
White Beck "Critique of Practical Reason"  
(Library of Liberal Arts 1956)  
KU - "Kritik der Urteilskraft" tr. by J.C. Meredith  
"The Critique of Judgement" (Oxford University  
Press 1961)  
R - "Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen  
Vernunft" tr. by T.M. Green & H.H. Hudson  
"Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone"  
(Harper Torchbooks 1960)  
P - "Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf"  
tr. Lewis White Beck "Perpetual Peace" (Library  
of the Liberal Arts 1963)  
G - "Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten" (Groundwor  
of the Metaphysic of Morals) tr. W.J. Paton "Th  
Moral Law" (Hutchinson's University Library,  
London 1961)  
H - A collection of essays by Kant entitled "Kant on  
History" (Library of Liberal Arts 1963). Page  
references are to the complete volume of essays.  
GR - Gabrielle Rabel "Kant" (Oxford University Press  
1963) Translation of selected Kant passages.

- Z - Zweig "Kant's Philosophical Correspondence" (1759-9  
Chicago University Press 1967.
- AB - T.A. Abbot "Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and  
other works on the Theory of Ethics" (Longman's  
1873 and 1959)
- V - Hans Vaihinger "Philosophie des als-ob" (tr. C.K.  
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THE MEANING OF FAITH IN THE THOUGHT OF KANT

Stuart D.B. Picken

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**KANT'S ALLEGED PRAGMATISM.**

"I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith". With this statement (in the introduction to the second edition of the KRV)<sup>1</sup>, Kant indicates the conclusion he has reached in his attempt to determine the relationship between knowledge (Wissen) and faith (Glaube). Taken as a general statement of the conclusions of the Critical Philosophy as a whole, or simply of the KRV in particular, it is too wide and general. This is at most one consequence of the critical investigations which Kant undertook. However, taken as a statement in which Kant brings together the terms knowledge and faith in a suggestive, significant and apparently conclusive manner, it is a starting point. Much philosophical endeavour has been expended in continuous efforts to clarify what Kant meant by knowledge thus 'denied' or limited. Far less concern has been exercised over what Kant meant when he spoke of faith, for which he claimed to have made room. This quotation is a beginning for thought.

Kant's famous statement falls into two natural parts. It is his conclusion that he must DENY KNOWLEDGE. It is perhaps banal to make this comment, but there are two ways in which one may proceed to deny knowledge. A vivid illustration of this point is found in a passage in the "Journals" of Kierkegaard:

" ..... a scholar who has used the twenty best

<sup>1</sup> Bxxx

years of his life (the years in which a man really studies) for the most intense study, and in his forty-eighth year, at the pinnacle of knowledge, has not found the satisfaction he sought, and finding himself suddenly at the end of his tether is brought to the opposite extreme, closes his books and says 'No, it is not knowledge that matters' ..... is this not a very different thing from an innkeeper, who was just passing and heard the scholar (for he lived there, the windows were open, and the scholar spoke in his passion in a loud voice), and this innkeeper could not even write his own name, and scarcely read it when someone else wrote it for him: is it not a very different thing when the innkeeper goes on his way, takes what he heard as a result, and says 'It is not knowledge that matters'? <sup>2</sup> There are those who would crassly deny or limit the value of knowledge out of ignorance, and there are those who after serious minded consideration, feel impelled to do so. Admittedly, Kierkegaard was attacking bad expositions of Luther, but the point he makes is clear enough to stand by itself. Needless to say, Kant is serious in his conclusion, and his statement is therefore not to be fastened upon as a facile justification for the rejection of reasoned thought. This particular quotation from Kant has suffered terrible abuse in this direction and is still occasionally to be heard in that species of Christian

<sup>2</sup> KIERKEGAARD - Journals AI 2 A 301 tr. R. Gregor  
Smith The Last Years p. 317. (Fontana Library  
1968)

preaching which seeks to vilify human reason. Perhaps Kierkegaard may be allowed a comment upon this: "What an abomination are those Protestant pastors who at most read what has cost others mortal struggles, and then use it as purple passages in their sermons"! <sup>3</sup> "I have found it necessary" implies a carefully reasoned judgement.

The second part of Kant's statement introduces the other principal term - TO MAKE ROOM FOR FAITH. In clarifying a little what he means by faith, he later on says "..... all objections to morality and religion will be forever silenced, and this in Socratic fashion, by the clearest proof of the ignorance of the objectors".<sup>4</sup> In what sense then is the word faith being used? Kant sees the defence of faith as silencing all objections to morality and religion. Prima facie, then, faith pertains to ethics and religion. The term faith relates, therefore, not merely to supersensible religious categories, concepts, or theological dogmas, but also to ethics and human conduct.

One may ponder to ask why Kant's equal emphasis upon the denial of knowledge and the place of faith has not been reflected in the great mass of Kant commentaries which exist. At the decided risk of being too general, the comment could be ventured that Kant's

<sup>3</sup> XI 1 A 86 op. cit. p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Bxxxix

denial of metaphysics <sup>5</sup> has been taken by some in isolation from the remainder of his Critical Philosophy and has been misrepresented as the most significant aspect of Kant's work. However, it is not only unfair to Kant, but more so untrue to the psychology of the man not to take his statement complete, when attempting to see what he is saying. To suggest as some have done, that Kant did not take this statement seriously himself betrays little understanding of the man who regarded truth-telling and promise-keeping as 'Categorical Imperatives' from God Himself. When Kant maintained that he had made room for faith, he was saying something significant, and it is necessary for students of Kant to ask, not only what he understood by knowledge, but what he meant by faith.

What then indeed does Kant mean when he speaks of FAITH? What is he defending, and does he defend it in a valid manner? This question immediately launches us into a preliminary investigation of Kant's philosophy of religion.

Kant gives a useful and illuminating summary account of his philosophy of religion, primarily in terms of his views on morality in the KU<sup>6</sup>. Kant here links up the idea of faith with religion and morality, and even the title of the paragraph 91 contains the expression

<sup>5</sup>The metaphysics of Descartes, Leibniz and Wolff are particular examples of what Kant denied as will be later explained.

<sup>6</sup>Part II Kritik der teleologischen Urteilskraft \*91 D (V018) p. 597 KU p. 140.

"praktischen Glauben" (practical faith) which of course has the overtone of morality since the sphere of praktischen Vernunft is moral judgement. (The whole argument commences at §84, but the relevant important ideas for this discussion are sketched as from §91).

How can something be the object of knowledge? This is Kant's problem, and his answer is that in asking the question, we are concerning ourselves not with the things themselves, but with our powers of knowing them, that is, with the possibility of our knowing them. To say that we can know something means not that we are able to be in direct contact with it, but that we may have the idea of the possibility of whatever it is.

This is difficult and requires clarification, but of course, behind this statement lies the whole work of the KRV. However, not to shrink from the duty of clarification, we could ask: Does Kant mean that we have (in terms of his terminology in the KRV) impressions or intuitions which the mind organises according to certain rules of procedure or presuppositions in order to give these intuitions coherence and meaning? To answer this in the affirmative would imply the judgement that the KRV merely explains how we come by our knowledge of the external world. Or we could ask: Is Kant implicitly saying that knowledge of any sort is all mere 'possibility', possessing no degree of certainty, and that our knowledge depends upon how we connect up our intuitions. If this is so, we therefore can never know whether or not our ideas thus formed correspond to reality.

These two lines of interpretation could both be eloquently sustained from the KRV. While Kant insists that experience through intuitions is the basis of knowledge, and that the mind creates for us what is indubitably our external world, at the same time our experience is limited to a phenomenal realm. Things in themselves may be different. One easy way to escape the dilemma would be to suggest that the first interpretation concerns empirical knowledge and the latter concerns a priori knowledge. This would be too simple a solution. The KRV, in Kant's language is a "transcendental enquiry", and Kant says: "I entitle all knowledge transcendental which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori".<sup>7</sup> The KRV is an examination of Pure Reason to determine whether or not synthetic a priori propositions are possible.<sup>8</sup> In other words, Kant wants to know how much knowledge is possible apart from experience. Mathematics, natural philosophy and metaphysics are, in his view, the three disciplines which make fundamental use of these propositions.

Now bearing in mind the classic statement from Kant with which I began, Kant appears to hold the view that knowledge has its limitations, and this would also appear to be the import of the opening paragraph.(§91 of the KU). No branch of human knowledge is beyond

<sup>7</sup> B 25.

<sup>8</sup> B 19.

question or doubt: Can we be any more certain that the angles of a triangle added together equal 180 degrees than that life exists on Mars or that man's freedom to achieve the summum bonum depends upon God making immortality possible? It is through probing the different forms of assurances possible in each case that Kant gives classification of possible objects of knowledge, and therefore of the different forms of knowledge possible, under three headings:- matters of opinion, matters of fact, and matters of faith.

Let us briefly examine these:

1. Sachen der Meinung (Matters of opinion - opinabile)

These are defined as being "always Objects of empirical knowledge ..... at least intrinsically possible"<sup>9</sup>. They belong to the world of sense, but are not possible objects of knowledge now, because of the limitations of knowledge at the present. The question of whether or not there is life on other planets is an example. Given the proper conditions, we could resolve the question by factual empirical investigation. However, the question of whether or not there exist fictitious logical entities such as pure disembodied spirits is not a matter of opinion in this sense. It is an idea of the imagination pure and simple.

2. Tatsachen (Matters of fact - scibile)

These are objects which answer to conceptions whose

<sup>9</sup> KU p. 140 line 21.

objective validity may be proved. But what does "objective reality" mean in this context? This does suggest that we can square our impressions with things in themselves, and that we can know more than the possibility of things. Kant however, clarifies his position by saying that we must have an intuition which corresponds to our 'Object of knowledge'. Geometrical sizes and mathematical properties fall into this class. If all the angles of a triangle are the same size, then all the sides will be of equal length. I can simply pick up a ruler, and measure such a triangle of equal angles to discover whether or not the idea may be substantiated by fact. No elaborate deductions are required.

Matters of fact are thus directly verifiable by experience. However, Kant extends this heading to include all properties of things which we or anyone else can verify. (It can only be assumed that the existence of other people is not merely a creation of my mind. I can experience them, and use their experience to verify my knowledge).

Kant then includes FREEDOM, viewed as a form of causality, as a matter of fact. This clearly refers back to G, where Kant makes the distinction between an action viewed as part of a causal process, and the same action viewed as the free action of an agent doing his duty. Looked at from the standpoint of appearance, freedom is explained by the law of causality, but looked at as an intelligence, man is a causal agent in certain situations.<sup>10</sup> Freedom, Kant affirms, is the only idea of reason, whose object is a matter of fact.

<sup>10</sup> G Chapter III p. 127.

This said, Kant proceeds to the third heading.

3. Glaubenssachen (Matters of faith - mere credible)

Matters of faith are defined as objects that must be thought a priori either as grounds or as consequences, if pure practical reason is to be used as duty commands, but which are transcendent for the theoretical use of reason.

Matters of faith are a priori, ideas which come not directly from experience, but which are the grounds or consequences of moral action. In that context, we have these ideas before us. However, viewed theoretically, they are transcendent, and we cannot speak of them as objects of knowledge. Kant is arguing that certain things which cannot be spoken of in the context of theoretical reason, may be spoken of in the context of moral action.

Kant includes the summum bonum in this category. It is something which cannot be verified by any possible experience, and which has to be realised through freedom, and which is only conceivable under the two further conditions of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Kant states <sup>11</sup> that these objects are the only ones that can be called matters of faith.

Of the three fundamental problems of philosophy, God, freedom and immortality, the solution to understanding two of them comes from faith. This is in itself significant.

<sup>11</sup> KU p. 143

In a footnote on the same page,<sup>12</sup> Kant helpfully distinguishes between Glaubenssachen and Glaubensartikel. Articles of faith are things we may be bound to acknowledge inwardly or outwardly, like the 'Virgin Birth', or the 'doctrine of the Atonement', the 'Communion of the Saints' or the 'Forgiveness of Sins'. These are not the subject of natural theology. Natural theology for Kant would appear to be that of which we may speak a priori, with moral assurance, independently of tradition or revelation.<sup>13</sup>

Kant's main thoughts about faith in this section may be summarised and highlighted by four direct quotations from the text:

- (a) "It is only objects of pure reason that can be matters of faith at all, and even then they must not be regarded as objects simply of pure speculative reason ..... they are ideas, that is, conceptions, whose objective reality cannot be guaranteed theoretically".<sup>14</sup>
- (b) "Faith as habitus, not as actus, is the moral attitude of reason in its assurance of the truth of what is beyond the reach of theoretical knowledge".<sup>15</sup>
- (c) "Assurance in matters of faith is an assurance from a purely practical point of view".<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> KU p. 143 D 600 (Vol. 8)

<sup>13</sup> This distinction will be discussed more fully later.

<sup>14</sup> KU p. 143 line 13 .. 18.

<sup>15</sup> op. cit. p. 145 line 4.

<sup>16</sup> op. cit. p. 143 line 28.

(d) "Faith in the plain acceptation of the term is a confidence of attaining a purpose, the furthering of which is a duty, but whose achievement is a thing of which we are unable to perceive the possibility - or, consequently the possibility of what we can alone conceive to be its condition. Thus the faith that has reference to particular objects is entirely a matter of morality, provided such objects are not objects of possible knowledge or opinion, in which latter case and above all in matters of history, it must be called credulity and not faith".<sup>17</sup>

There would appear to be more than one line of thought about faith present in these words: First of all, in quotation (a) faith is contrasted with theoretical knowledge. Knowledge concerns the possibility of an object, and by this, Kant means not the logical possibility, but the real possibility.<sup>18</sup> This real possibility is proved either from its actuality as attested by experience, or by means of reason, a priori. The KRV argues the case that synthetic a priori judgements form the basis of knowledge. We use them in order to make our intuitions form a coherent picture of the world, and even the world itself only can be understood by using a priori judgements in the same way. Faith is concerned with what is beyond the reach of theoretical knowledge, and with what Kant calls the Ideas of Pure Reason. The "Transcendental Dialectic" of the KRV is

<sup>17</sup> op. cit. p. 146 line 3

<sup>18</sup> KRV B xxvii - footnote.

where we find a fuller account of these ideas.

In the KRV, Kant says "Reason is never in immediate relation to an object, but only to the understanding; and it is only through the understanding that it has its own (specific) empirical employment. It does not create concepts of objects, but only orders them ..... reason has therefore as its sole object the understanding and the effectiveness of its application. Just as the understanding unifies the manifold in the object by means of concepts, so reason unifies the manifold of concepts by means of ideas, positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding, which otherwise are concerned with distributive unity.

I accordingly maintain that transcendental ideas never allow of any constitutive employment".<sup>19</sup>

The Ideas of Reason are used to give our concepts systematic and meaningful unity. Kant argues in a perplexing chapter of the KRV entitled "The Ground and Distinction of all Concepts in general into Phenomena and Noumena",<sup>20</sup> that the world may be divided (but not in a positive actual sense of "divided") into a world of sense and of understanding. Concepts may be employed empirically to appearances which come from the senses. They may not be employed transcendently to 'Things in themselves'.<sup>21</sup> The things he calls 'noumena' -

<sup>19</sup> B 671 - 2.

<sup>20</sup> B 295

<sup>21</sup> B 298

unknowable realities, he speaks of to curb the pretensions of our sensibility when we try to say that we have knowledge of certain things.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of Transcendental Ideas is introduced into the argument at this point. They are defined<sup>23</sup> as special a priori concepts which are contained in the synthetic unity of intuitions under the direction of the categories and which determine according to principles how understanding is to be employed in dealing with experience in its totality. But by their nature, we can never have any intuition which corresponds to these ideas. They are only ideas and we can never know whether or not objects exist which correspond to them.

Now what are the Ideas of Reason if they were to be listed? In the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, it emerges that the ideas are of two classes: first the three metaphysical ideas - God, freedom, and immortality.<sup>24</sup> The second class, however, appear to refer to phenomenal objects. They consist of principles, useful, but not held to be proved (even ethically) and which are not objects of belief. The utility of these principles is in connection with science, e.g. the principle of teleology, homogeneity of the species, principle of specification, principle of affinity and continuity. Pure earth, air, water (in the sense understood in Kant's day) are also Ideas of Reason.

<sup>22</sup> B 311.

<sup>23</sup> B 378.

<sup>24</sup> cf. B 295 footnote. N.B. KU p. 147 line 23 refers to the same point.

The epistemic mode in which these Ideas of Reason are held is an interesting question. Are they matters of faith, by virtue of being Ideas of Reason, in the same sense in which God, freedom and immortality are matters of faith? If the epistemic status of the two classes is equivalent, then certain fundamental issues are at stake for both science and theology.

Three distinct possibilities arise from this consideration. It could be asked first, that if the Ideas of Reason used in science are matters of faith in an identical sense in which God, freedom and immortality are matters of faith, can the basic concepts of science be any more securely believed than the basic concepts of natural theology? Since it would thus be implied that scientific 'faith' in certain basic concepts was necessary for our understanding of the world, it could be argued with effect that belief or faith, and not merely a theoretical, intellectual assent, is necessary as an element in all human knowledge.

This is one sense in which knowledge is denied in order to make room for faith. The sense of faith, however, is an extended one, which includes not only the basic concepts of theology, but also the basic concepts of science.

While this first possibility gives the advantage to theology, by suggesting that science has no more secure a conceptual foundation than does theology, the second possibility reverses the advantage. It could be argued from the same premises, (namely that the epistemic mode in which both the scientific and theological classes of Ideas of Reason are held is identical), that there is no

greater justification for the theological concepts, than there is for certain working scientific hypotheses. If it could be argued that there is no difference between how Kant defends his scientific Ideas of Reason and how he defends belief in God, freedom and immortality, then there are serious repercussions for the nature of faith. If Kant regarded the scientific class of Ideas as merely heuristic principles or justified hypotheses, then his treatment of the Ideas becomes a form of methodological pragmatism. On this basis God, freedom and Immortality become merely useful hypotheses or semi-justified opinions, whose value depends only on their usefulness. It may be observed in the passing that this interpretation would require Kant to 'go back' on his statement about making room for faith. It would imply that he held faith in low regard, and was at heart, perhaps, at least agnostic, if not in fact an atheist. As I have suggested earlier, this position would not be in keeping with the psychology of the man himself. However, a Kant scholar such as Hans Vaihinger, who was a pragmatist in his outlook, has maintained that Kant held such a negative view of faith. His views on Kant will shortly be examined.

The third possibility to be considered is that, while the epistemic mode of holding the Ideas of Reason may be same for both the classes of Ideas specified, there may be other possible forms of assurance in either or both cases. Since it is not the purpose of this work to establish in what manner the scientific Ideas of Reason should be used, or defended, except in so far as it makes clear any difference in status between the two classes of Ideas of Reason, I would simply offer the

view that the KRV affords the scientific Ideas status as working hypotheses which assist the ordering of experience into knowledge. This is what I take Kant to mean when he speaks about limiting knowledge. The possibility of giving another form of assurance to the Ideas of God, freedom and immortality therefore remains open.

To develop this third possibility, at least in embryo, it is necessary to refer back to the second line of thought about faith, presented by Kant in quotations (b), (c), and (d) from the KU. Quotation (b) speaks of the possibility of an assurance of the truth of what lies beyond the reach of speculative knowledge to prove. Quotation (c) connects this form of assurance with morality, and by this, Kant makes the formal connection between assurance in matters of faith and moral experience. In quotation (d), Kant speaks of faith as a reason for performing a duty. He suggests that we implicitly believe that by obeying the command of duty, we are expressing something more than the thought, 'This I must do'. The something extra is the belief that our duty is contributing to a total moral purpose for the world.

Prima facie, this is far removed from the severity of insistence upon the authority of duty spoken of in G. However, it could also be argued that the latter treatment in the KU is at a different level of argument. At any rate, Kant looks to the realm of morality for assurance in matters of faith, and this issue will be duly examined in the context of the question 'How did Kant see the connection between ethics and theology'?

One final question remains to be considered, arising out of the quotations from the KU. Are there two distinct emphases in Kant's conception of faith, emphases which do not entirely coincide with each other - the one concerned with the epistemological status of faith, and the other concerned with ethical assurances of God, freedom and immortality? The first conception would then have resulted from the recognition that knowledge has definite limitations, and the second would have derived its significance from the problems of practical reason.

If I may venture a solution to the difficulty at this stage, I would suggest that this reflects something of the manner in which Kant's defence of faith develops. The severe limitations upon knowledge which he recognises is expressed by the fact that the scientific Ideas of Reason are concerned merely with the possibility of knowledge. From the standpoint of speculative knowledge, the theological Ideas of Reason have no greater standing. However, Kant recognises that another form of assurance may be possible for these Ideas, which is not possible for the former class of Ideas. Central to this line of argument is the existence of the 'Thing-in-itself', which is the assurance that knowledge is limited to the phenomenal realm. In this way, Kant makes room for forms of assurance in matters of faith, which is not possible for the scientific Ideas of Reason.

This discussion, however, is no more than a preliminary sketch of some aspects of Kant's remarks about faith. It is hoped to establish two simple points: first, to demonstrate that Kant uses the term 'Faith',

(irrespective of the precise meaning he gives to the term) as an integral theme of his Critical Philosophy; and second, to indicate that there is a worthwhile problem in investigating not only Kant's conception of faith in and by itself, but also in relation to the entire Critical Philosophy. Such an investigation I believe is necessary for a balanced view of the Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

Two extreme views of the meaning of Faith in Kant have emerged in stark opposition to each other. The one extreme is that Kant had no religious faith at all, and that his statement about faith in the KRV must be totally disregarded. The other extreme connects Kant with the Romantic thinkers, and makes faith (in one specific sense of the term) the basis of his philosophy. Extremes of interpretation are always dangerous, especially in the matter of interpreting such a profound thinker as Kant. However, these views have been sincerely held at different times by different thinkers. Therefore an honest examination of Kant's views of Faith requires that they be accorded respectful treatment.

I propose, therefore, to examine first one and then the other, beginning with the question of "Kant's alleged Pragmatism". This discussion will be centred upon the writings of Hans Vaihinger, the most thorough-going and competent exponent of this view.

Hans Vaihinger, in his book translated under the title "The Philosophy of As-If",<sup>25</sup> expounds a version

25 v. (See KEY)

of what would now be called the 'pragmatist' thesis. He does so in terms of the method of 'As-if', which he traces through various eras of the history of thought. He analyses the philosophy of Kant, and adduces evidence from the total opera of Kant to support his view that Kant was an exponent and practitioner of the method of as-if.

Without doubt, Vaihinger was a very able Kant commentator in his day, but his particular interests and emphasis<sup>26</sup> made him rather one-sided in how he understood Kant. The phrase 'as-if' does belong to Kant, and it could be argued that the seeds of pragmatism lie in Kant. So too could it be argued that seeds of many more doctrines are present in Kant also. It is not Kant's use of 'as-if' that is in doubt. What is in doubt is whether or not all that Vaihinger attributes to Kant, in his assessment of how Kant used the idea, is actually

<sup>26</sup> Apart from Vaihinger's predilection towards a pragmatist position, the key to his attitude towards the text of the KRV is found in an essay entitled "Die Transcendentale Deduktion der Kategorien" (1902), in which Vaihinger maintains the view that the 'transcendental Deduktion' in the KRV (1789) is the result of the conflation of more than one version. H.J. Paton replied to him in his essay "Is the Transcendental Deduction a Patchwork?" ( In Defence of Reason HUL 1951, p. 65). Professor Herman J. de Vleeschwauer in L'Evolution de la pensee Kantienne (Tr. A.R.C. Duncan as The Development of Kantian Thought Nelson 1962) replies by tracing the development of Kantian thought as the key to the apparent discrepancies. However, this is a highly technical question of Kantian exposition, into which I do not propose to enter. I mention it for two reasons - first to indicate that Vaihinger was a reputable Kantian scholar, and second to explain why he seems to take liberties with Kant's writings.

present. It is the question of whether or not what Vaihinger purports to be Kant is, in fact, the real Kant. He himself is in no doubt: "Throughout the whole period between Kant's appearance and the present day, only a very few people have realised that this (Vaihinger's pragmatist version of Kant) was the real Kant. Some disciples, as well as opponents, were more or less clearly aware of it; others noticed it but had not the courage to speak out. The only writer to recognise and expound Kant's true doctrine in this respect was Forberg".<sup>27</sup>

Vaihinger almost could be accused of 'preaching' his position, so fervidly does he proclaim it. However, in spite of his zeal to convert, he makes some valuable contributions to the debate, and helps to clarify at least in part, what Kant did not mean by faith.

I have liberally used the term 'pragmatism', and by it I have meant the view which holds there are no necessary objective truths, but merely working hypotheses which are strongly evidenced by experience, and sufficiently vouched for in that way, for us to regard them 'as-if' they were true in an objective way.

In a somewhat devastating paragraph on Kant's religious philosophy, Vaihinger describes the implications of this for Kant, assuming as he does, that Kant's view on faith is pragmatist in that sense: "Our presentation ..... introduces us to quite a new Kant, a Kant in

one respect more radical, in another more conservative than the Kant we have heretofore known. He reveals himself to us as a theoretical non-theist, in the sense that he comes to regard the existence of a Supreme Spirit etc. in the ordinary sense of existence, as not only not probable, but extremely improbable - unbelievable and indeed impossible".<sup>28</sup>

The passage quoted is then followed by this statement: "Such agnosticism (which Kant's views prevent us from using as an escape ) which is indeed also found in Kant and which the majority of his disciples have adopted, appears as a weak compromise compared with the radicalism of the passages quoted above (in his commentary) wherein Kant takes his seat on the extreme left of the philosophical parliament: to him all transcendental conceptions are nothing but "self-formed ideas"."

This raises the question quite bluntly "Was Kant an atheist?" Indeed, this question must be faced. Vaihinger appears to be suggesting that Kant held such views by arguing that Kant refutes the agnosticism which avoids the completely radical step. This naturally poses the further problem, of why Kant began his KRV by saying that he had made room for faith, if, in fact, he had no faith for which to make room. Nonetheless, Vaihinger argues strongly for Kant's 'pragmatism', which he states in these extreme terms.

Other commentators on Kant have followed this line of thought, and other thinkers have fastened on to

Vaihinger's views. The famous Vienna Circle of the 1920s was working on views which were the direct descendants of Vaihinger. In the Anglo-Saxon world, A.J. Ayer developed a position not dissimilar,<sup>29</sup> in which Ayer claims to start from Kant's rejection of transcendent metaphysics, and ends up by solving some great philosophical problems by accepting only factually significant sentences, viz. sentences which the speaker knows how to verify, knowing under what conditions the proposition would be true or false. He uses this starting point to reach his view of Kant's religious faith.

"Our own analysis has shown that the phenomena of moral experience cannot fairly be used to support any rationalist or metaphysical doctrine whatsoever. In particular, they cannot, as Kant hoped, be used to establish the existence of a transcendent god".<sup>30</sup>

This, of course, is not identical with what Vaihinger is saying; Ayer does not insist that Kant was an atheist. He merely claims that Kant's theism cannot be supported on his (Ayer's) analysis of moral experience, which is conducted ostensibly on the principles of Kant's Critical Philosophy. Therefore, however, it could be taken that he is saying that Kant's own premises will not sustain the conclusion. This judgement must be faced. Meantime, it is sufficient to show that, in Vaihinger's terminology, 'left wing' views have emanated from Kant, and that this fact must be taken into account.

29 Ayer - Language, Truth and Logic - Victor Gollancz, 1960.

30 Ibid. p. 114.

We may now proceed to an outline of Vaihinger's doctrine of 'as-if'.

The book itself, in style and expression, is a period piece. It contains many assertions which would now be tested by scientific research, but which, in Vaihinger's day, would be permitted as being philosophy done according to the grand manner. In recounting what he claims, the truth of this should emerge.

He enunciates the 'Law of Preponderance of the Means over the End' according to which it is a universal phenomenon of nature that means which serve a purpose often undergo a more complete development than is necessary for the attainment of their purpose. He argues that the means may, however, emancipate itself partly or wholly, and become an end in itself. Ideas, judgement and conclusion, that is to say, thought, really was intended to serve the will to live, and was primarily only a biological function. However, it too has developed according to the said law, and thought has lost sight of its original practical purpose and is practised for its own sake, as theoretical thought. Thought thus sets itself problems which are really impossible, such as the problems of the origin and the meaning of the Universe, and by looking backwards psychologically, we can see how some of these problems have arisen. Some are purely meaningless, such as the problem of the square root minus one.

Thought-constructs and thought-processes are primarily biological phenomena. These phenomena are, in many cases, apparently consciously false assumptions

which either contradict reality or even themselves, but which are intentionally formed to overcome the difficulties of thought by this artificial deviation, and reach the goal of thought by roundabout ways and paths. These artificial thought-constructs he calls 'Scientific Fictions', and are distinguished as conscious creations by their 'as-if' character. The 'as-if' world is as important as the so-called real world, and indeed is more important for ethics and aesthetics. This world, however, which finally becomes a world of values in the form of religion must be distinguished from the world of becoming.

This then is a simple outline of Vaihinger's position. He develops it with all the complicated terminology of a scientific deduction. Chapter XXV is entitled "Outline of a General Theory of Fictional Constructs", and here the gist of the position is stated that fictional constructs are ideas used because of their logical utility, but from this their objective reality should not be inferred. They are subjective categories or general ideas which are useful as a method of understanding, but their value in this respect should not be used to suggest that they have any reality beyond that of their usefulness. It is to have a convenient way of understanding the world that we use them, and in the end, truth becomes not much more than the most helpful and expedient fiction. "As-if" is the key to how such fictional constructs are used. We speak and act 'as-if' they were the case, for the purpose of making sense and being understood, but the question of the actuality of the constructs is another matter. It may well require the

answer 'We cannot know....'.

Clearly, of course, Kant's views of our use of the categories of the understanding to organise our intuitions into the world we know is echoed here, and so too, the problem of whether our experience of the phenomenal can be verified by an appeal to reality.

This said, we must now look in detail at the passages cited by Vaihinger from Kant, as evidence of Kant's use of the 'as-if' method.

He opens with the KRV. In the "Transcendental Dialectic", the 'as-if' method makes its appearance.

Vaihinger concentrates his case upon the classic statement found in section 3 of the "Transcendental Doctrine of Method", which is entitled "The Discipline of Pure Reason in Hypothesis". Kant says: "The concepts of reason are, we have said, mere ideas, and have no object that can be met with in any experience. None the less, they do not, on this account, signify objects that, having been invented, are thereupon assumed to be possible. They are thought only problematically in order that, upon them, (as heuristic fictions) we may base regulative principles of the systematic employment of the understanding in the field of experience".

He continues and illustrates his point: "Save in this connection they are merely thought entities, the possibility of which is not demonstrable, and which, therefore do not allow of being employed, in the character of hypotheses, in explanation of actual appearances. It is quite permissible to think the soul as simple, in order, in conformity with this idea to employ as the

principle of our interpretation of its inner appearances a complete and necessary unity of all its faculties; and this is in spite of the fact that this unity can never be apprehended in concreto. But to assume the soul as a simple substance (a transcendent concept) would be (to propound) a proposition which is not only indemonstrable - as is the case with many physical hypotheses, but is haphazard in a quite blind and arbitrary fashion".<sup>31</sup>

Vaihinger asserts that here, Kant is distinguishing between the Ideas of Reason, which he describes as 'heuristic fictions', and hypotheses, which are linked with the given in experience, and are therefore genuine explanations. Kant may be adduced in amplification of this: "A transcendental hypothesis, in which a mere idea of reason is used in explanation of natural existences would really be no explanation; so to proceed would be to explain something which, in terms of known empirical principles, we do not understand sufficiently, by something which we do not understand at all. Moreover, the principle of such an hypothesis would, at most, serve only for the satisfaction of reason, not for the furtherance of the employment of the understanding in respect of objects. Order and purposiveness in nature must themselves be explained from natural grounds and according to natural laws; and the wildest hypothesis, if only they are physical are here (hier) more tolerable than a hyper-physical hypothesis, such as the appeal to a divine Author assumed simply in order that we may have an explanation".<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> B 799.

<sup>32</sup> B 801.

This, says Vaihinger, opens and closes his case because, "Had we always this famous passage before our eyes, Kant's whole doctrine of Ideas would have been better understood from the first".<sup>33</sup> I shall follow Vaihinger's further exposition of Kant, asking at every stage: 'Is Kant saying what Vaihinger claims that he says?'

Even at this early stage, it is possible to have reservations about Vaihinger's interpretation of Kant, merely on the basis of the way in which Kant speaks. Firstly, Kant does not condemn the use of the term soul in any context whatsoever. He appears to be concerned only that an illicit extension of the significance of the term should not be made so that an Idea of Reason should function as a description of something empirical. The whole emphasis of Kant is upon the context of the use and abuse of the Ideas, and the context is made clear when he speaks about anything being more tolerable than using the Idea of God merely as an explanation ....HIER. The addition of hier has the sense of 'in this context', with perhaps the suggestion implied that from another standpoint, speaking about God may be legitimate, but certainly not merely through the hypostatisation of the Ideas of Reason.

Then, from B 805 to 810, Kant hints about the nature of the other ways in which the Ideas may be discussed, or at least ways in which reference may be legitimately made to them. "But, although in dealing with the merely speculative questions of pure reason,

hypotheses are not available for the purposes of basing propositions upon them, they are yet entirely permissible for the purposes of defending propositions; that is to say, they may not be employed in any dogmatic, but only in polemical fashion".<sup>34</sup>

The burden of proof would thus rest with the opponent, because in the practical (moral) sphere, reason has certain 'rights of possession', which it does not need to prove.<sup>35</sup> Since the advocate of the Ideas is putting forward something necessary for the practical employment of reason, then he is at an advantage, and the burden of proof against must lie with the opponent.

Kant says quite explicitly: "Hypotheses are therefore, in the domain of pure reason, permissible only as weapons of war, and only for the purpose of defending a right, not in order to establish it".<sup>35</sup>

What is Kant in effect saying? He is surely implying that it is as reasonable to believe in the existence of the Ideas, as it is to have reservations about them as Ideas which have reality beyond their merely problematic use. Since, further, there is a measure of practical (moral) necessity about them, then from the point of view of Pure Speculative Reason, there is, indeed, must be, room for faith. There is as much to justify faith as there is to cast doubt.

Vaihinger seems to ignore Kant's claim that hypotheses may be used as 'weapons of war' in the domain of pure reason, and he does so to the discredit of his

<sup>34</sup> B 804.

<sup>35</sup> B 805.

overall argument. Kant's admission of this would appear to give the Ideas of Reason somewhat more status than mere 'heuristic fictions' and 'as-if' notions.

Moving back now to Vaihinger's treatment of the earlier part of the 'Dialectic', Kant says: "I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason, to which no corresponding object can be given in sense experience. Thus, the pure concepts of reason now under consideration are transcendental ideas. They are concepts of pure reason, in that they view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions. They are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding. Finally, they are transcendent, and overstep the limits of all experience; no object adequate to the transcendental idea can ever be found within experience".<sup>36</sup>

Kant indeed does say that the Ideas of Pure Reason are transcendental ideas, which cannot determine any object, but which may be used as a canon for the proper employment of understanding. Thus, says Vaihinger, they are heuristic fictions. However, Vaihinger appears to disregard what Kant says further on: "Although we must say of the transcendental concepts of reason that they are only ideas, this is not by any means to be taken as signifying that they are superfluous and void ..... Further - what we need here no more than mention - concepts of reason may perhaps make possible a transition

from the concepts of nature (Naturbegriffen)<sup>37</sup> to the practical concepts (praktischen)<sup>37</sup>, and in that way, may give support to the moral ideas (moralischen Ideen)<sup>37</sup> themselves, bringing them into connection with the speculative knowledge of reason". Kant finishes with the significant sentence: "As to all this, we must await the explanation in the sequel".<sup>38</sup>

Kant here again appears to be denying knowledge to make room for some other possibility, hinting very broadly (from the sense of selbst<sup>37</sup>), that there is a spontaneous connection between Ideas of reason and concepts necessary for understanding our moral reason. The Ideas of reason it appears, may be approached in another way, and if Kant's sincerity is not to be called into question, Vaihinger's exposition of Kant certainly pays attention to only half of what Kant claims to be saying. It is Kant's sense of the term 'fiction' that is at stake. Kant sees the Ideas as fictions, from the point of view of objective knowledge empirically acquired, but suggests that there are other ways of seeing the Ideas, and that from these other points of view (or point of view), the Ideas may not be fictions in the same sense, or indeed, may not be fictions at all.

Next Vaihinger considers a passage from the 'Antinomy of Pure Reason'. At Section 8, the title reads 'The Regulative Principle of Pure Reason in its application

<sup>37</sup> D Vol. 4 p. 332

<sup>38</sup> B p. 385 and 386.

to the Cosmological Ideas'. He equates the term 'regulative principle' with the expression 'rules for understanding'. Then he moves to the section entitled "The Final Purpose of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason",<sup>39</sup> where Kant uses the expression 'as-if' in the following way: (This, Vaihinger takes, is Kant clarifying what he means by the regulative use of the Ideas of Reason). "In conformity with these ideas and principles, we shall first in psychology, under the guidance of inner experience, connect all the appearances, all the actions and receptivity of our mind, AS IF the mind were a simple substance which persists with personal identity ..... Secondly, in cosmology, we must follow up the conditions of both inner and outer natural appearances, in an enquiry which is to be regarded as never allowing of completion, just AS IF the series of appearances were in itself endless, without any first or supreme member ..... Thirdly, and finally in the domain of theology, we must view everything that can belong to the context of possible experience AS IF this experience formed an absolute, but at the same time, completely dependent and sensibly conditioned unity, and yet also at the same time AS IF the sum of all appearances (the sensible world itself) had a single, highest and all sufficient ground beyond itself, a namely, a self-subsistent, original, creative reason ....."<sup>40</sup>

Kant is saying that we must connect our appearances

39 B p. 697 ff.

40 B p. 700.

and intuitions in such a way, as-if there were for us a soul, a world and God. This is how we make experience comprehensible.

But is Kant not doing more than postulating a mere method, or a way of understanding? Further on, Kant says: "Now there is nothing whatsoever to hinder us from assuming these ideas to be also objective, that is, from hypostatizing them - except in the case of the cosmological Ideas, where reason is so proceeding, falls into antinomy. The psychological and theological ideas contain no antinomy and involve no contradiction. Now then can anyone dispute their (possible) objective reality? He who denies their possibility must do so with as little knowledge (of this possibility) as we can have in affirming it".<sup>41</sup>

Kant again returns to the point that to deny the possibility of the soul and God requires equally as much proof as does the positive affirmation of these entities. Since there is need to posit them, then, of course, the burden of disproof rests upon the opponent.

In summarising the purpose of the natural dialectic of human reason, Kant says: "Pure Reason is in fact occupied with nothing but itself. It is not a constitutive principle that enables us to determine anything in respect of its direct object, but only a merely regulative principle and maxim to further and strengthen the empirical employment of reason".<sup>42</sup>

41 B 701.

42 B 708.

What does he mean by 'regulative principle'? Does he mean no more than 'heuristic fiction'? Kant seems to stress the 'as-if' character of his views.

"This object as thus entertained by reason is a mere idea; it is not assumed as something that is real absolutely in itself, but is postulated only problematically ..... in order that we may view all connection of the things of the world of sense AS IF they had their grounds in such a being".<sup>43</sup>

"The speculative interest of reason makes it necessary to regard all order in the world AS-IF it had originated in the purpose (Absicht) of a supreme reason".<sup>44</sup>

"Can we, on such grounds, assume a wise and omnipotent Author of the world? Undoubtedly we may; and we not only may, but MUST do so. But do we then extend our knowledge beyond the field of possible experience? By no means. All that we have done is merely to presuppose a something, a merely transcendental object of which, as it is in itself, we have no concept whatsoever".<sup>45</sup>

"Thus pure reason, which at first seemed to promise nothing less than the extension of knowledge beyond all limits of experience, contains if properly understood, nothing but regulative principles, which indeed, while prescribing greater unity than the empirical employment

43 B 709.

44 B 714.

45 B 726.

of the understanding can achieve ..... carry its agreement with itself, by means of systematic unity, to the highest possible degree. But if, on the other hand, they be misunderstood and treated as constitutive principles of transcendent knowledge, they give rise, by dazzling and deceptive illusion, to persuasion and a merely fictitious knowledge, and therewith to contradictions and eternal disputes".<sup>46</sup>

These passages do seem to substantiate Vaihinger's thesis, namely, that Kant regarded the Ideas as 'as-if' tools of method and nothing more. However, more properly, what Kant seems to say is that the Ideas of Reason, from the standpoint of pure speculative reason, must be seen in that light, as being possessed only of an 'as-if' character. However, he does not preclude the possibility that there are other standpoints from which the ideas may be viewed. He is only emphatic about their regulative employment when speaking in terms of their use by pure reason. This fact should not be forgotten. The considerations of Practical Reason, of course, Kant later developed, and it is clear that he is leaving the question open in the KRV.

Kant's argument is now taken up by Vaihinger as from the beginning of the Dialectic Book II Chapter III 'The Ideal of Pure Reason': " ..... ideas are even further removed from the objective reality than the categories, for no appearance can be found in which they can be represented in concreto ..... But what

I entitle the Ideal seems to be further removed from objective reality than even the idea. By the Ideal I understand the idea, not merely in concreto, but in individuo, that is, as an individual thing, determinable, or even determined by the idea alone".<sup>47</sup>

The Idea of God is spoken of as the *omnitudo realitatis*, and with regard to this transcendental idea, Kant says: "In any such use of the transcendental idea, we should, however, be overstepping the limits of its purpose and validity. For reason in employing it as a basis for the complete determination of things has used it only as the concept of all reality without requiring that all this reality be objectively given, and be a thing itself. Such a thing is a mere fiction in which we combine and realise the manifold of our idea in an ideal, as an individual being".<sup>48</sup>

In this particular section of the *KRV*, and in these passages, Vaihinger's interpretation of Kant seems correct, up to a point. If however, the passages are set properly in the full context of the surrounding argument, it becomes clear that, for Kant, any reference to God seems to hinge upon the idea of the totality of reality, and any purposeful movement within it. This is where God comes in to his thought, but naturally, in keeping with the limits set by negative employment. Kant thus is still leaving the doorway to practical reason open.

47 B 595-6.

48 B 608.

Section III is next discussed: "Notwithstanding this pressing need of reason to presuppose something that may afford the understanding a sufficient foundation for the complete determination of its concepts, it is yet much too easily conscious of the ideal and merely fictitious character of such a presupposition to allow itself, on this ground alone, to be persuaded that a mere creature of its own thought is a real being ....."<sup>49</sup>

Kant is refuting the traditional and rationalist proofs of God's existence, as may be found in Descartes, for example. He shows that speculative reason cannot prove that God exists. Kant analyses the three possible ways of proving that God exists by speculative reason, and points out the impossibility of these. However, is Vaihinger justified in implying that Kant is refuting the Idea of God altogether, and saying that, when it is used, it can have no more than an 'as-if' character? From the point of speculative reason, it has to be underlined, ONLY, is Kant saying this. From that standpoint, God is a convenient fictional construct, but this for Kant clearly does not exhaust the idea of all its possibilities.

Vaihinger then quotes Kant in answer to those who would argue that the idea of God is inscrutable:

" .....the transcendental object lying at the basis of appearances ..... is and remains for us inscrutable ... But it is quite otherwise with an ideal of pure reason; it can never be said to be inscrutable. For since it is not required to give any credentials of its reality save only the need on the part of reason

to complete all synthetic unity by means of it; and since therefore, it is in no wise given as a thinkable object, it cannot be inscrutable in the manner in which an object is".<sup>50</sup>

Kant indeed does say that, if there is not a conceivable object, then it cannot be inscrutable. Vaihinger, however, perhaps states his case too strongly when he argues that the Ideas are the mere creations of reason.<sup>51</sup> Reason often presupposes them as Kant says, but it does not create them. Reason can be accused of allowing illusion to arise when we are tempted to hypostasise its Ideas, but reason as 'creating' God, and the world, is merely begging the question in favour of 'as-if'.

Further, this passage at B 642, Vaihinger regards as crucial. Strangely enough, Kemp Smith omitted it from his abbreviated edition of the KRV! It contains in Vaihinger's words: "a disavowal of the traditional view of the Kantian doctrine of the ideas which represents Kant as having in the KRV taught the inscrutability of the intelligible world, whereas in the KPV he had on moral lines proved the reality of the ideas relating thereto, such as those of God, freedom and immortality".<sup>52</sup>

In answer to this point, it must be said that there is here a play on two senses of the word 'inscrutable'. There is inscrutable in the sense that something cannot

<sup>50</sup> B 642.

<sup>51</sup> V p. 277.

<sup>52</sup> V p. 266.

be known or explained at all by its very nature. In attacking those who try to defend God in this way, Vaihinger perhaps correctly uses Kant.

However, there is the other sense of inscrutable as meaning something which is inaccessible to reason in its speculative employment ..... inscrutable to speculative examination. This would refer to something of whose existence we know, but about which we can really know little other than that there is a reason to believe it exists. If Vaihinger was correct, then Kant would be refuting his distinction between 'Phenomena' and 'noumena', which is really the keystone of the KRV, and which makes fundamentally clear Kant's overall position.

In the appendix to section V,<sup>53</sup> Kant says that hypostasising is a natural illusion. The principle of seeking a necessary first cause is heuristic and regulative. Both are distinct functions. We are to philosophize about nature AS IF there were a first cause and we have the regulative use of this idea. But the idea, of course, is not the assertion of an existence. Vaihinger does not seem to see the negative employment of the Ideas as a separate matter from the benefit of having the idea. The benefit is that science may proceed with the pragmatic assumption of God ..... and the two ways of using the idea are distinct. Section VI<sup>54</sup> emphasises again the usefulness of the Ideas for science and the domain of experience. Well and good, but is this all Kant admits may be said for these ideas?

53 B 643 ff.

54 B 648 ff.

Significantly, in section VII, which Vaihinger never mentions, we find these words of Kant: "The objective reality (of the Supreme Being) cannot indeed be proved, but also cannot be disproved by merely speculative reason. If THEN THERE CAN BE A MORAL THEOLOGY which can make good this deficiency, transcendental theology, which before was only problematic, will prove itself indispensable in determining the concept of this supreme being and, in constantly testing reason, which is so often deceived by sensibility, and which is frequently out of harmony with its own ideas".<sup>56</sup>

This passage appears to support the view I have been suggesting, that Vaihinger, apart from being too selective in the passages he quotes, also fails to see that Kant is constantly reiterating the theme that the limitations he sees upon knowledge exist primarily from the standpoint of speculative reason.

The Appendix to the Dialectic<sup>57</sup> has many interesting passages in it, and some of these are discussed.

Kant refutes Vaihinger's assertion that reason creates the world and God when he says: "Reason is never in immediate relation to an object, but only to the understanding; and it is only through the understanding that it has its own specific empirical employment. It does not therefore create concepts (of objects) but only orders them and gives them that unity which they can have only if they be employed in their widest

<sup>56</sup> B p. 669 ff.

<sup>57</sup> B p. 671.

possible application, that is with a view to obtaining totality in the various series".<sup>58</sup>

The ideas are regulative, and this we have already acknowledged, but Kant says that reason does not create them, only orders them.

The 'Final Purpose of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason' has already been mentioned, and, of course, the same caveat applies in considering Vaihinger's exposition of Kant. While Kant speaks of 'As-if' with regard to the status of God and the soul and the world, he nowhere affirms that these entities do not exist at all. Only from the point of view of speculative reason do they have the 'as-if' character.

"The Transcendental Doctrine of Method" is next discussed. However, here Kant takes a firmer stand, and one cannot escape the feeling that Vaihinger is on very treacherous ground when trying to read his version of pragmatism into Kant. In Section 4 'The Discipline of Pure Reason in Regard to its Proofs', Kant underlines the view that in transcendental knowledge, "so long as we are concerned only with the concepts of the understanding, our guide is the possibility of experience".<sup>59</sup>

Vaihinger's point is that all the way through his argument, Kant is using illustrations which are really methodological fictions of the pragmatist variety. Without probing further into detailed exegetical points at this stage (since I believe that the earlier analyses of the text of Kant show that Vaihinger is selective in his quotations), I would like to focus attention on a passage

58 B 671

59 B 811

from the 'Canon of Pure Reason', Section 3, entitled: "Opinion, Knowledge and Belief". Kant says: "Moreover the outcome of my attempts (in explanation of nature) so frequently confirms the usefulness of this postulate, while nothing decisive can be cited against it, that I am saying too little if I proceed to declare that I hold it merely as an opinion. Even in this theoretical relation it can be said that I firmly believe in God".<sup>60</sup>

Prior to this, at Section 2 'The Ideal of the Highest Good as a determining Ground of the Ultimate End of Pure Reason', Kant says, in suggestion that there is another way to approach the Ideas of Reason: "One other line of enquiry remains open to us: namely whether pure reason may not also be met with in the practical sphere, and whether it may not there conduct us to ideas which reach to those highest ends of pure reason that we have just stated, and whether therefore reason may not be able to supply us from the standpoint of its practical interest what it altogether refuses to supply in respect of its speculative interest".<sup>61</sup>

These two passages speak eloquently for themselves and require no further comment in the light of what I have already said.

Kant does indeed see the need to make room for faith, and himself feels that there are grounds for having faith in the Ideas of Reason, stronger grounds than for not believing at all. From the standpoint of pure reason, they can be only useful notions, but practical reason may well supply what is missing in

60 B 854

61 B 832

assurance.

Vaihinger<sup>62</sup> does admit that he only quotes from certain sections of Kant's KRV, and the passages he rejects are those of the pre-critical strand of the work.<sup>63</sup> However, one small thought which Vaihinger never mentions is Kant's constant thought that the very usefulness of the Ideas methodologically speaking suggests that they might well be worth investigating further, and that moral considerations may explain why they are so useful to science, and its account of the world of experience.

Vaihinger then takes a look at Kant's writings on ethics and religion, and makes a start with G. In Chapter III he sees the use of the 'as-if' method: "Now I assert that every being who cannot act except under the Idea of Freedom, is by this alone from a practical point of view, really free; that is to say, for him all the laws inseparably bound up with freedom are valid, just as much AS IF his will could be pronounced free in itself on grounds valid for theoretical philosophy".<sup>64</sup>

Is Kant saying that freedom is a mere idea with no reality? What is the force of the saying that freedom must be 'presupposed' (in the heading of the section)?

62 V p. 286-7

63 Vaihinger also quotes from the Prolegomena, but I do not feel that space is justified to answer the points made. The Prolegomena is a summary of the KRV, and the one set of answers should be adequate.

64 G p. 115.

Surely Kant's closing words which follow as-if, suggest something more than a mere idea. The as-if is not so significant as the statement that freedom is as valid as though it had been proved theoretically for speculative reason.

We are then confronted by Vaihinger with the following quotation: " ..... the Idea of a purely intelligible world, as a whole of all intelligences to which we ourselves belong as rational beings (although from another point of view we are members of the sensible world as well) remains always a serviceable and permitted Idea for the purposes of a rational belief, though all knowledge ends at its boundary: it serves to produce in us a lively interest in the moral law by means of the splendid Ideal of a universal Kingdom of ends in themselves (rational beings) to which we can only belong if we are scrupulous to live in accordance with the maxims of freedom AS IF they were laws of nature".<sup>65</sup>

Added to this must be the supreme formulation of the principle of morality: "Act AS IF the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature".<sup>66</sup>

Vaihinger claims that the hypothetical framework of morality, and the consequent 'fictional nature' of the Ideas is suggested in these passages. But does the context support this? In the KRV the Ideas were introduced to give knowledge a systematic unity. In G, Kant is explaining 'how morality works' so to speak, and

<sup>65</sup> G p. 130.

<sup>66</sup> G p. 89.

is merely illustrating this by means of the 'as-if' device.

Another formulation of the supreme principle of morality reads: "Act only on that maxim you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law".<sup>67</sup>

There is a difference between saying 'To have systematic knowledge, we must proceed in thought as though or as-if, there were a God', and saying 'Acts AS-IF .....', or 'Act on what you can will as law ....'. 'AS-if' has two distinct forces: It can have the force of something presupposed for the sake of argument or meaning, and the force of something predicated as a possibility in terms of consequences. Vaihinger does not make this distinction of sense, and therefore does not read Kant correctly in this context.

Vaihinger then quotes the passage "..... And precisely here we encounter the paradox that without any further end or advantage to be attained the mere dignity of humanity, that is, of rational nature in man - and consequently that reverence for a mere Idea - should function as an inflexible precept for the will; and that it is just this freedom from dependence on interested motives which constitutes the sublimity of a maxim and the worthiness of every rational subject to be a law-making member in the Kingdom of ends: for otherwise he would have to be regarded as subject only to the law of nature - the law of his own needs".<sup>68</sup>

He regards this passage as most important, and has

67 G p. 88.

68 G p. 106.

this comment to make upon it: "In this passage, Kant reached the high-water mark of his critical philosophy: the 'dignity of man', the 'realm of purposes' - this Kant acknowledges and teaches - are "mere ideas", concepts, that is without any reality, only 'heuristic fictions', only modes of approach, only a standpoint; we can, should and must look upon the things as if it were so. But in spite of this realisation of the fictive nature of this mode of representation, man as a 'rational being', orders his conduct in accordance with these fictions. Here we reach the highest pinnacle attained by Kantian thought, or indeed, by any human thought. Only a few, an elite, can continue to breathe at all at this altitude: the vast majority need a different, a less rarified atmosphere".<sup>69</sup>

Apart from the mountaineering metaphor which exalts Kant, there is the questionable assertion that this is the highest pinnacle of any human thought. Could not the commandment 'Love your enemies', taken not merely as a commandment of Jesus, but as a command which strikes our consciences with a moral authority of its own, be regarded as having come 'from the same altitude'?

However, Vaihinger's fascination with the notion that a mere Idea serves as an inflexible rule for the will is what leads him astray. Perhaps the Idea of the Kingdom of Ends is important, but surely the freedom from dependence on interested motives is very real. Freedom here is no mere idea. It is something which we experience when we act independently of self-interest.

Kant's statement indeed does depict human nature

in elevated terms, but far from reducing morality to a dignified response to a set of Ideas, morality and the worthwhileness of life are closely tied together, and this implies that Kant was concerned with the experience of living, and not merely with expressing a pragmatic theory of human conduct.

The KPV contains little which interests Vaihinger. He takes the general view that the KPV contains many elements of the pre-critical dogmatism from which Kant sought to extricate himself. However, he admits that the radical elements do not totally vanish, and quotes from Section 1, par. 7, where the idea of holiness is described as a practical idea. He points out that the meaning of the expression 'objective reality' shifts its meaning in the KPV, and that when it is not being used in the old dogmatic sense, he can see indications of a more pragmatic meaning.

"This holiness of will is, however, a practical ideal which must necessarily serve as a model which all finite rational beings must strive toward even though they cannot reach it. The pure moral law, which is itself for this reason called holy, constantly and rightly holds it before their eyes".<sup>70</sup>

Vaihinger's general view of the relation between the KRV and the KPV is that the KPV lapses into the pre-critical rationalism from which Kant had tried to emerge. This problem is of course a major question of Kantian exegesis, but I would suggest that it is rather a superficial view in light of the importance which Kant laid upon the limitations he had discovered in

speculative reason. In light of this, a detailed answer to Vaihinger's rather sketchy comments is hardly required.

It is in R that Vaihinger next claims to find many important passages, and he goes through the book citing every instance of the use of 'as-if', and explaining these as fictional constructs. However, in looking at Die Religion carefully, it could be argued that the 'as-if' statements could be grouped into at least three main classes, and that this classification, if acceptable, weakens Vaihinger's case before it commences.

1. Kant speaks of a schematism of analogy<sup>71</sup> by which he means, to render a concept intelligible by the help of an analogy to something sensible. He says "It is on no account permitted to infer (and thus to extend our concept) by this analogy, that what holds of the former, must also be attributed to the latter. Such an inference is impossible for the simple reason that it would run directly counter to all analogy to conclude that because we absolutely need a schema to render a concept intelligible to ourselves (to support it with an example) it therefore follows that this schema must necessarily belong to the object itself as its predicate".<sup>72</sup>

This echoes what the KRV said in essence about the Ideas viewed from the point of view of theoretical reason.

2. There are those passages which relate to the as-if as used in the practical sphere of moral judgement.

71 R p. 59 - footnote.

72 R p. 59 - footnote.

Kant says that we see an evil act from the standpoint of its maxim (principle of volition) and we tend to see the action in terms of its ground and consequents, as if it were a rule of action.<sup>73</sup>

"..... because these actions are of such a nature that we may infer from the presence in him of evil maxims". (op. cit. p. 16)

"Every evil act if we look for the rational origin of it must be treated AS IF the individual has passed straight to it from a condition of innocence".<sup>74</sup>

This use of as-if is methodological and is qualified by statements about maxims and (from G) statements about what the action implies as ground and consequent.

3. The third group of passages in which 'fictional constructs' appear in 'Die Religion' bring in something altogether new. Vaihinger now gets close to undermining Kant's concept of faith in this context, e.g. The devil and hell are introduced as examples of fictional constructs, like the Virgin Birth and the 'Son of God'.

"It is indeed a limitation of human reason that we can conceive of no considerable moral worth in the actions of a personal being without representing that person or his manifestation in a human guise .....

The Scriptures often accommodate themselves to this mode of representation when, in order to make us comprehend the degree of God's love for the human race, they ascribe to him the very highest sacrifice which a

<sup>73</sup> R p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> R p. 36.

loving being can make, a sacrifice performed in order that even those who are unworthy should be made happy ....  
... (John 3:16)" 75

Kant appears to be saying that the concept of the 'Son of God' is a morally useful myth. This would appear to be a fictional construct of a sort, and the Virgin Birth is dealt with similarly<sup>76</sup> by Kant. However, two points must be made:

First, Kant says: (of the 'Son of God' concept)  
"From the practical point of view this idea is completely real in its own right, for it resides in our morally legislative reason". 77

This is a clear statement of Kant's view of the status of the idea.

However, Kant does make a distinction between Glaubenssachen, matters of Faith .... God, freedom and immortality, and Glaubensartikel, articles of faith, as contained in credal statements such as 'I believe in the Virgin Birth' (for example from the Apostles' Creed).

Kant sees these as distinct in status, and there may well be a case for argument that he viewed them mainly as morally useful myths. This point will be discussed later. Meantime, it is sufficient to observe that, while some statements may be dealt with as 'as-if' statements, Kant is clear about the difference in status and the 'Son of God' statement. Further, he nowhere

75 R p. 58 - footnote.

76 R p. 75

77 R p. 55.

impugns the status of what composed Glaubenssachen.

Vaihinger turns to the KU, but in fact offers no analysis of it at all. He rests his case with a reference to an unpublished essay,<sup>78</sup> written by Kant for a prize offered by Berlin University in 1791. The fact that Kant did not publish it suggests two possibilities. Either he did not regard it as a valuable contribution to his thought, or that he regarded it as inconsistent with his general Critical position. Vaihinger regards it as the supreme statement of Kant's methodological pragmatism. Erich Adickes,<sup>79</sup> in an analysis of the essay, makes an excellent reply to Vaihinger: "In reality, Kant is here, (i.e. in the Preisschrift) as everywhere, the strongest opponent of pragmatism. What is the basis of Vaihinger's misunderstanding is the fact that Kant, in the 'Fortschritte' (pages 139 - 157) repeatedly reiterates that God, freedom and immortality are self-made Concepts or Ideas".<sup>79</sup> Adickes then makes the point which I have constantly emphasised in my discussion of Vaihinger: "From the teaching of RV and from the general critical standpoint he may say nothing else, although he may otherwise be convinced of the real existence of those objects which are beyond sense experience".<sup>79</sup>

Adickes develops this point with reference to Kant's essay itself, and establishes that Kant recognised moral considerations as the source from which conviction could arise about Ideas of Reason.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Preisschrift über die Fortschritte der Metaphysik  
(Prize Essay concerning the future of Metaphysics.)

<sup>79</sup> ADICKES Kant und die Als-ob Philosophie (Frommans  
Stuttgart 1927 p. 236 - 237)

<sup>80</sup> Adickes op. cit pp 237 - 242.

In completing my own formal reply to Vaihinger, I would quote Professor A.C. Ewing: "Kant refuses to class the beliefs in God, freedom and immortality as justified opinions or hypotheses, partly because he thinks these words too weak to express the certainty of the beliefs in question, but partly because he thinks that such words should only be used where we have a definite concept of the nature of what we are postulating ..... Kant in fact limits opinion to the sphere of causal reasoning among phenomena, and insists that in metaphysics or critical philosophy, as in mathematics, our arguments being apriori either prove their conclusions with certainty or have no value at all. Since propositions about God and immortality were according to him neither cases of opinion or knowledge, he had to find a new niche for them, and did it by introducing a third class of cognitive attitudes, which he called belief or practical knowledge",<sup>81</sup>

"The question may reasonably be asked how it is that having denied the possibility of attaining any sort of knowledge or even justified opinion about reality through theoretical reason, Kant could consistently claim to do so by means of practical reason. He would answer by pointing out the total difference (on his view) between ethical and theoretical knowledge".<sup>82</sup>

These quotations sum up the nature of my reply to Vaihinger. Kant speaks of the Ideas of Reason quite differently from those concepts classified as justified opinions or hypotheses. The difference between

<sup>81</sup> A. C. Ewing Shorter Commentary on Critique of Pure Reason Methuen 1939 p. 248.

<sup>82</sup> Ewing op. cit. p. 250.

theoretical and practical reason enables him to study them again in the light of morality.

To try to reduce Kant's faith to mere pragmatism does violence to the text, and to the views he expresses. While pragmatism is a useful method, and while the idea of God may be viewed in this way, there is another approach to God, freedom and immortality.

In a letter dated 28th April, 1775, Kant says;  
"I distinguish the teachings of Christ from the report we have of those teachings. In order that the former may be seen in their purity, I seek above all to separate out the moral teachings from all the dogmas of the New Testament. These moral teachings are certainly the fundamental doctrine of the Gospels, and the remainder can only serve as an auxiliary to them .....  
I respect the reports of the evangelists and apostles, and I put my humble trust in that means of reconciliation with God of which they have given us historical tidings - or in any other means that God, in his secret counsels, may have concealed. For I do not become in the least a better man if I know this, since it concerns only what God does; and I dare not be so presumptuous as to declare before God that this is the real means, the only means whereby I can attain my salvation .....  
I am not close enough to their times to be able to make such dangerous and audacious decisions".<sup>83</sup>

In answer to the question "Was Kant an agnostic or an atheist?" the point seems clear. Kant believed in

<sup>83</sup> Letter of J. C. Lavater B A Vol X p. 176 - 179  
tr. p. 80 - 81.

the existence of God, and while he sympathised with and recognised the value of the insights of the Gospel, he would not venture to assert its unique claim to truth. He felt that it was not morally relevant or helpful, since it concerned God's action rather than that of man. Whether or not he had time for the Church or organised religion is another matter. But he did have an attitude to life which made references to God. His faith embodied principles by which he lived, and which were rooted in moral considerations.

B. Horner quotes this letter, and makes this comment: "The KRV has made room for faith by demonstrating that the concept of a most perfect being, though theoretically empty, is yet not logically absurd or self-contradictory. The KPV has conferred some practical content on this concept by showing how through the conception of the highest good it is linked to the notions of duty and the moral law. In this way, the two Critiques have prepared the ground for an act of faith, which is in harmony with the findings of the critical philosophy. It can, in this sense, be called a rational faith. According to Kant, it is rational also in the sense that it satisfied 'an interest in pure reason' namely of the connection between the realms of nature and moral freedom. However difficult it may be to understand Kant's notion of rational faith, he leaves us in no doubt that it is different from the apprehension either of the moral law or of the world of empirical fact. It belongs to the sphere of religion".<sup>84</sup>

This connection between the two Critiques and the

work on religion is perhaps an oversimplification of what actually happened in their creation. However, there can be no doubt that Kant was convinced that this was what he was achieving in his attempt to make room for faith. The KRV leaves the question of the Ideas of Reason open, and the KPV takes it up from the practical point of view. R develops a style of faith based upon the conclusions and insights of both the KRV and the KPV. It is an important part of the argument of this work to establish that there is a vital connection between the thought of all Kant's critical works, which leads up to R and points back therefore to the initial statement at B xxx.

However, for the present, the argument is confined to showing that Kant interpretation which leans in the direction of Vaihinger and his pragmatism is unable to present either a balanced or complete exposition of the text of Kant. While it may have merits in respect of particular points of exposition, it is unable to provide a basis for an overall assessment of Kant's position. It is therefore unacceptable, and another line of interpretation must be sought.

CHAPTER TWO

KANT'S ALLEGED ROMANTICISM.

The starting point for this study of the meaning of faith in Kant's thought was the conclusion which followed from his analysis of human understanding. He felt it necessary to place limitations upon human knowledge which enabled him to assert that he had left room for faith. In answer to the question 'what kind of faith?' Vaihinger's line of interpretation was examined. By refuting Vaihinger's point of view so far as his understanding of the nature of Kant's "Faith" is concerned, it was proved that Kant's claim about faith is to be understood seriously. Kant did not hold the view that the concept of faith was merely a convenient or useful fiction. We may now proceed to ask again 'what did Kant mean by 'faith'? and examine the other extreme line of interpretation.

The statement by Kant in the KRV about denying knowledge to make room for faith, if set against the intellectual background of the times, could be made to carry the implication that Kant was aligning himself with the contemporary plea for the recognition of faith, found in thinkers like Hamann and Schleiermacher. If this can be substantiated, it suggests that Kant was adopting a Romanticist interpretation of the term faith. This has indeed been argued, and Kant has been read in this way. Kant's earliest reception in England was the reception of an intellectual protagonist of Romanticism.

"Coleridge used Kant, after periods of complete inactivity ultimately as a defensor fidei; Hamilton saw in Kant the gravedigger of rationalist metaphysics, who justified learned ignorance; Carlyle found in Kant the supreme foe of the Enlightenment who made possible the

return to Divine Faith ....."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ronald Gregor Smith, in a work on J. G. Hamann makes this comment: "It is possible to argue that Kant was much more on the side of the Romantics than Hamann ever recognised".<sup>2</sup>

I would regard the views expressed in both these quotations as dangerously misleading for two reasons. First, Kant was, on his own admission, afraid of any Romantic view of religious faith, and would have rejected any question of a connection between his views and those of Hamann. Secondly, the contemporary Romantics of Kant's day would have likewise rejected any attempt to relate their views to those of Kant. Admittedly, as Professor Gregor Smith says, they may not have fully recognised the significance of Kant's position. However, by making clear the nature of both sets of views, I would hope that their mutual exclusiveness will become clear.

I referred to two names as being leading exponents of the Romantic view of religious faith, who were contemporaneous with Kant. Johann Georg Hamann (1730 - 1788), the 'wizard of the North' as he was called, was the founder of the "Faith Philosophy" movement. He lived in Kant's city of Königsberg, and was a man of prodigious intellect who lived out his interesting and unusual life propagating his new ideas. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834), a man of passionate

<sup>1</sup> Kant in England R. Wellek (Princeton U.P. 1931) p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Hamann R. Gregor Smith (Collins 1960) p. 85.

religious faith and unbending intellectual rigour, was the theological exponent of Romanticism. While in Berlin, as preacher at the Charity Hospital, Schleiermacher published his "Addresses on Religion", in which his views were expounded. Let me comment on Schleiermacher first.

" ..... Berlin had been the headquarters of the Enlightenment, whose ideas now tended to wear fairly thin; and the more sensitive minds were by this time listening eagerly to the tender and exquisite tones of Romanticism ....."<sup>3</sup>

" ..... of this movement, with the vague splendours and pursuit of the indeterminate which were its life-blood, Schleiermacher - with reservations - made himself the champion in the religious field".<sup>4</sup>

So wrote H.R. Mackintosh on Schleiermacher. Rudolf Otto, in an introduction to John Oman's English translation of the "Addresses", makes this assessment of him: " ..... Schleiermacher set himself in sharp opposition to the intellectualism and moralism of the Age of Reason. He accused it of debasing and misunderstanding religion, of confusing it with and transforming it into metaphysics and morality. Thereby the Enlightenment had obscured the completely unique independent essence of religion, discrediting it and bringing it to the very vanishing point. This explains his tirelessly repeated

<sup>3</sup> Types of Modern Theology H.R. Mackintosh (Nisbet & Co. 1937) p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. footnote to p. 33.

demands that a sharp distinction must ever be between religion and all metaphysics and moralities.

Schleiermacher attacked a host of enemies: "the dogmatic school system of traditional theology, including the treatment of religion on the part of the new secular 'science of religion'; Deism and 'natural religion'; the theology of rationalism, including Kant's Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone that had appeared six years before ....."<sup>5</sup>

Two quotations from Schleiermacher, which are characteristic of his outlook and which outline his standpoint, should expand the meaning of these comments: "It is true that religion is essentially contemplative. You would never call anyone pious who went about in impervious stupidity whose sense is not open for the life of the world. But this contemplation is not turned as your knowledge of nature is, to the existence of a finite thing, combined with and opposed to another finite thing .....

"The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things, in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this, and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal. Where this is found, religion is satisfied, where it hides itself there is for her unrest and anguish,

5 Addresses tr. Oman Harper Torchbooks 1958  
p. xvii (introd. by Otto)

extremity and death. Wherefore it is a life in the infinite, nature of the Whole, in One and in the All, in God, having and possessing all things in God, and God in all. Yet religion is not knowledge and science either of the world or of God. Without being knowledge, it recognises knowledge and science. In itself it is an affection, a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it in God".<sup>6</sup>

"True science is complete vision, true practice is culture and art self-produced; true religion is sense and taste for the Infinite".<sup>7</sup>

Schleiermacher's position could be defined by saying that he regarded religion as a matter of feeling, as an experience to be lived and enjoyed, and which yielded a certain type of knowledge, one which science and other forms of knowledge could not yield, viz, a sense of the Infinite. He also speaks about having a sense of dependence upon this sense of the Infinite, upon the reality of God thus experienced. This immediately brings to mind Wordsworth's lines:

" ..... and I have felt  
a presence that disturbs me with the joy  
of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused.  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
and the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking objects, all objects of all thought  
And rolls through all things ..... " <sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Addresses Schleiermacher tr. Oman p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> "Lines composed near Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth  
(English Parnassus OUP 1954) p. 291.

The direction of Schleiermacher's thought puts him clearly into the Romantic camp so to speak, with regard to his views on the nature of religious faith.

Before examining Hamann's more general version of the specifically theological position expressed in Schleiermacher, let us pause to ask: "Is there any ground for arguing that Kant could have held Romanticist views?" 'Does he anywhere speak in a manner which is at all reminiscent of Schleiermacher or, for example, Wordsworth, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Romanticism?'

There are three Kant passages, all of which are referred to by John Silber in an essay on Kant's religious views,<sup>9</sup> and to which he gives the name 'Kant's Devotionals'.

First there is Kant's famous hymn to duty: "Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating but requirest submission and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but only holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience) - a law before which all inclinations are dumb even though they secretly work against it: what origin is there worthy of thee, and where is to be found the root of thy noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations and from which to be descended is the indispensable condition of the only worth which men can give themselves?"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Ethical Significance of Kant's Religion" Silber  
R p. lxxix - lxxx.

<sup>10</sup> REFV p. 89

Further to this, there is the more famous passage at the end of the Methodology of Pure Practical Reason, which is suggestively Romantic: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not merely conjecture them and seek them as though obscured in darkness or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon: I see them before me, and I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence. The former begins at the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and it broadens the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude of worlds beyond worlds and systems of systems and into the limitless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and their continuance. The latter begins at my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is comprehensible only to the understanding - a world with which I recognize myself as existing in a universal and necessary (and not only, as in the first case, contingent) connection, and thereby also in connection with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an animal creature, which must give back to the planet ( a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came, the matter which is for a little time provided with vital force, we know not how. The latter, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as that of an intelligency by my personality, in which the moral law reveals a life independent of all animality and even of the whole world of sense - at least so far as it may be

inferred from the purposive destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination which is not restricted to the conditions and limits of this life but reaches into the infinite." 11

The third passage comes from R: "O sincerity! Thou ~~Astrea~~ that hast fled from earth to heaven, how must thou (the basis of conscience, and hence of all inner religion) be drawn thence to us again? I can admit, though it is much to be deplored that candor (in speaking the whole truth which one knows) is not to be found in human nature. But we must be able to demand sincerity (that all that one says be said with truthfulness) and indeed if there were in our nature no predisposition to sincerity, whose cultivation merely is neglected, the human race must needs be in its own eyes, an object of the deepest contempt. Yet this sought for quality of mind is such that it is exposed to many temptations and entails many a sacrifice and hence calls for moral strength or virtue (which must be won); and moreover it must be guarded and cultivated earlier than any other, because the opposed propensity is the hardest to extirpate if it has been allowed firmly to root itself".

This passage like the others is lengthy, but the tone of the final section is worthy of special mention: "And if we now compare with the kind of construction here recommended our usual mode of upbringing, especially in the matter of religion, or better in doctrines of faith, where fidelity of memory in answering questions relating to those doctrines without regard to the

fidelity of the confession itself (which is never put to the test) is accepted as sufficient to make a believer who does not understand what he declares to be holy no longer shall we wonder at the lack of sincerity which produced nothing but inward hypocrites".<sup>12</sup>

These three passages are Kant's only excursions into the Romantic use of language. The question to be asked is "Could Kant be accused of expressing himself in terms of an experience or awareness that could be defined as an aesthetic intuition, such as the Romantics held to be the basic source of their knowledge?" Kant's awe at the starry heavens above, however, is equalled only by his awe at the fact of the moral law within. While it is apparently easy to achieve a Romantic interpretation of Kant on these texts, in fact it is impossible to prove or justify beyond them. Kant's awareness is fundamentally moral, and refers to the human sense of duty. The similarity between Kant and the Romantic enthusiasm for language ends at the point of a similarity between their literary styles and Kant's literary style in these passages. Aesthetic experience for Kant could never replace or even be made equal in status to the act of being sincere, performing one's duty, and behaving according to the moral law. This would certainly distinguish Kant from all Romanticism. So far then as Schliermacher and Kant are concerned, no point of meeting between the thought of each exists. In the expression of what each meant by religion, without begging the final question, Kant has nothing to say that resembles Schleiermacher in appearance, at least at a

<sup>12</sup> R p. 178 (footnote)

first glance.

Now let us probe deeper, and consider Hamann. Hamann was the leader of the Faith Philosophers, and while Kant perhaps did not express himself in the extreme terms of Schliermacher in theology, it is still possible that there is an affinity between Kant's "Glauben Platz" and Hamann's conception of faith.

Some quotations from Hamann should be sufficient to outline his position which can then be stated more compactly as a view of the relationship between faith and reason.

"Just as all kinds of unreason presuppose the existence of reason and its misuse, so must all religions bear a relation to the faith in a single, independent, and living truth, which like our existence, must be older than our reason, and hence cannot be known from the genesis of reason, but by a direct revelation of the truth. Since our reason draws the material of its concepts merely from the external relations of visible, sensuous changing things, in order itself to shape them in accordance with the form of their inward nature, and to make use of them for its pleasure or service, so the ground of religion lies in our whole existence, and outside the sphere of our powers of cognition, which taken altogether constitute the most casual and abstract mode of our existence".<sup>13</sup>

"Being, faith and reason are sheer relationships which do not let themselves be treated as absolutes; they are not things, but pure concepts of the schools, signs for the understanding not for admiration, means

<sup>13</sup> Zweifel and Einfalle Nadler edn. Wecke (Vienna) Vol. 3 p 191 ff.  
tr. R. G. Smith Hamann p. 258.

of help to awaken and fix our attention, just as nature is a revelation not of itself, but of a higher object, not of its vanity but of His glory".<sup>14</sup>

" ..... why should only uncertain knowledge be called faith? What are not grounds of reason? Is knowledge without grounds of reason possible, any more than sensus without intellectus? ..... sense experience in human nature can be as little separated from reason, as reason can from the senses ..... Sense experience must be qualified by grounds of reason. Knowledge from faith is basically identical with the nil in intellectu ..... " <sup>15</sup>

" ..... And whoever is moved by Faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience.

"Tell your friend that it becomes him least of all to laugh at the spectacles of my aesthetic imagination, because I use them to arm the weak eyes of my reason".<sup>16</sup>

"The philosopher is just as much subject to the law of imitation as the poet. For the poet, his muse and its hieroglyphic-shadow-play is as true as reason and its structures for the philosopher. If fate sets the

<sup>14</sup> Letter 29 April 1787 tr. R.G. Smith Hamann p. 257

<sup>15</sup> Letter 27 April 1787 tr. R.G. Smith op. cit p. 255-6.

<sup>16</sup> Letter 27 July 1759 tr. R.G. Smith op. cit. p. 241-2.

greatest sage and the poet in circumstances where they really feel for themselves, the one denies his reason and discloses that he does not believe in the best of all possible worlds, however well he can prove it, while the other sees himself deprived of his muse and guardian angel when his Meta dies".<sup>17</sup>

From these and other writings of Hamann, it can be argued that Hamann regarded faith and reason as in opposition, even in radical opposition. Because of this, each requires the other to supplement it, but in particular, reason needs faith. The aesthetic imagination, which is the instrument of faith as an experience is needed to strengthen the weak eyes of reason. This latter point was made in a letter to Kant. Like Kant, he saw that knowledge had limits. But in answer to the question 'what should supplement knowledge', the distinction between the two is to be found. For Kant, rational faith supplements knowledge. For Hamann, faith formed through the aesthetic imagination supplements not only knowledge, but reason.

It would not be a misrepresentation of Hamann to say that he regarded reason as only an illusory guide to knowledge, and that for him reality is grasped properly only by faith. By reason, Hamann was referring to the rationalist school of philosophy in which Kant had been nurtured, and which could be traced through Wolff, Kant's teacher, to Leibniz and Descartes. Reality, they argued, was amenable to reason and could be analysed and expressed in much the same way as mathematical formulae and calculations could be worked

17 Socratic Memorabilia 1759 tr. R.G. Smith  
op. cit. p. 182.

out. This was indeed their model. According to Hamann, faith is needed to supplement the shortsightedness and limitations of this approach to reality.

Developing the Romantic side of Hamann's thought further, with reference to the second last of these quotations, Hamann brings alongside each other, the standpoint of the philosopher and that of the artist or poet. He says that they have much in common, and by implication suggests that the feelings of the artist can better express reality than the philosopher. Hamann was making a contrast between reason understood as the tool of philosophical scientific knowledge and Faith as the product or experience of aesthetic intuition. This certainly is Romanticism.

Professor Gregor Smith, the most recent commentator on Hamann, had doubts about placing Hamann in the ranks of the Romantics: " ..... it is doubtful to me whether a full study of Hamann can substantiate either the simple disjunction, and opposition between faith and reason, on the one hand, or the restriction on the other hand, of the activity of faith to the intuition of the artist. Reason is not the enemy of faith, nor is faith to be understood as an immediate, as opposed to discursive view of reality".<sup>18</sup>

While perhaps Professor Gregor Smith is correct in pointing out that it is always dangerous to classify a thinker with a label which represents a point of view to which he seems close, there is no doubt that Hamann subordinated reason to faith in a manner different from

Kant. What he meant by faith was something intuitive and aesthetic.

In a letter to Hamann, which recognises the great difference between their points of view, Kant invited Hamann to express himself in any future correspondence "..... if possible in the language of men. For I, poor earthling that I am, have not been properly trained to understand the Divine language of an Intuitive reason".<sup>19</sup> This clearly indicates how Kant regarded Hamann insofar as his view of reason was concerned.

To develop this a little further, I would draw attention to Kant's correspondence with J.C. Lavater (1741 - 1801), a Swiss poet, mystic and 'phrenologist', who was steeped in Romanticism, strongly influenced by Goethe and was close to Hamann. Kant gives a clearer indication of his practical objections to the religious views of men like Hamann and Lavater. Lavater had asked Kant for some comments on a work published in 1774, and these are the terms of Kant's reply: "As for your request that I give my opinions of the ideas of faith and prayer in your Vermischte Schriften, the essential and most excellent part of the teaching of Christ is this: that righteousness is the sum of all religion, and that we ought to seek it with all our might, having faith (that is, an unconditional trust) that God will supplement our efforts and supply the good that is not in our power. This doctrine of faith forbids all our presumptuous curiosity about the manner in which God will do this, forbids the arrogance of supposing that one can know what means would be most in conformity

with His wisdom; it forbids all wooing of favour by the performance of Rituals that someone has introduced. It allows no part of that endless religious madness to which people in all ages are inclined save only the general and undefined trust that we shall all partake of the good in some unknown way, if only we do not make ourselves unworthy of our share of it by our conduct".<sup>20</sup>

It seems then that Kant's objection to Lavater's ideas (which are not defined or discussed in the letter) is that they give rise to needless speculation and religious madness. The fact that Kant referred to Lavater on one occasion as a Schwärmer, albeit perhaps affectionately, gives the key to why Kant precluded religious experience as a source or support of faith. Kant rejected the view that any weight or value for knowledge should be attached to religious experience. He was afraid of Schwärmerei<sup>21</sup> - "irrational fanaticism proceeding from unreflective emotional feelings". Kant does not question

<sup>20</sup> B.A. Vol. 10 p. 179 - 80 tr. Z p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> Kant recognised a more general sense of the term Schwärmerei, of which the religious sense is a specific manifestation. L.B. Borowski in his biography of Kant, records his having asked Kant for comments on his book on Cagliostro, and on the Enthusiastic mischief of the age in general. Kant's reply was the short paper entitled "On Schwärmerei, and the Means against it" (1790), in which he spoke against the superficial scholarship and learning of the day. Schwärmerei, he said, seemed to spread like influenza. "I see no other remedy against this evil than to replace the superficial learning of all sorts of things in the schools by a thorough learning of fewer things, and to direct the thirst for reading in such a way that a well-taught pupil only enjoys reading what deepens his insight and is disgusted with everything else". GR p. 232.

religious experience as a psychological fact, but as a means of knowledge of God, he completely rejects it. Consider these quotations from R, in which he speaks of Schwärmerei. In speaking of encouraging men to act morally, he says: "Moreover, it does not even seem advisable to encourage such a state of confidence (engendered by feelings), rather it is advantageous (to morality) to 'work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling' (a hard saying which, if misunderstood, is capable of driving a man to the blackest fanaticism)."<sup>22</sup> (fanaticism - Schwärmerei). Moral success through feelings of pioueness is bad, and if misunderstood, this text could lead to such fanaticism.

At the end of book Two, Kant says: "Finally, lest perchance, for want of this assurance (about the original predisposition to good and of how it may be restored) we compensate superstitiously, through expiations which presuppose no change of heart, or fanatically (schwärmerisch) through (and merely passive) inner illumination, and so forever be kept distance from the good that is grounded inactivity of the self, we should acknowledge as a mark of the presence of goodness in us naught but a well ordered conduct of life".<sup>23</sup> Fanaticism which entails specious assurances is really pretended passive inner illumination. This seems a rejection of religious awareness for practical purposes.

In direct and explicit rejection of feeling (Gefühl) as an arbiter in the sphere of Scriptural interpretation, Kant speaks of the dangers of incipient fanaticism

<sup>22</sup> R edn. quoted p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> R. p 78

through such a source: "There is a third claimant contesting the office of interpreter, the man who needs neither reason nor scholarship, but merely an inner feeling to recognise the true meaning of Scripture as well as its divine origin ..... A knowledge of laws and of their morality can scarcely be derived from any sort of feeling; still less can there be inferred or discovered from a feeling, certain evidence of a direct divine influence; for the same effect can have more than one cause. In this case, however, the bare morality of the law (and the doctrine) known through reason, is the source (of the law's validity) and even if this origin were no more than barely possible, duty demands that it be thus construed, unless we wish to open wide the gates to every kind of fanaticism (Schwärmerei) and even cause the unequivocal moral feeling to lose its dignity through affiliation with fantasy of every sort".

He continues: "Feeling (Gefühl) is private to every individual, and cannot be demanded of others when the law, from which and according to which this feeling arises, is known in advance; therefore one cannot urge it as a touchstone for the genuineness of a revelation, for it teaches absolutely nothing, but is merely the way in which the subject is affected as regards pleasure or displeasure - and on this basis can be established no knowledge whatsoever".<sup>24</sup>

This latter sentence gives Kant's reason for rejection of Gefühl as a source of knowledge, and explains why Schwärmerei can result from giving Gefühl epistemological status.

Continuing with the evidence from R, Kant warns about the physical dangers which can arise from fanaticism: " ..... history tells how the mystical fanaticism (mystische Schwärmereien) in the lives of hermits and monks, and the glorification of the holiness of celibacy, rendered great masses of people useless to the world; how alleged miracles accompanying all this weighed down the people with heavy chains under a blind superstition; how with a hierarchy forcing itself upon free men, the dreadful voice of orthodoxy was raised, out of the mouths of presumptuous exclusively 'called' expositors, and divided the Christian world into embittered parties over credal opinions on matters of faith (upon which absolutely no general agreement can be reached without appeal to reason as the expositor .....)"<sup>24</sup>\*

Kant's illustration of the fanatically inspired monastic movement, and the consequent uselessness of its members, and of the presumptuousness of the Reformation preachers who claimed Biblical authority, is clear in its meaning. Reason can reconcile the opposites because of its status, but those who base their beliefs upon feelings can only end up divided and at variance, because communication is impossible between them.

In speaking about the principle of morality as the proper source of religious understanding, Kant says: "The persuasion that we can distinguish the effects of grace from those of nature (virtue) or can actually produce the former within ourselves, is fanaticism: (Schwärmerei) for we cannot by any token recognise a supersensible object in experience, still less can we exert an influence upon

<sup>24</sup> \* R p. 121.

it to draw it down to us .....<sup>25</sup>

Further on, Kant defines superstition and fanaticism: "The illusion of being able to accomplish anything in the way of justifying ourselves before God through religious acts of worship is religious superstition, just as the illusion of wishing to accomplish this by striving for what is supposed to be communion with God is religious fanaticism (Schwärmerei) ..... an illusion called fanatical when the very means it contemplates, as supersensible, are not within man's power, leaving out of account the inaccessibility of the supersensible and aimed at by those means; for this feeling of the immediate presence of the Supreme Being and the distinguishing of this from every other, even from the moral feeling, would constitute a receptivity for an intuition for which there is no sensory provision in man's nature".<sup>26</sup>

Kant makes his position beyond all reasonable shadow of doubt in clear distinction from the Romantic standpoint. Fanaticism is any claim to experience God directly. Man has no faculty for apprehending God, and therefore the concept of communion with God is an illusion. To speak of God in the manner and style of Schliermacher, Kant dismisses as intellectually absurd and physically impossible.

He goes even further and says: "The fanatical religious illusion (schwärmerische Religionswahn) ..... is the moral death of reason; for without reason after all, no religion is possible, since like morality in general, it must be established upon basic principles".<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> R p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> R p. 162-163.

<sup>27</sup> R p. 172.

When Kant says that Schwärmerei is the moral death of reason, he is being unequivocal. The previous quotation read in the light of this requires no further comment. In a footnote,<sup>27</sup> Kant speaks slightly of the "fanatical (Schwärmerischen) illusion of imagined supersensible heavenly feelings" leaving no doubt about his contempt for the "Gefühlsphilosophie" (philosophy of feeling) of which the "Glaubensphilosophie" was a particular species.

The points made in Kant's letter to Lavater which I quoted are expanded in R, and in particular in four sections which come as 'observations' to the four divisions of the work. They deal with works of grace, miracles, mysteries and means of grace. Kant maintains that he cannot speak of these as part of religious faith viewed within the limits of the critical philosophy. However, they are part of the trappings of institutional religion, and some comment upon them is therefore necessary. "They do not belong to it, (religion within the limits of pure reason), but they border on it".<sup>28</sup> Kant calls them the parerga of religion, additional embroideries upon the basic pattern of faith. In seeing how Kant treats them we can see more clearly the tendencies which he feared, and the interpretations of faith which he himself rejected. We see in fact, his treatment of those aspects of religion which themselves either encourage, or are encouraged by Romanticism.

The General Observation entitled "Concerning the Restoration to its power of the Original Predisposition to Good" is the first of the discussions and it deals

<sup>27</sup> R p. 172  
<sup>28</sup> R p. 47.

with the concept of grace - the idea of supernatural aid in the moral struggle.

Kant's final attitude is summed up in the last sentence of the Observation: "Hence we can admit a work of grace as something incomprehensible, but we cannot adopt it into our maxims either for theoretical or practical use".<sup>29</sup>

Kant is saying that from the standpoint of Reason (practical or theoretical) nothing may be said about grace, other than that it may exist. We can say in a more general way that grace might be real, and that works of grace may exist, but we must add that they are outwith the possibility of knowledge as defined in the KRV. How does Kant reach this position?

He commences by insisting that man must act rightly by himself, and that he is vested with full moral responsibility. He says: "Man himself must make, or have made himself into whatever in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice".<sup>30</sup> Otherwise it is pointed out, man could not be held responsible for any action, and therefore could not be morally good or bad. To affirm that man is created good, Kant takes to mean that he is created for good, and not that he is good in actuality. He has a predisposition for good. Bearing in mind what he has already said about good and evil in man, Kant is faced with the question: "how can a man become good?" Here he declares: "Granted that some

<sup>29</sup> R p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> R p. 40.

supernatural co-operation may be necessary to his becoming good, or to this becoming better, whether his co-operation consists merely in the abatement of hindrances or indeed in positive assistance, man must first make himself worthy to receive it, and must lay hold of this aid (which is no small matter) - that is, he must adopt this positive increase of power into his maxim, for only thus can good be imputed to him and he be known as a good man.

"The restoration (of the original predisposition to good) is but the establishment of the purity of this law as the supreme ground of all our maxims, whereby it is not merely associated with other incentives, and certainly is not subordinated to any such (to inclinations) as its conditions, but instead must be adopted in its entire purity, as an incentive, adequate in itself for the determination of the will".<sup>31</sup>

In pointing out that original goodness is the holiness of maxims in doing one's duty, namely doing one's duty for duty's sake, Kant recognises that there are two senses in which a man can perform the right action. He may resolve to conform to the law and do his duty out of self interest and not out of a sense of duty. "Honesty is the best policy" is not a moral slogan. "Honesty for honesty's sake" is a moral slogan. Kant says: "..... if a man is to become not merely legally, but morally a good man (pleasing to God) that is, a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character (virtus noumenon) and one who, knowing something

to be his duty, requires no other incentive than this representation of duty itself, this cannot be brought about through gradual reformation, so long as the basis of the maxims remains impure, but must be effected through a revolution in the man's disposition (a going over to the maxim of holiness of the disposition.) He can become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation".<sup>32</sup>

Before proceeding further, a question emerges which is very obvious. "Is Kant entitled, on his own basis, and within the framework of his overall argument, to postulate the possibility of supernatural assistance, and in the way in which he speaks of it, namely as an adopted increase of power into the maxim of action?" He clearly runs the risk of being accused of stepping beyond the critical limits he has set for himself. Those who find a contradiction between the KRV and the KPV will naturally find him guilty of trespassing his own prescribed limits.

Kant himself, however, anticipates this question when he says: "Reason, conscious of her inability to satisfy her moral need extends to herself high-flown ideas capable of supplying this lack without, however, appropriating these ideas as an extension of her domain. Reason does not dispute the possibility or the reality of the objects of these ideas; she simply cannot adopt them into the maxims of thought and action. She even holds that, if in the inscrutable realm of the supernatural there is something more than she can explain to herself, which may yet be necessary as a complement to her moral insufficiency, this will be, even though

unknown, available to her good will. Reason believes this with a faith which (with respect to the possibility of this supernatural complement) might be called reflective; for dogmatic faith, which proclaims itself as a form of knowledge appears to her dishonest and presumptuous".<sup>33</sup>

Kant does not deny that Reason is often tempted to go beyond her recognised limits. This he calls the natural dialectic of reason.<sup>34</sup> If works of grace, which are the hypostasised ideas of supernatural help are taken as dogmatic, then of course reason has been transcended. Kant says however, that we have no more than an idea, and answers the question I raised by saying that when we speak this way, we are not asserting in the existence of these things a new knowledge to which we have reasoned. It is, in fact, a reflective faith derived through past experience that suggests speaking thus at all. No knowledge is involved. Faith, in this sense, is defined as the conviction that, when a man consistently tries to act from the motive of duty, what is inadequate about his moral reason which makes it difficult for him to act from the right maxims, will be supplied by a supernatural complement.

There is, however, still an unsatisfactory feature in this reply. Kant says that works of grace may be postulated or admitted as existing, but he does also say that they are inscrutable. Reason cannot venture to say

<sup>33</sup> R. p. 47.

<sup>34</sup> cf KRV B 356 on the theme of 'Pure Reason as the Seat of transcendental Illusion' where Kant admits that reason tries continually to go beyond the critical limits.

anything about the supernatural at all. In the realm of the supernatural, "all use of reason ceases".<sup>35</sup> But Kant implies that the Divine co-operation is necessary because man does not have the wherewithal to pull himself up to his full moral stature without such assistance. He has to believe that he will receive what he needs to make his moral undertakings possible.

Is there not a contradiction here, or at least the possibility that Kant is speaking from some other, but unstated point of view? This possibility appears to depend upon an extended use of reason which enables Kant to speak about things from this point of view that cannot be mentioned within the strictly critical understanding of reason.

The only way in which this difficulty of exegesis may be overcome so that Kant speaks consistently is to refer to G,<sup>36</sup> and there to the distinction between the standpoint of the moral agent who makes the decision in the faith that he will receive help, and the observer who from outside the situation can only observe a man acting in a causal process, and therefore cannot speak about anything supernatural. It would seem that Kant is leaning on this distinction without making the fact explicit, and this suggests that the distinction is a basic one in his thought. This is one answer to a Kant critic on this point. Whether or not it is acceptable must be a personal judgement. I accept it because this distinction with which Kant operates runs through every level of his thought and is derived ultimately from the

<sup>35</sup> R. p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> G. p. 124.

problematic concept of the "Ding-an-Sich". This issue lies in a realm of Kant interpretation beyond the scope of the immediate argument. However, it is important to point out two consequences, first, there is an answer which justifies Kant speaking at all about the supernatural, and secondly, the relationship Kant sees between man and grace is one of faith.

Central also for the proper understanding of why Kant viewed works of grace as superfluous to man as a moral agent is the conception he uses of the revolution necessary in the disposition before a man can become morally as against legally a good man. He says in expanding this theme: " ..... duty bids us do this, and duty demands nothing of us except by saying that a man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of a revolution in his sensuous nature (which places obstacles in the way of the former)."<sup>37</sup>

Kant could be saying one of several things in this passage: First, starting with the view that we have a duty to act always from the motive of duty, it could be argued that, amongst all the decisions we have to make about duty, there must at some point be one major decision, a meta-decision so to speak, which could be expressed in this way "From now on, I will always do my duty for duty's sake, and with no regard for self interest". When we make this decision, then we have undergone the recast of mind necessary to become morally good as well as legally good.

Another interpretation of Kant would be reached by arguing that we should continually purify our

<sup>37</sup> R. p. 42-3.

maxims, and by doing so, we will gradually undergo (with the aid of grace) a recast of our mind by the purifying of our maxims. "He must be able to hope through his own efforts to reach the road which leads thither, and which is pointed out to him by a fundamentally improved disposition, because he ought to become a good man and is to be adjudged morally good only by virtue of that which can be imputed to him as performed by himself".<sup>38</sup>

These two lines of interpretation suffer from the fault of oversimplification. We do not take a revolutionary leap from impurity to purity, nor do we gradually progress. What is indeed required for such a change, Kant states thus: " ..... the conversion of the disposition of a bad man into that of a good one is to be found in the change of the highest inward ground of the adoption of all his maxims conformable to the moral law, so far as this new ground (the new heart) is now itself unchangeable".<sup>39</sup>

This seems to indicate a leaning towards the first interpretation. However, Kant continues in a manner which raises doubts about both: "Man cannot attain NATURALLY to assurance concerning such a revolution, however, either by immediate consciousness or through the evidence furnished by the life which he has hitherto led; for the depths of the heart (the subjective first ground of his maxims) are inscrutable to him".<sup>40</sup> Kant says he can only hope.

Therefore, what Kant is saying is that whether or

38 R. p. 46

39 R. p. 46

40 R. p. 46

not we make a meta-decision, or progressively purify our maxims, we can never assess our own moral progress. We can only keep trying, hoping that what we lack will be supplied. Clearly, faith is involved, the same faith that makes us believe that doing our duty is contributing to a better world.

The main point of Kant's views on works of grace should be clear. There is no need to speak about grace. We have the concrete situations in life where we are faced by duty. Our course of action is laid down for us. This we must follow. We can wonder about the meaning of it all, and how we succeed and we can speak of grace and faith, but this in no way contributes to the performance of duty.

"It is not essential and hence not necessary for everyone to know what God does or has done for his salvation", but it is essential to know what man himself must do in order to become worthy of this assistance".<sup>41</sup> Again, the emphasis is upon the action of the moral agent. It is therefore impossible to read any kind of Romantic interpretation of grace into Kant's comments upon works of grace. He even points quite explicitly to the superfluity of those religious efforts to win favour with God. This type of religious effort flatters itself that God can make someone eternally happy without him becoming a better person, or that God can do this merely on request. This, no doubt, Kant would argue, opens the door to Schwärmerei, bearing in mind what he said to Lavater in his letter.

The only quasi-Romantic manner of speaking adopted

41 R. p. 47.

by Kant in this section occurs where he eulogises the moral disposition, the predisposition to good, in these words: "The force of this question (about our sense of right and wrong) every man, even one of the meanest capacity, must feel most deeply - every man, ~~that is who~~ previously has been taught the holiness which inheres in the idea of duty, but who has not yet advanced to an inquiry into the concept of freedom, which first and foremost emerges from this law; and the very incomprehensibility of this predisposition which announces a divine origin, acts perforce upon the spirit even to the point of exaltation, and strengthens it for whatever sacrifice a man's respect for his duty may demand of him. More frequently to excite in man this feeling of the sublimity of his moral destiny is especially commendable as a method of awakening moral sentiments".<sup>42</sup>

The expression moral destiny is highly suggestive, but again, when read carefully in the context of its use, Kant is merely referring to man's predisposition to good, and how this can encourage the moral sense and strengthen man's resolution to be dutiful. There is nothing Romanticist about this idea.

Kant's next Observation is on the subject of MIRACLES, and he opens his discussion in the following way: "If a moral religion (which must consist not in dogmas and rites, but in the heart's disposition to fulfil all human duties as Divine commands) is to be established, all miracles which history connects with its inauguration must themselves in the end render superfluous the belief in miracles in general: for it bespeaks a culpable degree of moral unbelief not to

acknowledge as completely authoritative the commands of duty ..... " 43

Kant clearly regarded belief in miracles if looked upon as a prop to moral endeavour as merely pandering to moral unbelief, which itself cannot be excused.

In a footnote,<sup>44</sup> Kant refers to Lavater's defence of Wunderglaubens, and it is not unexpected that Kant is opposed to any defence of the idea of supernatural influences upon human life or in the world. Kant points out that in principle, Lavater's champion, Pfenninger,<sup>46</sup> can be assailed himself by the same arguments he applies to those who permit Biblical miracles, but no others. Kant clearly saw a danger of Schwärmerei in admitting even little miracles or special Providences.

However, it is significant that he does not take to task the New Testament miracles. He accepts that they ushered in a new era, and that it is therefore pointless to debate "narratives or interpretations".<sup>47</sup>

Kant says: "..... when a religion of mere

43 R. p. 79

44 R. p. 80

45 In periods of history where the Romantic influence has been strong, folklore abounds in tales of the supernatural. Belief in miracles seems to be part of the Romantic temperament when it reaches popular levels. A healing shrine such as at Lourdes is surely the mere product of a Romantic imagination? Lavater, naturally enough, as a Romantic, defended Wunderglaubens.

46 Johann Konrad Pfenninger (1747 - 92) Reformed Minister at Zürich.

47 R. p. 79.

rites and observations has run its course, and when one based on the spirit and the truth (on the moral disposition) is to be established in its stead, it is wholly conformable to man's ordinary ways of thought, though not strictly necessary, for the historical introduction of the latter to be accompanied and, as it were, adorned by miracles in order to announce the termination of the earlier religion, which, without miracles, would never have had any authority".<sup>48</sup>

Having made his point in this general way, Kant then develops it with particular reference to Gospel miracles: "The person of the teacher of the one and only religion, valid for all worlds, may indeed be a mystery. His appearance on earth, his translation thence, and his eventful life and suffering may all be nothing but miracles ..... We need not call in question any of these miracles and indeed may honour the trappings which have served to bring into public currency a doctrine <sup>49</sup> whose authenticity rests upon a record indelibly registered on every soul and which stands in need of no miracle".<sup>50</sup>

The life of Jesus may be shrouded in miraculous happenings, but this should not confuse our realisation that His message is already written in the moral law and engraved upon our hearts.

<sup>48</sup> R p. 79.

<sup>49</sup> There is a striking parallel to Kant's insistence that the Gospel narrative is secondary in importance to the message it proclaims. This is a basic premise of the form critical school of N.T. scholars, although no doubt, Rodolf Bultmann would differ with Kant strongly on what was the content of the Gospel.

<sup>50</sup> R p. 79f.

When Kant asks directly "What is a miracle?", he declares that the only possible answer is in terms of what they are for us (as something we can incorporate into the maxims of our practical reason.) He defines them as "events in the world the operating laws of whose causes are and must remain absolutely unknown to us".<sup>51</sup> He then classifies them, and briefly explains why none of these categories of miracles can be of any practical use to us.

He speaks of theistic miracles, in which we can have the idea that it is possible for God, the Creator to occasionally suspend the causal nexus in order to bring about a miracle. However, the means by which He does this, and the law in accordance with which it is achieved, we can never know. However, it is certain that what is done will be morally good, and that this itself provides a means of testing a so-called theistic miracle, and also a reason for regarding them as 'difficult to accept'. If a theistic miracle conflicted with the moral law, then it would be false. This is a negative test. If however, the evil spirit made himself an angel of light, which would be a demonic (devilish) act, we could not apply a positive test.

The other classification he mentions is that of demonic (angelic in the sense of good spirit) miracles. The same problem applies: how do we identify one beyond all doubt?

He continues by saying that in any event, we cannot make use of these ideas in the affairs of life. A man cannot face a court of law and say "I have been tempted by the devil". This cannot be a defence against possible

<sup>51</sup> R p. 83.

conviction. Kant then concludes: "since he (man) can make no possible use of them (miracles) he sanctions (i.e. does not incorporate belief in miracles into his maxims of either theoretical or practical reason, though indeed he does not impugn their possibility or reality - footnote) no miracles in this case, but instead should he attend to the commands of reason, he conducts himself as though all his change of heart and all improvement depended solely upon his own exertions directed thereto. But to think that through the gift of a really firm theoretical faith in miracles, man could himself perform them and so storm heaven - this is to venture<sup>so</sup> far beyond the limits of reason that we are not justified in tarrying long over such senseless conceit".<sup>51</sup>

Even the idea that miracles can occur occasionally makes little difference to Kant's unquestionable refutation of the need for a belief in the miraculous.

Works of grace are inaccessible to theoretical reason, and miracles are of no value to practical reason. Religious thought therefore can take neither of these things seriously. The third observation deals with mysteries. He commences by defining the concept of MYSTERY: "Investigation into the inner nature of all kinds of faith which concern religion invariably encounters a mystery - i.e. something which may indeed be known by each single individual but cannot be made known publicly, that is, shared universally. Being holy, it must be moral, and so an object of reason, and it must be capable of being known from within adequately for

practical use, and yet as something mysterious, not for theoretical use ..... " 52

Kant's recognition of the mysterious element is conditioned by his insistence upon the importance of giving moral significance to the concept before it is capable of being discussed.

When he speaks of them being private, and not public, he is perhaps thinking of the experience usually termed mystical, when someone claims to have apprehended or experienced reality directly through an intuition.<sup>53</sup> Such an experience of course precludes the use of reason, and on this ground alone, Kant would have objected.

However, he continues: "Belief in what we are yet to regard as a holy mystery can be looked upon as divinely prompted or as pure rational faith. Unless we are impelled by the greatest need to adopt the first of these views, we shall make it our maxim to abide by the second". Then with great significance, he says: "Feelings are not knowledge and so do not indicate a mystery....."

Therefore, he concludes: "It is impossible to settle a priori and objectively, whether there are mysteries or not".<sup>54</sup>

Kant is therefore refusing to discuss any concept of MYSTERY which is based upon feelings which are subjective. He turns to the inner subjective moral predisposition (which is objective in the sense that all men are

52 R p. 129.

53 It should be remembered that Lavater was also a mystic.

54 R p. 129.

endowed with it) to enquire if any such thing as a mystery is to be found there. The Ground of morality, he declares, is not a mystery: "Yet we shall not be entitled to number among the holy mysteries the grounds of morality which ~~is~~ inscrutable to us; for we can thus classify only that which we can know ~~but~~ which is incapable of being communicated publicly, whereas though morality can be communicated publicly, its cause remains unknown to us".<sup>55</sup>

Neither is freedom a mystery, for the same reasons. Our knowledge of freedom can be shared, but the ground of freedom is not given as an object of knowledge. But "..... it is this very freedom which, when applied to the final object of practical reason (the realisation of the moral end) alone leads us inevitably to holy mysteries".<sup>56</sup>

Man, Kant argues, has a duty to work towards the end of the idea of the highest good, and in this "he finds himself impelled to believe in the co-operation or management of a Moral Ruler of the world by means of which alone this goal can be reached".<sup>57</sup> Practical reason requires a belief in God, concerned "not so much to know what God is in Himself (His Nature) as what He is for us as moral beings".<sup>58</sup> God is spoken of as the Creator - the morally holy legislator, Preserver - Ruler and moral Guardian and as Administrator - and Judge. This merely

55 R p. 129.

56 R p. 129.

57 R p. 130.

58 R p. 130.

expresses God's moral relation to the human race. Without entering into a digression to discuss Kant's understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, it is relevant at this point to note his reference to such an idea. Clement J. Webb explains Kant's thought in these words: "This doctrine of the Trinity does not extend our knowledge of God's nature in itself, and if presented as if it did, would be a morally useless mystery of the kind which a rational religion cannot admit; but understood of God's moral relation to us, it is, in another and better sense of the word, a 'mystery' or rather three mysteries revealed to us through our own reason, and so practically clear to us, although presenting problems which are theoretically insoluble".<sup>59</sup>

The three mysteries mentioned which correspond to the aspects of the Trinity as defined by Kant are the ideas of a DIVINE CALL, ATONEMENT and ELECTION.

A fuller discussion of Kant's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the doctrines of Atonement and Election belong to a study of how he treats the doctrines of the Christian faith and the teaching and beliefs of the Christian Church. The immediate task to hand in this section of the argument is to seek out traces of Romanticism in his discussion of those aspects of religion which lend themselves to that way of thinking. One final quotation from this section should dispel any such ideas: "Although that great mystery, comprising in one formula all that we have mentioned, can be made comprehensible to each man through his reason as a practical and necessary religious idea, we can say that,

<sup>59</sup> Clement J. Webb Kant's Philosophy of Religion  
p. 134.

in order to become the moral basis of religion and particularly of a public religion, it was, at that time, first revealed when it was publicly taught and made the symbol of a wholly new religious epoch ..... But the highest goal of moral perfection of finite creatures - a goal to which man can never completely attain - is love of the law".<sup>60</sup>

Moral worth is the primary value of religion to man, and the supernatural element cannot have moral significance. Therefore it cannot really be incorporated into the beliefs of a moral faith.

The traditional concept of the MEANS OF GRACE is discussed in the fourth general observation. Since Kant has already rejected the idea of grace as being of no moral value, the means of grace would be rejected on the same grounds. However, his discussion does raise some points which are worth noting. He begins by saying: "Whatever good man is able to do through his own efforts under laws of freedom, in contrast to what he can do only with supernatural assistance, can be called NATURE as distinguished from GRACE".<sup>61</sup> However, we do not know what grace can do for us, "and reason is left, on this score as with the supernatural in general (to which morality, if regarded as holiness belongs) without any knowledge of the laws according to which it might occur".<sup>61</sup>

The means of grace are naturally central to the spiritual and devotional life of a believer. In Christian thought, they are channels of God's grace to man, through which he receives Divine help, and therefore are basic to

<sup>60</sup> R p. 136.

<sup>61</sup> R p. 179.

any conception of a personal subjective religious faith.

Kant, however, in these opening words already demolishes the possibility of means of grace as part of a moral faith. We cannot know how they work, on the basis of his distinction between nature and grace. If nature is opposed to grace at the level of what we can do that is good by ourselves, as against what we can do with supernatural assistance, then grace must be immediately and by definition precluded from any rational discussion of religion.

Kant says in further clarification: "The concept of a supernatural accession to our moral, though deficient capacity and even to our not wholly purified and certainly weak disposition to perform our entire duty, is a TRANSCENDENT CONCEPT and is a bare idea of whose reality no experience can assure us". Kant finds it hard to reconcile such an idea as grace with reason, but admits that it cannot be proved to be an impossibility because "freedom itself, though containing nothing supernatural in its conception remains, as regards its possibility, just as incomprehensible to us as is the supernatural factor which we would like to regard as a supplement to the spontaneous but deficient determination of freedom".<sup>62</sup> However, beyond the bare idea that it is not impossible, we can know nothing of its operation, if it does exist. It is a transcendent idea, and in that sense a mystery. Of the transcendent, we can have no knowledge at all.

Of the means of grace, Kant says: "Now means are all the intermediate causes which man has in his power whereby a certain purpose may be achieved. There is no

other means (and there can be no other) of becoming worthy of heavenly assistance than the earnest endeavour to better in every possible way our moral nature and thus render ourselves susceptible of having the fitness of this nature perfected for Divine approval, so far as this perfecting is not in our power; for that Divine aid, which we await, itself really aims at nothing but our morality".<sup>63</sup>

He continues: "The concept of a so-called means of grace ..... serves here nonetheless as a means of self-deception which is as common as it is detrimental to true religion".

Kant is saying then that as the operation of grace is outwith the idea of moral religion, so the idea of a means of grace which brings grace to work is a form of self-deception if it is regarded as an object of knowledge. The central theme of R is that true religion and true service of God consists in the "disposition of obedience to all true duties as Divine commands, not in actions directed exclusively to God".<sup>63</sup> The only true means of grace for Kant is the earnest moral endeavour of man. The means of grace spoken of by the Church are illusory if they claim to give knowledge of supernatural aid.

From the examination of these themes in R (i.e. works of grace, miracles, mysteries and means of grace) it should be clear that Kant has no desire to allow into his consideration of religion any element of feeling or even any considerations based upon anything but moral experience. Religion for Kant if it is to be discussed must be rational, and by that he means amenable to understanding in terms of the laws of morality. Kant

rejected the idea of a personal subjective religious faith, because he regarded it as a potential source of Schwärmerei.

During this stage of his career, there can be little doubt that Kant held the view that personal subjective religious experience was not an expression of any kind of knowledge of God. Pure rational moral faith was, for him, the only true possible and valid religion. However, it has been argued from Kant's OPUS POSTUMUM that later in his life, he did adopt such a personal religious faith for himself. Erich Adickes made this claim many years ago.<sup>64</sup> His arguments rest on three grounds: First, in the Opus Postumum, Kant does not restate his moral argument, as advanced in the KPV. Secondly, Kant declares that no 'proof' is possible in any case, and finally, Adickes claims that Kant affirms that God is directly and immediately revealed in the Categorical Imperative.

Adickes' points must be given serious consideration.<sup>65</sup> The first two can be answered fairly simply. First, as to the claim that Kant does not restate the moral argument, it could be said that this is merely negative

64 Erich Adickes "Die bewegenden Kräfte in Kants philosophischer Entwicklung und die beiden Pole seines Systems II" Kantstudien Vol. I 1897 p. 402 ff "Kants Opus Postumum, dargetekkt und beurheit"  
Kantstudien Vol. 50 p. 720 ff.

65 A point by point consideration of Adickes' views is contained in an article by George Schrader in Philosophy 1951 (p. 228): "Kant's presumed repudiation of the Moral Argument in the Opus Postumum - Adickes Interpretation"

evidence, and the point that he declares that no proof is possible can surely be cleared up by remembering that the moral argument is not a theoretical proof in any case. The KRV destroyed the possibility of speculative theology. However, as to the third point, that Kant claims that God is directly and immediately revealed in the Categorical Imperative, let me offer three quotations from Kant's *Opus Postumum* which appear to contradict any possible defence of the view that Kant reverted in later years to a personal subjective religious faith based on this idea.

The first reiterates the thought of R Book IV. "The reality of the concept of freedom cannot be presented or proved directly (immediately) but only through a mediating principle; and similarly the proposition "there is a God", namely in the human, moral/practical reason, a determination of His activity in the knowledge of all human obligations as Divine commands".<sup>66</sup>

This surely also answers the point that Kant never offered a further 'proof' of God's existence.

The second passage I would cite takes up the point made by Adickes that we apprehend God directly in the Categorical Imperative. We do not apprehend the Nature of God in this Imperative, but only the command of God, which is God speaking to us as moral beings. It is what God is for us, morally, that we know in the Categorical Imperative.

The third quotation which I append to the second merely underlines Kant's view that a direct and

<sup>66</sup> Kant Schriften: BA Vol 21 p. 30

unmediated experience of God is not possible.

"That no positive or negative command from a holy and powerful Being to man could actually be issued, that even if it occurred, the man to whom it happened could not have recognised it and been persuaded of its authenticity, is beyond doubt. We are left with nothing more than the knowledge of our duty as commanded of God, which suffers not the slightest loss of authority because of the inevitable lack of knowledge of this proclamation. The moral imperative can thus be regarded as the voice of God".<sup>67</sup>

"It is fanatical to claim or even to hope for an experience or perception of the Being of God or for an effect which could proceed only from Him".<sup>68</sup>

These quotations from the *Opus Postumum* should clarify any doubts about Kant having changed his views at that time.

Kant's intellectual integrity which stood firmly by the principle of objectivity in knowledge obviously did not allow him to either countenance in others or embrace to himself the view that belief in God is a matter of pure personal conviction. It is surprising that Adickes should have tried to make the claim that Kant altered his grounds of belief. However, while admitting that it is difficult to present any kind of argument from such a mass as the *Opus Postumum*, at least it has been

<sup>67</sup> Kant Schriften: Berlin Academy Edition Vol. 22 p. 64.

<sup>68</sup> Kant Schriften: Berlin Academy Edition Vol. 21 p. 74.

demonstrated that while Adickes represents Kant as having abandoned his rational faith for the personal and subjective faith, the kind of religious view that he feared all his 'critical' life, there are passages which indicate that he held to his position as enunciated in R. To prove the case finally would require an analysis beyond the scope of this argument; I am content therefore to suggest that such an analysis would prove that allowing for 'experiments' with ideas and language, Kant never abandoned the rational faith of pure reason.

Therefore neither in his published works nor in the *Opus Postumum* is there any evidence of Kant ever having embraced a view of religion that had anything in common with the views of Schliermacher the theologian or Hamann the Glaubensphilosoph. Indeed, it has been one consistent criticism of Kant, that he failed to identify any personal and subjective elements in religious faith, or as some would have insisted more extremely, he failed to see that religious faith was personal and subjective. This latter criticism is implied by the extreme Romantics, such as Schliermacher. The former criticism merely points out that Kant's religion is perhaps rather cold and devoid of the warmth of a personal element. The following is an example of this line of criticism: "Perhaps the main weakness of Kant's Philosophy of religion is that it is ..... a moral philosophy. It never seems to occur to him that there is a specifically religious experience, a part of which is what Otto called "The numinous". He develops only the moral side of man in harmony with God. The temple of Karnak, the Parthenon, the cathedral at Chartres, religious painting, sculpture,

poetry, music and charity - Kantian religion is not sufficiently fertile and generous to welcome these. It waters down saints and prophets into ethical culture leaders. Its emphasis on reason and morality as the essence of advanced religion, or of religion for the philosopher, unconsciously tends to engulf religion as a whole, making it hard on the hypothesis to understand how - immediate experience of the Divine being ignored - religion can flourish where abstract thought and moral inspiration are weak, and how it often falters where discursive reason and politeness reign".<sup>69</sup>

This quotation speaks for those who think that Kant's views lack an element of feeling, and are therefore one-sided.<sup>70</sup> Dakin refers to Rudolph Otto and his expression "the numinous" - Otto formally raised the question of the relation between the rational and the non-rational elements in religion, and developed a line of thought in answer to this problem within a Kantian framework. Anyone acquainted with Das Heilige <sup>71</sup> may perhaps question the worthwhileness of discussing it at all since it is so far from the position that Kant held, at least as I have

<sup>69</sup> A. Hazard Dakin: "Kant and Religion" Essay XVII of Heritage of Kant edit. Whitney and Bowers (Princeton U.P. 1939) p. 418-9.

<sup>70</sup> cf. Baron Friedrich von Hügel ( Essays & Addresses - Dent & Sons Ltd. London reprint 1963) criticises Kant in this vein. See 1st. Series of Essays & Addresses pp. 12-13, 17-18, 151, 186-7, 252, 265 in particular.

<sup>71</sup> Rudolph Otto Das Heilige (1917) tr. J.W. Harvey The Idea of the Holy Pelican Books 1959.

represented it negatively in his fear of Schwärmerei. However, since Otto does refer to Kant for certain of his basic ideas, he cannot be totally disregarded. In fact, there are one or two positive reasons, for examining "Das Heilige".

First, Otto attempts to go beyond Schliermacher. He criticises Schliermacher on two main counts. While respecting that Schliermacher has isolated "a very important element"<sup>72</sup> in religious experience, the 'feeling of dependence'<sup>73</sup> he claims that his discovery is open to criticism.

First, because Schliermacher fails to distinguish successfully between the religious sense of dependence, and the ordinary human sense of dependence. Schliermacher appears to see the difference as a matter of degree, between conditional dependence, which is human, and absolute dependence, which is religious dependence. Otto wishes to state the specifically religious form of dependence more positively as 'creature feeling'.<sup>74</sup>

Secondly, Otto criticises Schliermacher because he speaks as though this religious feeling of dependence were primarily a phase of self-consciousness. However, Otto believes that the feeling has reference beyond the self to what he calls a numen praesens.<sup>75</sup> It is this numinous that he wishes to study. Otto's attempt to

<sup>72</sup> op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>73</sup> op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>74</sup> Otto op.cit. p. 23-24. Otto refers to Gen. 18:27 where Abraham speaks of himself as 'dust and ashes'.

<sup>75</sup> op. cit. p. 25.

rationalise Schliermacher's discovery is one reason for taking a closer look at his views.

Secondly, Professor C.A. Campbell feels that the use Otto makes of Kant's term 'Schematism' is not to be totally ignored: "Since Otto's use of the Kantian term 'schematism' has been somewhat blown upon by the critics, it is worth while pointing out that there does seem to be a sufficient resemblance between the process Otto has in mind, and Kant's schematism of the categories - or, more accurately, Kant's schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding - for the term 'schematism' to have real indicative value".<sup>76</sup>

Professor Campbell feels that while Otto may perhaps not be a strict Kantian, his use of 'schematism' is not entirely worthless or meaningless.

The purpose of Otto's use of the term 'schematism' is of course to attempt to rationalise the numinous feeling which he derives from his criticism of Schliermacher.

Finally, it should be remembered that what is being asked is quite simply 'Can Kant be read in this way?' We have found no trace of Romanticism in his writings, and since there is no doubt that Otto's views belong to the Romantic camp of thinkers, and since he does draw in a meaningful way upon Kant, the question must be faced 'Are the seeds of a Romantic position in Kant?' 'Do his terms lend themselves to such a use?'

<sup>76</sup> C.A. Campbell Selfhood and Godhood (George Allen & Unwin 1957) p. 337.

For the purposes of strict relevance, I shall state the general question of Otto and Kant <sup>77</sup> in a very specific form: 'What is the nature of the 'indicative value' of Otto's use of the term 'schematism', and is there anything in his final position that is genuine reflection of Kant?'

First, then, some quotations from Otto which lead directly into his treatment of 'Schematism': "..... in our idea of God, is the non-rational overborne even perhaps wholly excluded by the rational .....?" <sup>78</sup> From this question, he makes a criticism of orthodox Christianity for failing to recognise the value of religious experience, and for therefore giving to the idea of God a one-sided intellectualist and rationalist interpretation. Religion cannot be fully contained in a series of rational assertions. It is Otto's belief that the non-rational element of religion has been mistakenly devalued.

To give his discussion precision, he takes for analysis the concept of "Das Heilige", and this leads us to his use of Schematism: "We generally take 'holy' as meaning 'completely good'; it is the absolute moral attribute, denoting the consummation of moral goodness. In this sense, Kant calls the will which remains unwaveringly obedient to the moral law from the motive of duty a 'holy' will; here clearly we have simply the

<sup>77</sup> Detailed material on Otto's background, and relation to Kant's ideas may be found in Robert F. Davidson Rudolph Otto's Interpretation of Religion (Princeton U.P. 1947) Chapter V in particular.

<sup>78</sup> The Idea of the Holy p. 18.

perfectly moral will. In the same way, we may speak of the holiness or sanctity of duty or law, meaning merely that they are imperative upon conduct and universally obligatory".

Then he continues: "But this common usage of the term is inaccurate. It is true that all this moral significance is contained in the word 'holy', but it includes in addition - as even we cannot but feel - a clear overplus of meaning, and this it is now our task to isolate".<sup>79</sup>

Having isolated the overplus of meaning contained in the word 'holy', Otto asks how the rational and non-rational (the holy) are related. To answer this question, he introduces the term 'schematism'.

In expounding 'schematism', Otto says: " ..... an example indeed of an inner a priori principle is (following the theory of Kant) the connection of the category of causality with its temporal 'schema', the temporal sequence of two successive events which by being brought into connection with the category of causality is known and recognised as a causal relation of the two. In this case, analogy between the two - the category and the schema - has also a place, but it is not chance external resemblance but essential correspondence and the fact that the two belong together is here a necessity of our reason. On this basis of such a necessity, the temporal sequence 'schematises' the category".<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> The Idea of the Holy. p. 19.

<sup>80</sup> The Idea of the Holy. p. 60.

Applied to his concept of the holy, Otto claims that: "the relation of the rational to the non-rational element in the idea of the holy or sacred is just such a one of schematisation, and the non-rational numinous fact, schematised by the rational concepts we have suggested above, yields us the complex category of the 'holy' itself, richly charged and complete and in its fullest meaning".<sup>81</sup>

He claims "that the schematisation is a genuine one, and not a mere combination of analogies may be distinctly seen from the fact that it does not fall to pieces, and cannot be cut out as the development of the consciousness of religious truth proceeds onwards and upwards, but is only recognised with greater definiteness and certainty".

This must now be compared with Kant's chapter on 'Schematism' in the KRV.<sup>82</sup> The following passages from Kant outline his doctrine: "How then is the subsumption of intuitions under pure concepts, the application of a category to appearances possible?"

He answers his own question thus: "Obviously there must be some third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet at the same time, while it must in one respect be intellectual, it must in another be sensible. Such a representation is the TRANSCENDENTAL SCHEMA".<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Idea of the Holy p. 61.

<sup>82</sup> B p. 177.

Kant says that the schemata are found by interpreting a pure category in terms of time.

"Thus an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of a transcendental determination of time, which as the schema of the concepts of understanding mediates the subsumption of the appearances under the category".<sup>83</sup>

The schema of a concept is defined as "..... representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept ....."<sup>84</sup>

He gives an example: "The concept 'dog' signifies a rule according to which my imagination can delineate the figure of a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent in concreto actually exists".

How is this possible, and how do we 'schematize?' Kant says: "This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form IS AN ART CONCEALED IN THE DEPTHS OF THE HUMAN SOUL, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover and to have open to our gaze".<sup>85</sup>

"The schema of a reality, as the quantity of something in so far as it fills time, is just this continuous and uniform production of that reality in time as we

<sup>83</sup> B p. 178.

<sup>84</sup> B p. 180.

<sup>85</sup> B p. 181.

successively descend from a sensation which has a certain degree to its vanishing point, or progressively ascend from its negation to some magnitude of it".<sup>86</sup>

"The categories therefore, without schemata, are merely functions of the understanding for concepts; and represent no object".<sup>87</sup>

Such in brief is Kant's doctrine of 'Schematism'.

In using this doctrine, Otto argues that the category of the Holy (which he claims is an a priori category) is schematised by the rational (moral) concept of the holy.

He argues: "The idea of the numinous and the feelings that correspond to them are, quite as much the rational ideas and feelings absolutely 'pure' and the criteria which Kant suggests for the 'pure' concept and the 'pure' feeling of respect are most precisely applicable to them".<sup>88</sup>

"The proof that in the numinous we have to deal with purely a priori cognitive elements is to be reached by introspection and a critical examination of reason such as Kant instituted".<sup>89</sup>

He refers to Kant's distinction of empirical knowledge into what we receive from intuition and what comes from understanding, when intuitions give occasion for them, and sees the numinous arising from the understanding:

"The facts of the numinous consciousness point therefore - as likewise do also the 'pure concepts of the understanding' of Kant and the ideas and value judgements of ethics and aesthetics - to a hidden substantive source,

<sup>86</sup> B p. 183.

<sup>87</sup> B p. 187.

<sup>88</sup> Idea of the Holy p. 129.

<sup>89</sup> Idea of the Holy p. 130.

from which the religious ideas and feelings are formed, which lies in the mind independently of sense experience; a pure reason in the profoundest sense, which, because of the surpassingness of its content, must be distinguished from both the pure theoretical and the pure practical reason of Kant, as something yet higher and deeper than they".<sup>90</sup>

These passages indicate Otto's position. It is true to say that Kant's enigmatic description of Schematism as 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul' has a Romantic sound. It lacks the precision and clarity of most Kantian definitions. However, Kant intended that it should be a negative limit to improper speculation about the ground of knowledge and reason itself. Otto seems to have developed the idea in a positive way. However, this is perhaps too general a criticism to have any weight.

Therefore, we must examine the justification Otto offers for his claim to have used Kant's term schematism to rationalise the non-rational element in religion.

One searing criticism comes from Professor John Oman, the Orkney-born theologian. He says: "Professor Otto, more perhaps than any other writer has put the emphasis on the awesome holy as the essential religious characteristic, and he divides it entirely from the ethical, which he regards as a quite separate development alongside it. Yet so undeniable is the close and apparently necessary connection that after distinguishing them sharply in the interests of his theory, he maintains in the interests of experience and common sense, that they are related

a priori.

"Such a position hardly needs refuting ....."

"This scheme really assumes two Supernaturals. One we realise by awe and value by the shuddering of the creature, and one only by moral reverence and moral value in the liberty of God's children ..... Again in respect of the rational, are there two supernaturals - one a numinous might, before which the creature has no claims and no rights, and one a moral order which speaks to us as children?" 91

If Professor Oman is correct in his criticism,<sup>92</sup> then Otto must face the dilemma of being accused of distorting Kant, so that the fundamental Kantian position of the concept of religion as seeing all duties as commands from God is destroyed, or of having discovered in Kant's epistemology a weakness that makes his views on ethics and theology totally inconsistent.

However, there may be a measure of truth in Oman's criticism. One point he does make (and overstresses perhaps) is given a finer edge by Professor Campbell who points out the consequences for theology of Otto's use of Kant's schematism.

He says: "The implication of Otto's central thesis seems to me to be incontestably, that the only kind of theology possible is a symbolic theology".<sup>93</sup>

He takes the question first "Is there an inward

91 The Natural and the Supernatural John Oman (Cambridge U.P. 1931) the two questions will be found on pages 63 and 64 respectively.

92 C.A. Campbell Selfhood and Godhood an answer to Oman's 'attack' on Otto is given pp 342-343.

93 op. cit. p. 341.

necessity of the mind which compels us to think of the numinous object in terms of rational concepts in their literal meaning?" He answers that when the numinous consciousness is active, there is an inward necessity to refrain from 'rationalising'. However, this level of experience does not sustain itself long, and when it is passed, the desire to rationalise grows. There comes the desire to think the numinous object in terms of a specific set of characters. However, we can assign to these characters no more than a symbolic validity, because they are applied to the *mysterium tremendum* as analogues only and not in any literal manner.

The refusal to rationalise initially is necessary, in order to prevent the numinous nature of the experience, from ceasing to exist. When any attempt is made to rationalise for the purpose of expressing the experience theologically, any definition can be merely analogical, and therefore symbolic. Hence only a symbolic theology is possible on Otto's basis.

This refines Oman's point about separating the ethical and religious, in that as Professor Campbell points out, the ethical characters can be applied to the religious experience only as analogues, and not literally.

The technical abuses of which Otto may be accused, Professor H.J. Paton discusses in one of his books.<sup>94</sup>

"Otto lumps together Ideas and categories - he uses the words interchangeably - and assumes (by twisting the meaning of both) that the category or Idea of the 'holy' can give us knowledge of an object which transcends

ordinary experience altogether".<sup>95</sup>

He points out that Kant's doctrine is complicated, but that this fundamental distortion by Otto denudes his position of the right to be designated Kantian in any form.

"Otto reverses the meaning of the terms he has borrowed. The pure rational concepts belonging to the category of the holy are described as the schemata of the non-rational instead of vice versa. Furthermore, as these rational concepts, although called categories are really Ideas and so by definition can have no objects in experience, they are all of all things least suited for the function of schemata - namely, the function of enabling us to apply a priori concepts to an object." <sup>96</sup>

In summing up Otto's general position, Paton says: "It seems pretty clear that he bases religious belief, at least primarily, on divination and not on reason".<sup>97</sup>

Finally he comments: "For Kant, such a doctrine would be mere mysticism or Schwärmerei".<sup>98</sup>

Professor Paton does admit that Otto's suggestion is a most plausible adaption of Kant's philosophy to the needs of the religious consciousness.

With regard to it being a legitimate use of Kant, he feels however that Otto is merely trying to make Kant's

95 The Modern Predicament p. 138.

96 The Modern Predicament p. 138-139.

97 The Modern Predicament p. 140.

98 The Modern Predicament p. 141.

philosophy into a rational framework for mysticism. Professor Paton concludes that Otto distorts Kant for this purpose.

The most recent attempt to revive an interpretation of Kant in which the role of experience is stressed in matters of religion is in Hägerström's thesis about what he calls 'metaphysical religiosity' in Kantianism.<sup>99</sup> The details of his doctrine are not relevant here, but his interpretation of Kant's view of morality is open to question. He argues that ".... for Kant, morality in itself has no value whatsoever. It is merely a symptom of the soul's absorption in its essence, in perfect happiness. Why not of the soul's absorption in God? It is customarily said that in Kant, religion loses all independence and is only an appendix to morality. Why? Because what Kant calls religion, viz. faith in God as the giver of happiness in the measure of duty, is nothing but the imperceptible form of religiosity, such as we have in an extreme form in the Arabian concept of paradise. But if Kant's so-called morality were not just religion, neither would it be religiosity, but morality when Jesus says 'My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give'. Kant says 'Be determined by reason'. Paul says 'Abide in Christ'. The background of feeling and thought are still fundamentally the same - the feeling of blessedness in connection with absorption in the pure 'I', and the thought thereof".<sup>99</sup>

In reply to Hägerström's sweeping identifications, I would say first, that it takes no account at all of what Kant said about Schwärmerei. This makes his view

<sup>99</sup> HÄGERSTRÖM Philosophy and Religion (George Allen & Unwin 1964) p. 201-202.

open to question. However, within the passage quoted the definition of religion he offers, namely, faith in God as the giver of happiness in the measure of duty is quite wrong. While Kant allowed himself in R to take up the question which Hägerström earlier raises, 'Why is the deuteous will bent on fulfilling its duty?' 100 the problem is still discussed within the critical limits, and the transcendent use of the term God which Hägerström employs in his version of Kant's views, to Kant would be an illegitimate use of an Idea of Reason. Only by virtue of this improper use of God, can Hägerström's thesis be either advanced or defended. Kant's own definition of religion as the recognition of all duties as Divine commands would not permit the development of such a doctrine.

It may be added that while Kant might accept the reduction of Jesus' words, and St. Paul's words to the simple imperative 'Be determined by practical reason' he would most certainly not have accepted an equation of that imperative with any formulation which carried mystical overtones. T.M. Greene, in clarifying Kant's position, speaks in a way which finally refutes Hägerström's idea when he speaks of "Kant's inability to recognise a distinctive religious experience, which is akin to that moral experience which he himself describes in such detail yet is not identical with it. This religious experience implies a knowledge of God as real as Kant's own apprehension of the moral law. Kant himself, as we have seen, tended during his last years to interpret the moral experience as a direct revelation of God to

man.<sup>101</sup> Yet his characteristic belief is that God is not directly knowable".<sup>102</sup> These words are adequate comment.

Kant may have denied knowledge, but he did not repudiate reason. Any non-rational element in religion was debarred from rational discussion. Kant claimed that we cannot discuss things which belong to a realm whose laws we do not know. Therefore, any attempt to place Kant in the ranks of the Romantics must be doomed to failure. While there may be traces of a Romantic imagination within his writings, close scrutiny of the text and the context yields little support for any generalisation. Kant was interested in some of the phenomena of Romanticism.<sup>103</sup> That is all that may be said. The 'Faith Philosophy', he rejected, not because it pressed the claims of faith or denied knowledge, but because it repudiated reason. Therefore he took issue with Hamann. Similarly, either an attempt to erect a theology of the non-rational in religion on Kantian lines, as in the case of Otto, or a simple equation of a neo-mystical position with Kant's view of faith in mind, as in the case of Hägerström, are alike doomed to failure.

So far, it has been established that Kant took a serious stand on the need for religious faith, and that he believed that he had made room for faith through the conclusions of the KRV. Whatever he meant by the term

<sup>101</sup> As earlier indicated, I do not subscribe to these views. Greene's admission that Kant's characteristic belief is that God is not directly knowable is important.

<sup>102</sup> T.M. Greene "The Historical Context and Religious Significance of Kant's Religion" R p. xxvi.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix I.

'faith', he did not mean a personal subjective religious attitude derived through religious experience. This view he rejected as being open to Schwärmerei. He objected strongly to Romanticism either in matters philosophical,<sup>104</sup> or theological. As a possible basis for a standpoint in either philosophy or religion he rejected it completely.

In conclusion, at this stage, both extreme forms of Kant interpretation, namely that represented by Vaihinger on the one hand, which denies a significant place for religious faith in Kantian thought, and the other extreme which attempts to relate Kant's use of the term 'faith' to the faith philosophy of Hamann, for example, must on good grounds be equally rejected. The enquiry must now return to Kant's starting point, and proceed to follow the route of his thought to the point at which he justifies his claim to have made room for faith.

<sup>104</sup> In a short work entitled "On a newly emerged noble Tone in Philosophy (1796)", Kant states his objections to the idea of philosophy as the utterance of eccentric Romantics. "Obscure expectation which cannot be satisfied by Reason must find a surrogate in mystical illumination which perverts the brain towards Schwärmerei and is the death of true philosophy".

**CHAPTER THREE**

**FROM RATIONALIST THEOLOGY TO  
RATIONAL FAITH - I**

In order to understand the nature of the faith for which Kant believed his ERV had made room, it is necessary to focus upon the means by which he denied knowledge.<sup>1</sup> We must ask 'what are the steps, in Kant's argument, which lead to this conclusion?' This is necessary in and by itself for an adequate study of Kant's conception of faith. It becomes imperative, however, in the light of Kant's assessment of the use of speculative reason in contemporary theology: "Now I maintain that all attempts to employ reason in theology in any merely speculative manner are altogether fruitless and by their very nature, null and void, and that the principles of its employment in the study of nature do not lead to any theology whatsoever".<sup>2</sup>

This statement implies a rejection by Kant of certain views on theology. However, taken with his initial position, we face the seeming paradox of Kant rejecting theology but defending faith. Stated in such an oversimplified form, Kant's position is open to both misinterpretation and abuse. With this in mind, the general question of how he makes room for faith may be subdivided into three distinct problems:

1. What did Kant mean by a 'theology' which used reason in a speculative manner? What sort of theology was he rejecting?
2. How does he justify the possibility of another type of theology?
3. By what means does he introduce the discussion of the type of theology which he regards as legitimate, the kind of theology which expounds and contains

1 B xxx

2 B 665.

the faith for which he has made room?

A proper and satisfactory answer to these questions requires an interpretation of the intentions and structure of the Critical Philosophy as it developed out of the KRV. Therefore, the movement of Kant's thought in the argument of that work, and in other related and relevant writings must be followed.

The basic problem with which Kant started the KRV is set out in more than one way. For example, he asks quite directly: "what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience?" <sup>3</sup>

The rationalist tradition of philosophy, in which Kant had been formally trained rejected the senses as a source of knowledge. Kant clearly faces the issue which is raised by that position, so he formulates his question accordingly.

However, Kant was also aware of the difficulty raised for science and philosophy by David Hume's famous argument on causality.<sup>4</sup> Hume argued that while we speak of 'cause' and 'effect', we in fact apprehend neither. 'Cause' and 'effect' often occur simultaneously, and so cannot be distinguished. Where this is not the case, we merely see, for example, B succeeding A and not B as necessarily and always successive upon A. The latter ideas we infer from a number of repeated instances of A followed by B. Now the characteristics of universality and necessity belong to many basic statements of mathematics, science and

<sup>3</sup> A xvii

<sup>4</sup> David Hume: Treatise of Human Nature Book 1 Part III  
Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding  
Section VII.

metaphysics, (such as - 'every event has a cause'.) Such statements Kant called Synthetic A priori. His problem then became: "How are synthetic a priori judgements possible?" <sup>5</sup>

This question broken into its component parts became the three problems of the KRV - viz.

- (1) How is pure mathematics possible?
- (2) How is pure science possible?
- (3) How is metaphysics, as a natural disposition, possible?<sup>6</sup>

Kant's own title for his enquiry is TRANSCENDENTAL. It is concerned with 'not so much the objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this knowledge is possible a priori'.<sup>7</sup>

The structure of the KRV is highly complex, and it may be set out in more than one way. Although Kant himself subdivides it into two main sections, <sup>8</sup> it may also be regarded as being in three sections, each dealing with one of the three specific formulations of the question about synthetic a priori propositions.

In the TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETIC, Kant analyses the mode of our sense experience and in doing so deals with the problem of synthetic a priori judgements in geometry.<sup>9</sup> Similar to sense experience Geometry requires the construction of space. Space is shown by Kant to be a necessary

<sup>5</sup> B p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> B p. 19-24.

<sup>7</sup> B p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Transcendental Doctrine of Elements & Tr. Doctrine of Method.

<sup>9</sup> Euclidean Geometry is what Kant is discussing. The significance of the Aesthetic for non-Euclidean Geometry is a separate problem. B p. 41.

MODE (OR WAY) of receiving ideas of things in our minds. Without the idea of space<sup>10</sup> and the idea of time,<sup>11</sup> the world of our sense perception cannot be organised. Thus pure mathematical calculations would be impossible. Space and time have no reality of themselves. However, they have TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALITY,<sup>12</sup> in that they are the necessary condition of ordered experience.

The TRANSCENDENTAL ANALYTIC deals with the problem of synthetic a priori judgements in the body of physical science.<sup>13</sup> To justify the use of statements such as 'Every event has a cause', Kant expounds his TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES,<sup>14</sup> He argues that for there to be any experience at all there must be what he calls "SYNTHETIC UNITY OF APPERCEPTION".<sup>15</sup>

He means that the mind uses categories through which it synthetically unites and organises the material of sense experience, which we already have by virtue of the forms of sensibility.<sup>16</sup> The categories of the understanding belong to the mind, and apply only to appearances. They

10 B p. 42. "Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us".

11 B p. 50. "Time is nothing but the form of inner sense ..... Time is the formal a priori condition of all appearances.

12 B p. 52.

13 Newtonian Physics.

14 B p. 129 ff.

15 B p. 131.

16 B p. 42 - space and time.

do not apply to objects <sup>17</sup> themselves which give rise to our experiences. We only know of things as they appear to us in our thus ordered experience.<sup>18</sup>

While these sketchy remarks do not begin to analyse the complex themes of the KRV, they set into perspective Kant's approach to the problem. They render clearer the background against which the TRANSCENDENTAL DIALECTIC deals with the problem <sup>19</sup> of synthetic a priori judgements in the discipline of metaphysics.

Having shown that we cannot know objects, and that our knowledge is limited to appearances, Kant argues that when metaphysics uses reason to try to reach objects, PARADOXIEMS <sup>20</sup> (formally fallacious syllogisms) arise. Three types of syllogism are specified by Kant, and these characterise the three subdivisions of metaphysics. They are respectively:

- ( i ) the CATEGORICAL SYLLOGISM, used by rational psychology to prove the existence of the soul.<sup>21</sup>
- ( ii ) the HYPOTHETICAL SYLLOGISM, used by rational cosmology to prove the reality of freedom.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> B p. 52 "time ..... cannot be applied to the objects in themselves"

<sup>18</sup> B p. 148 "the categories, as yielding knowledge of things, have no kind of application, save only in regard to things which may be objects of possible experience."

<sup>19</sup> B p. 350 ff.

<sup>20</sup> B p. 399.

<sup>21</sup> B p. 379 "We have therefore to seek for an unconditioned first of the categorical synthesis in a subject; secondly, of the hypothetical synthesis of the members of a series; thirdly of the disjunctive synthesis of the parts in a system". B 397.

<sup>22</sup> B p. 433 "The second type of dialectical argument follows the analogy of the hypothetical syllogism".

(iii) the DISJUNCTIVE SYLLOGISM used in the statements made by RATIONAL THEOLOGY to prove the existence of God.<sup>23</sup>

These disciplines sought the unconditioned objects behind the appearances of our experience. Rational psychology sought the subject in terms of the immortality of the soul. Kant took all categorical propositions to be reducible to subject/predicate form, thus connecting them with the category of substance. He argues that the syllogisms of rational psychology use 'thought' and 'subject' in two distinct senses in two different premises,<sup>24</sup> and was therefore not satisfied that the immortality of the soul could be proved in this manner.

Rational cosmology and its defence of freedom Kant similarly rejected.<sup>25</sup> Hypothetical syllogisms express a relation between ground and consequent, and if, as would be necessary to assert the reality of freedom, things that are ideal are ascribed reality, contradictions must arise. These he calls ANTINOMIES.

<sup>23</sup> B p. 604-5.

<sup>24</sup> B p. 410-412. "In the major premise we speak of a being that can be thought in general, in every relation, and therefore also as it may be given in intuition. But in the minor premise we speak of it only in so far as it regards itself as subject, simply in relation to thought and the unity of consciousness, and not as likewise in relation to the intuition through which it is given as object to thought".

Adendum to 24: Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86, a friend of Kant, argued that the soul was a substance, not composed of parts. (Gesammelte Schriften 1843 II p. 151 ff) Kant refuted it by saying that if the soul was a simple substance, it would have to disappear at once or not at all, since it had not parts. Because of its intensive quality, the soul could diminish gradually. See B p. 414-5.

<sup>25</sup> B p. 472 ff. cf. B p. 524-525. See also B p. 570-86.

Metaphysics as a science, Kant claims is impossible. He allows that it may exist as a natural disposition.<sup>26</sup> He affirms that rational cosmology cannot prove the reality of freedom, but by limiting the causal relation to appearances, as the condition of the intelligible order of the appearances, freedom as a rational possibility remains. This possibility he discusses more fully in the RV.

Finally, rational theology is dismissed. Theological proofs are characteristically in the form of disjunctive syllogisms.<sup>27</sup> If God is regarded as the ens realissimum, as the sum of all attributes, then this notion presupposes a vast disjunctive proposition giving all possible alternative attributes which a finite thing may have.

Kant's rejection of theology is contained in his declaration that the three traditional proofs<sup>28</sup> afforded by theology are impossible.

The ontological argument is disposed of first.<sup>29</sup> This argument in its simplest and often paraphrased form runs: "Since God is the sum of all positive attributes, and since existence is a positive attribute, therefore God exists". Kant questions the premises that 'Being is a positive attribute'<sup>30</sup> and argues that existence is not

<sup>26</sup> B p. 490 ff.

<sup>27</sup> B p. 604-5.

<sup>28</sup> B p. 611 ff. Chapter III (Book II) of the Dialectic deals with the Arguments of Speculative Reason in Proof of the Existence of a Supreme Being.

<sup>29</sup> Section IV - entitled "The Impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God".

<sup>30</sup> B p. 628 " 'Being' is obviously not a real predicate"

a predicate.

He also discusses the concept of a necessary being, and concludes that the concept of someone whose existence cannot be denied without contradiction arises through confusion with necessary judgements. The predicate which is necessary is conditional upon the subject to be defined, but this does not mean that the subject itself and its conditions are necessary. Kant illustrates this in the case of a triangle.<sup>31</sup>

The Cosmological proof <sup>32</sup> Kant rejects because it covertly implies the ontological argument, and the failure of the former is determined by the failure of the latter. The proof he states thus: "If anything exists, an absolutely necessary being must also exist. Now I, at least, exist. Therefore an absolutely necessary being exists".<sup>33</sup>

Even if this argument were able to stand by itself, it would not be helpful in that it yields nothing of the nature of the being whose existence it proves.<sup>34</sup> The argument as a whole requires supplementing by the ontological argument which Kant has discredited.

<sup>35</sup>  
The argument from design rests upon the cosmological argument, since from the concept of an absolutely necessary being, we infer the existence of a Perfect and Omnipotent One. The cosmological argument is refuted because it conceals the ontological argument, and likewise this argument collapses for the same reason.

<sup>31</sup> B p. 622.

<sup>32</sup> B p. 631.

<sup>33</sup> B p. 632.

<sup>34</sup> B p. 642.

<sup>35</sup> B p. 648.

"Thus the physico-theological proof of the existence of an original or supreme being rests upon the cosmological proof, and the cosmological upon the ontological".<sup>36</sup>

Kant therefore rejects this argument, although he does exhibit some sympathy for it,<sup>37</sup> in spite of his final rejection.

While Kant disposes of the arguments in detail in the "Transcendental Dialectic", his attitude to these proofs has already been determined in the "Transcendental Aesthetic", and in the "Transcendental Deduction of the Categories", as Professor Gottfried Martin has pointed out: "In the Critique of Pure Reason, the doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time solves the ontotheological problem as well. Space and time do not belong to things in themselves but are forms of appearance, and it follows immediately from this that they cannot belong to the divine being. Kant repeatedly points out that with the doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time he has also solved the ontotheological problem".<sup>38</sup>

Professor Martin offers a statement from Kant which is worth quoting at length: "In natural theology, in thinking an object (God) who not only can never be an object of intuition to us, but cannot be an object of sensible intuition even to himself, we are careful to remove the conditions of time and space from his

<sup>36</sup> B p. 658.

<sup>37</sup> see B p. 654-5. This question is interesting, and worth noting in the passing.

<sup>38</sup> Kant's Metaphysics and Theory of Science Gottfried Martin Manchester University Press. 1961 p. 162. Tr. by I.G. Lucas.

intuition - for all his knowledge must be intuition, and not thought, which always involves limitations. But with what right can we do this if we have made time and space previously forms of things in themselves, and as such, would remain as apriori conditions of the existence of things, even though the things in themselves were removed? As conditions of all existence in general, they must also be conditions of the existence of God".<sup>39</sup>

Kant is saying that time and space cannot be attributes of the being of God. This makes any rational proof of God's existence beyond possibility.

Having examined now the theological arguments which Kant rejects, it remains to enquire with whom in particular these views may be identified. Kant himself identifies Descartes<sup>40</sup> with the ontological argument, and Leibniz<sup>41</sup> with the cosmological argument. Descartes advanced the ontological argument on the basis of his clear and distinct ideas.<sup>42</sup> He regarded them as equally established as his

<sup>39</sup> B p. 71.

<sup>40</sup> "The attempt to establish the existence of a Supreme being by means of the famous ontological argument of Descartes is therefore merely so much labour and effort lost ....." B p. 630.

<sup>41</sup> "This proof, termed by Leibniz the proof of a contingentia mundi, we shall now proceed to expound and examine." B 632.

<sup>42</sup> Rene Descartes "Meditations on the first Philosophy" edn. Everyman, tr. by John Veitch. Meditation III "...there is nothing that gives me assurance of its truth, except the clear and distinct perception of what I affirm". p. 90. cf. "Principles of Philosophy" Part I XIV p. 182 on "what constitutes clear and distinct perception." Meditation V "... I cannot conceive God unless as existing, it follows that existence is inseparable from Him, and that therefore He really exists" p. 123 "As soon as I discover that existence is a perfection, to cause me to infer the existence of this first and sovereign being". p. 123.

own system of co-ordinate Geometry. His attitude to philosophy was modelled on mathematics and the type of certainty that mathematical deduction affords.<sup>43</sup>

Leibniz was even more optimistic than Descartes, in that he completely exaggerated the possibilities of natural theology. Indicative of the naivete of his optimism, he is reputed to have believed that the vexed problem of the division of the Christian Churches was soluble by diplomatic negotiations! He also believed that he had solved the problem of the theodicy. This particular problem Kant later faced in a separate work on that theme, and dismissed all attempts at Theodicy.<sup>44</sup> Leibniz believed his solution was so simple that he undertook to produce a popular version of it. He thought that he had solved the question of the relation of the intelligible world to the world of appearances by means of his concept of the pre-established harmony. He assumed the ontological argument, but his peculiar emphasis was upon his version of the cosmological argument. He possessed a 'blind faith' in the powers of reason, reflected in the optimistic manner in which he sets forth his philosophical views,<sup>45</sup> particularly, with regard to his attitude to the proofs of God's existence. He clearly believed that final proofs and solutions may be offered in such matters.

Descartes (1596-1650) and Leibniz (1646-1716) were

43 Descartes op. cit p. 14-16.

44 Kant "On the Failure of all philosophical Attempts towards a Theodicy" 1791

45 See appendix II.

dead before Kant was born. However, Kant (1724-1804) himself was nonetheless nurtured in the Rationalist tradition and in his pre-critical period he did embrace it. His acquaintance with Rationalism was through Christian Wolff<sup>46</sup> (1679-1734) and through Baumgarten<sup>47</sup> and Eberhard,<sup>48</sup> whose works on Leibniz Kant used in his lectures. Kant, before he wrote the Critiques, was so immersed in Rationalist thought that Eberhard was able to cite from Kant<sup>49</sup> a rationalist proof of the existence of God.

The contrast between Kant's approach to theology in his pre-critical writings, and his views expressed in the KRV indicates how he had changed his position, how he had rejected Rationalist theology as an impossible undertaking, and how he had seen that if religious faith was to have any justification, it had to come from another source.

<sup>46</sup> Christian Wolff: "Ontologia" (Frankfurt 1730)

<sup>47</sup> A.G. Baumgarten: "Metaphysica" Halle 1737 (reprinted in BA Vol. XVII, 31) Baumgarten illustrates the ultimate limit of rationalism: At section 602, he declares that while God is incomprehensibilis he is in se concepitibilis, thus accepting the distinction between the terms and implying that God may be defined. He rejects the error of the deists that while the existence of God may be known, His essence may not. This is surely excessive optimism about the possibility of offering a rational definition of God, and the rejection of deism is also an indication that Baumgarten has thrown "caution to the winds".

<sup>48</sup> J.A. Eberhard (Professor at Halle, "Prolegomena to Natural Theology"). Amongst other things Eberhard argued: 1. From every property of God all other properties may be deduced; and 2. Any property of God can be made the basis of a system of natural theology. He illustrates this from Wolff, Sulzer, Baumgarten, and then from Kant.

<sup>49</sup> Eberhard's illustration is drawn from a pre-critical writing of Kant, entitled "The only possible Argument for a Demonstration of the Existence of God" 1763.

Kant's rejection of Natural Theology in the Rationalist tradition was not his rejection of God, but merely of the possibility of proving God's existence by speculative means.

"Its objective reality (that of the supreme being) cannot indeed be proved, but also cannot be disproved, by merely speculative reason".<sup>50</sup> Kant's attack on theology is too often only half read. The full significance of his attack is that it leaves open the possibility of RECONSTRUCTING theology on new lines.

Kant also in the KRV indicates the manner in which theology may be reconstructed: "..... the only theology of reason which is possible is that which is based upon moral laws, or seeks guidance from them".<sup>51</sup>

In Section 2 of the Canon of Pure Reason, he says quite specifically that: "One other line of enquiry still remains open to us: namely, whether pure reason may not also be met with in the practical sphere, and whether it may not there conduct to us ideas which reach to those highest ends of pure reason ..... and whether, therefore, reason may not be able to supply to us from the standpoint of its practical interest what it altogether refuses to supply in respect of its speculative interest". He goes on to formulate the three great questions of philosophy: "All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following

<sup>50</sup> B p. 669-

<sup>51</sup> B p. 669.

questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?

The first question is merely speculative .....

The second question is purely practical .....

The third question - if I do what I ought to do, what may I then hope? - is at once practical and theoretical, in such fashion that the practical serves only as a clue that leads us to the answer to the theoretical question, and when this is followed out to the speculative question".<sup>52</sup>

Kant relates the practical question to the problem of the Highest Good, implying that we should think in practical terms of things which theoretically are unknowable to us. In other words, he is suggesting that he has found the possibility of speaking about God within a reconstructed theology, a theology which emerges from a study of the nature of practical reason, or pure reason in its practical employment.

Two questions of Kant exegesis immediately arise. First, can Kant, on his own basis, permit any reference to God at all? Is this consistent with his position in the Transcendental Analytic?

Secondly, what argument does Kant employ to make further discussion about God possible when he has rejected the traditional proofs?

The first question may be stated in the words of

Professor W.H. Walsh<sup>53</sup>: "Yet how could he (Kant) have any kind of rational theology, given the correctness of the results of the Critique of Pure Reason? According to the argument of that work, any attempt to prove God's existence as a matter of knowledge or justified belief of the everyday kind can be shown to involve either an illegitimate extension of the categories beyond the limits of possible experience, or the patently false assumption that, in this one case, we can argue from essence to existence; if not both. Proof of the existence of God, as something which demands or at least has some claim on our theoretical assent, is accordingly ruled out".

Professor Walsh then continues with his more specific criticism: "But there is worse to come, for the doctrines of the Analytic do not merely amount to a theory of the limits of the proper employment of the understanding; they also constitute a theory of meaning. And if Kant is to stick to his theory of meaning, as he in fact professes to do throughout his mature writings, it looks as if he is committed to the view, not just that statements about God are incapable of proof or disproof, but that they are strictly, not even intelligible".

Professor Walsh further quotes Kant himself in support of this view: "For we have seen that concepts are altogether impossible, and can have no meaning, if no object is given for them, or at least for the elements of which they are composed".<sup>54</sup>

If these criticisms are valid, then Kant's undertaking to vindicate faith is doomed to failure by his

<sup>53</sup> Professor W.H. Walsh "Kant's Moral Theology" Proceedings of the British Academy Vol 49 1963 p. 264.

<sup>54</sup> B p. 178.

own admission. Or if Kant believed he was 'making room for faith', he was going back on his own critical insights. This problem is indeed serious. However, I do not think it is unanswerable.

First of all, it seems that the real sting of Professor Walsh's criticism lies in the passage he cites from Kant. Kant does indeed say that concepts without objects given for them are impossible (unmöglich), but he appears himself to see the danger of this rather extreme statement, and Professor Kemp Smith, in a footnote to the relevant page of his translation mentions that fact that Kant amended the wording of this sentence to read: "For we have seen that concepts are for us without meaning, and can have no meaning....."

This brings his statement more clearly into line with what I have earlier explained as being Kant's position as I understand it.

To say that concepts applied beyond appearances can have no meaning for us is different from saying that they are impossible. We know that the categories cannot be extended in use beyond appearances, and that when they are, we fall into fallacies, or in other words, what we try to say becomes meaningless.

However, it also seems doubtful whether or not Kant would, on his own basis, have the right to say that concepts without objects in experience (appearances) are meaningless. This would be to assume that, for example, Hume's 'scepticism' was justified, and that what cannot be manufactured from the raw materials of experience is meaningless if defined, unless it corresponds to some intuition. This would be no more than a dogmatic

rationalism. Kant's concern was not to come down on the side of either scepticism or indeed the polar opposite of the rationalism from which Hume awakened him. As I have suggested, he appears to respect the insights and the questions which both positions raise, and therefore tries to hold a balance between them.

The answer to the second question is found in Kant's concept of the 'Ding-an-Sich'. It remains possible to speak about God, freedom and immortality because the categories of human knowledge relate to appearances, and not to the ultimate objects of knowledge, the 'things-in-themselves' which give rise to our intuitions. Therefore, the way is open to reconsider the problem. We have certain intellectual ideals, the ideas of reason (primarily God, freedom and immortality), and because we mistakenly think we have apriori understanding of them, we commit the fallacies which yield the invalid proofs of God's existence. If there were only phenomena, then our ideals would be beyond fulfillment or understanding. However, Kant posits the reality of 'Things-in-themselves', as it were, behind phenomena, noumena, as he calls them, and in this way, the discussion remains open. In this way, Kant attempted to hold a balance between dogmatic rationalism and dogmatic scepticism.

Clearly, Kant's exposition and defence of this concept must be reviewed,<sup>55</sup> with specific regard to the

<sup>55</sup> It cannot be within the scope of this essay to review the very difficult problem of Kant exegesis contained in the Chapter on 'Phenomena & Noumena'. Reference will be made to certain writers on this subject, but a complete review of all the literature relevant to the problem is not possible. Below are appended some of the main contributions to the debate: (written recently)

Erich ADICKES: "Kant und das Ding-an-Sich".

Martin (op. cit.) pp 134-155.

John MacMurray "Self as Agent" Chapter III

Eva Schaper "The Kantian Thing-in-itself as a Philosophical Fiction".

George Schrader "The Thing-in-itself in Kantian Philosophy" (Review of Metaphysics March 1949 p. 30-44)

question 'Does this justify the possibility of another way of speaking about God?'.  
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The last Chapter of the *Analytic of Principles* is entitled "The Ground and Distinction of all objects in general into Phenomena and Noumena".<sup>56</sup>

Kant's opening statement indicates that he intends to review the limits of knowledge in the light of the nature and function of the categories. This would imply an indication of the province of faith. In a poetic vein,<sup>57</sup> he describes the territory of pure understanding as an "island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth - enchanting name! - surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion ....." He then offers a distinction (which does not appear elsewhere in the *KRV*) between the TRANSCENDENTAL and the EMPIRICAL USE of a concept. Empirical employment of concepts is their use in ordering the material of experience. Transcendental employment of concepts takes place when we attempt to apply them to the objects of knowledge themselves as against our intuitions of them. Kant limits categories to appearances, and therefore to empirical employment.

In every concept we have two things, according to Kant: first its logical form (what it is in thought to

<sup>56</sup> The chapter falls into four main parts:

- ( i ) Introduction (B p. 295-6)
- ( ii ) Review of argument of the "Analytic" (to 305)
- ( iii ) Thesis of Phenomena & Noumena (306-9)
- ( iv ) further elaboration (B 310 to end).

<sup>57</sup> B p. 295-6.

us) and secondly, the possibility of specifying an object to which it may be applied. Now an object cannot be given a concept other than in intuition, hence all concepts and principles relate to empirical intuition, the data of possible experience. Apart from this relation, they have neither meaning nor validity. We cannot define the categories substantially. We must, for example, in speaking about a cause, refer to the conditions of sensibility and to the forms of appearances. If in explaining the concept of cause, reference is committed to something which goes before, and something which follows, there can be nothing left to talk about. Cause and effect cannot be distinguished, because their possibility of being (in intuition) has been removed.

"So long as the definition of possibility, existence and necessity is sought solely in pure understanding, they cannot be explained save through an obvious tautology. For to substitute the logical possibility of the concept (namely that the concept does not contradict itself) for the transcendental possibility of things (namely that an object corresponds to the concept) can deceive and leave satisfied only the simple minded.

From all this it undeniably follows that the pure concepts of understanding can never admit of transcendental, but always only of empirical employment ..... " 58

Kant then summarises the conclusion of the "Analytic" - "..... the most the understanding can achieve a priori is to anticipate the form of a possible experience in general". 59

58 B p. 302-303.

59 B p. 303.

The limitation of the categories is clear. They contain the logical faculty <sup>60</sup> of uniting a priori into one consciousness the manifold given in intuition, separate from the intuition possible to us. Apart from this, they cannot mean anything. Without intuitions, they have nothing to unite.

Kant makes the further point, that we should not confuse the origin of the categories with the forms of intuition, (i.e. space and time) which are grounded in sensibility. The categories are merely forms of thought.

Kant then draws the distinction between SENSIBLE ENTITIES and INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES. "We distinguish the mode in which we intuit them (phenomena) from the nature that belongs to them in themselves".<sup>61</sup> The mode of perceiving is by means of appearances (PHENOMENA). The Things in themselves are NOUMENA, the intelligible entities. The concepts of the understanding cannot apply to NOUMENA. NOUMENA is an indeterminate concept "of a something in general outside our sensibility".<sup>62</sup> Kant indicates two senses of NOUMENA.

There is the positive sense as an object of non-sensible intuition, a special intellectual faculty being employed in order to apprehend them. Such a faculty we do not possess. The negative use of the term means quite simply, something which is NOT an object of sensible intuition. The categories only have meaning in relation

60 B p. 305-306.

61 B p. 306.

62 B p. 307.

to the unity of intuition in space and time. Therefore, Kant's emphasis is naturally upon the negative use of the term".<sup>63</sup>

Kant further styles NOUMENON a PROBLEMATIC CONCEPT - a concept whose "objective reality cannot in any way be known, while yet the concept contains no contradiction also at the same time is connected with other modes of knowledge that involve given concepts which it serves to LIMIT .....".<sup>64</sup>

"The concept of NOUMENON is thus merely a limiting concept, the function of which is to curb the pretensions of sensibility; and it is therefore only of negative employment. At the same time, it is no arbitrary invention; it is bound up with the limitation of sensibility, though it cannot affirm anything positive beyond the field of sensibility".<sup>65</sup>

The chapter is concluded with these words: "Thus the concept of pure and merely intelligible objects is completely lacking in all principles that might make possible its application. For we cannot think of any way in which such intelligible objects might be given. The problematic thought which leaves open a place for them serves only, like an empty space, for the limitation of empirical principles, without itself containing or revealing any other object of knowledge beyond the sphere of those principles".<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> B p. 307.

<sup>64</sup> B p. 310.

<sup>65</sup> B p. 310-311.

<sup>66</sup> B p. 315.

Why did Kant regard the "Ding-an-Sich" as a vital and necessary part of his philosophy? Macmurray claims that it was only introduced to solve the antinomy of freedom.<sup>67</sup> Fichte regarded it as the Achilles heel of the Kantian philosophy. Martin<sup>68</sup> summarises well the great range of different attitudes towards this concept.

Certain reasons are immediately apparent. First, Kant realised that some explanation was necessary of how our sense experience was caused. The forms of sensibility and the categories are transcendental in that they are concerned with the mode of our knowledge. They are not real. Where then is reality located? Kant answers that the source and the cause of experience is the NOUMENA.

Kant also regards the NOUMENA as necessary in order to set limits upon the possible exploits of metaphysics, which is constantly tempted to use the categories to extend knowledge beyond appearances. Noumena by definition prevent the illegitimate extension of the categories. Dialectical illusion, the impulse to apply the categories to reality originates when pure reason forgets its limitations. Noumena are firmly bound up with the conclusion of the Critical Philosophy and the limitations of knowledge.

It is at least clear that Kant, on the basis of his own position would have been wrong not to speak of NOUMENA, but this leaves open the question of whether or

<sup>67</sup> Macmurray op. cit. p. 63.

<sup>68</sup> Martin op. cit. § 21 p. 134 ff.

not he justifies what he says.<sup>69</sup>

From the standpoint of developing his idea of Faith, the Noumena were necessary. The 'empty space'<sup>70</sup> he speaks of is highly suggestive as Martin had noted,<sup>71</sup> and Kant's limitations of knowledge was the limitation of the application of empirical principles. The possibility of further discussion of God remains open.

The distinction between PHENOMENA and NOUMENA was necessary for Kant to maintain a balance between scepticism and dogmatism. Had he limited all knowledge to the categories, and thus adopted the position that speaking about God was meaningless, then he would have been a sceptic. Had he however allowed reason to speak of the nature of reality, then he would have been condoning the rationalist view of reason. Neither extreme seemed palatable, and therefore within his philosophy, there is a point at which the two impinge in opposition to one another. It is in the distinction between PHENOMENA and NOUMENA. This further explains why both Vaihinger's interpretation of Kant lacks balance, and also those who have tried to suggest that Kant considered that some form of direct intuition of reality was possible.

There are numerous questions which could be discussed with regard to the status of the "Ding-an-Sich". It could

<sup>69</sup> "It is clear from these considerations that it would have been wrong on Kant's principles to deny things-in-themselves, but was he justified in asserting them?"  
A.C. Ewing 'Shorter Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason' Methuen 1950 p. 192.

<sup>70</sup> B p. 315.

<sup>71</sup> Martin op. cit. "..... at the same time, the objective reality of being in itself ..... is always envisaged as a possibility". p. 146.

simply be asked: 'Is it not an impossible concept?' Professor Caird<sup>72</sup> accused Kant of creating a metaphysical dualism between the reality of noumenal and phenomenal. This dualism could only be overcome by either an infinite progression or by the Deus ex Machina. He claims that Kant used both of these devices. This criticism oversimplifies the issues involved, and disregards the subtlety of Kant's argument. Professor D.M. McKinnon recognises that the question of how Kant left open the possibility of discussing faith may not be so peremptorily dealt with.

"It used to be said of Kant that the evident disproportion observed between his theoretical and practical philosophy was the expression of a change of mind experienced between the writing of the first two Critiques, and variously attributed to his distress at finding the religious faith of his servant impugned by his arguments, or to his fear of the Prussian State Police".<sup>73</sup> However, he himself recognises that "The subtle agnosticism to which Kant argues in his first Critique provides the context in which the peculiar quality of moral experience can be determined".<sup>74</sup>

Therefore while admitting that the "Ding-an-Sich" is not a concept which may be either easily accepted or defended, it must in fairness be said that it is part of a subtle train of thought which should be reviewed entire before any judgement is made. To allow this is

<sup>72</sup> Edward Caird The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant Vol II p. 289 ff.

<sup>73</sup> D.M. McKinnon Ethical Theory (Adam & Charles Black, London 1956) p. 66.

<sup>74</sup> D.M. McKinnon op. cit. p. 64.

to recognise something basic about the nature of Kant's thought which Professor McKinnon identifies when he says that "..... in Kant there is something at once of the painstaking minuteness and the sheer virtuosity characteristic of the philosopher of genius, who makes it possible to see a whole group of seemingly disconnected problems together in a new light".<sup>75</sup>

Having now discussed the nature of the theology which Kant rejected, and having attempted to give an exposition of the manner in which Kant justified the possibility of an alternative approach to the problem of religious faith, it remains to deal with the third question. This concerns the means by which he introduced a new basis for discussing those things about which speculative reason must be silent.

In the Preface to the KPV, Kant summarises his position, and gives an explanation of what he understood he was doing. In the KRV, he had spoken of practical reason, and of the possibility of raising again questions which cannot be answered by speculative reason.<sup>76</sup> It is this possibility that is discussed in the KPV. Basic to Kant's exposition of the position, he is now defining, is the establishment of freedom. He says: "With the pure practical faculty of reason, the reality of transcendental freedom is also confirmed. Indeed, it is substantiated in the absolute sense needed by speculative reason in its use of the concept of causality, for this freedom is required if reason is to rescue itself from the antinomy in which it is inevitably entangled when attempting to think the unconditioned in a causal series.

<sup>75</sup> D.M. McKinnon op. cit. p. 64-65.

<sup>76</sup> B p. 805 ff.

For speculative reason, the concept of freedom was problematic but not possible ..... " 77

"The concept of freedom, in so far as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as mere ideas, are unsupported by anything in speculative reason now attach themselves to the concept of freedom, and gain, with it and through it, stability and objective reality. That is, their possibility is proved by the fact that there really is freedom, for this idea is revealed by the moral law".<sup>78</sup>

"Freedom, however, among all the ideas of speculative reason is the only one whose possibility we know a priori. We do not understand it, but we know it as the condition of the moral law which we do know".<sup>79</sup>

"Here we have a ground of assent which in comparison to the speculative reason, is only practical, but which is just as valid objectively to a practical but equally pure reason".<sup>80</sup>

These passages are quoted in full because they give rise to the general protest that what Kant has forbidden reason to attempt in the KRV, he permits in the KPV. Practical reason is permitted to conduct speculative journeys into the noumenal.

77 KPV p. 3.

78 KPV p. 4.

79 KPV p. 4.

80 KPV p. 4.

Kant clearly saw that this charge would be laid, and he replies in anticipation: "reason is not hereby extended, however, in its theoretical knowledge; the only thing which is different is that the possibility, which was heretofore a problem, now becomes an assertion, and the practical use of reason is thus connected with the elements of theoretical reason".<sup>81</sup>

Further to this, he elaborates his explanation in these terms: "Now is explained the enigma of the critical philosophy, which lies in the fact that we must renounce the objective reality of the supersensible use of the categories in speculation and yet can attribute this reality to them in respect of the objects of pure reason. This must have seemed an inconsistency so long as the practical use of reason was known only by name. However, a thorough analysis of the practical use of reason makes it clear that the reality thought of here implies no theoretical determination of the categories and no extension of our knowledge to the supersensible. One then perceives that all that is meant in attributing reality to those concepts is that an object is attributable to them in so far as they are contained in the necessary determination of the will apriori or because they are indissolubly connected with the object of this determination. The inconsistency vanishes because the use which is now made of these concepts is different from that required by speculative reason".<sup>82</sup>

Having defended his position, Kant continues: "So far from being incoherent, the highly consistent structure of the Critique of Pure Reason is very satisfyingly

81 KPV p. 4.

82 KPV p. 4-5.

revealed here. For in that work the objects of experience as such, including even our own subject, were explained as only appearances, though based upon things-in-themselves; consequently, even in that Critique it was emphasised that the supersensible was not mere fancy and that its concepts were not empty. Now practical reason itself, without any collusion with the speculative, provides reality to a supersensible object of the category of causality - i.e. to freedom".<sup>83</sup>

Of significant note at this point is Kant's assertion that in the Critique of Pure Reason it was emphasised that the supersensible was not mere fancy, and that its concepts were not devoid of meaning. He also insists that the argument he is defending is not inserted merely to fill up all the blank spaces of knowledge left by the limited nature of speculative reason: "One must not, therefore, think that such considerations including those devoted to the concept of freedom in the practical use of pure reason, are only interpolations which serve to fill out gaps in the critical system of speculative reason, for this is complete in its design. They are not like the props and buttresses which usually have to be put behind a hastily erected building, but they are rather true members making the structure of the system plain and letting the concepts, which were previously thought of only in a problematic way, be clearly seen as real.

This reminder pre-eminently concerns the concept

<sup>83</sup> KPV p. 5. This is a final reply to Vaihinger's views; to Professor Walsh's point about Kant's theory of meaning denuding the idea of God of any possible meaning.

of freedom .....<sup>84</sup>

The vital point which emerges from these quotations from the KPV is that the concept of FREEDOM is the key to clarifying the nature of practical reason and its assertions. Two smaller, but equally important points emerge also. The first is that, as has already been said, Kant's introduction of practical reason is not merely a device to fill any gaps left by his earlier work. The second point is that he does not retract any of his earlier views, because when God is discussed, there is no attempt being made to achieve 'objective reality' for the concept, in the sense in which speculative reason understands the expression 'objective reality'. The reality achieved is valid for morality only, and not for speculative reason.

A great deal of clarification and definition is required here in order to understand both the argument being advanced, and the refined distinctions being drawn by Kant. Two obvious questions of exegesis must be answered. First, how is freedom established? Secondly, from there, how does Kant go on to speak of God, immortality and faith? These questions will be dealt with in the next section.

In summary at this stage, the crucial concept in Kant's move from rationalist theology to his own understanding of the nature of faith, is the concept of freedom.

<sup>84</sup> KPV p. 7.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM RATIONALIST THEOLOGY TO  
RATIONAL FAITH - II

The centrality of the concept of freedom in the overall argument which leads up to Kant's statement of his view of the nature of faith has been established. In this connection, two exegetical questions suggest themselves. First 'How does Kant establish and define his concept of freedom?' Second, 'From the establishment of freedom, how precisely does he proceed to speak of God, immortality and faith?' The first question may be answered from G, in which Kant expounds his doctrine of freedom. The second question may be answered from the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason" in the KPV, where Kant establishes the Postulates of Pure Practical Reason.

As a prefatory note, I would like to say that I see the principal task in the discussion of these questions as an exegetical one. The critical task here is secondary. This I take to be the case for three reasons. First, the main objective is to clarify the role of freedom in its relation to faith, and to see how Kant completes his move from rationalist theology to the need for rational faith. Secondly, specific criticisms of Kant's defence of freedom, while of great philosophical interest, belong to a separate discussion. Any criticism offered of Kant's view of freedom will depend on its relation to his view of faith. Thirdly, the clarification of Kant's doctrine of freedom is, for the purpose in hand, only a step, albeit a crucial one, in the argument which had its final outcome in the writing of R. Taking Kant's defence of freedom first, it is not unexpected that his argument leans heavily upon the distinction between phenomena and noumena. This, it has been argued, is the central distinction of the KRV, which makes possible Kant's departure from rationalist

theology without involving him in the total rejection of a religious standpoint. Through this distinction, Kant established that the mind can think of noumena outwith the phenomena of the causal process of nature. This distinction is applied to the problem of causality as it affects human freedom. Having shown in the KRV that the category of causality is necessary for an ordered understanding of sense experience, Kant faces in G the implication of this for human freedom. Man, considered as phenomena, is part of the causal order of nature, under the category of causality. Therefore, viewed in this way, man is not free. However, the fact that the possibilities of knowledge are not exhausted by phenomena, leaves open the question of whether or not, from another standpoint, man may be considered as a free agent.

Professor Stephan Körner summarises this point in these words: "..... it has been shown that the two propositions 'Man as Noumenon is free' and 'Man as phenomenon is part of the causal order of nature' are compatible. Indeed, Kant has <sup>argued</sup> that the Third Antinomy of Pure Reason can only be resolved by admitting the joint possibility of both these propositions ..... freedom means nothing beyond independence of the causal order of nature. If we keep this in mind we can regard it as a kind of causality and contrast it, as moral or noumenal, with the positive notion of natural or phenomenal causality, which is a schematized Category of theoretical thinking.

"We have established, now, the internal consistency of the notion of freedom or moral causality ..... If we wish to prove that man exists as a free being we need to know something more; and the nature of the additional

evidence we require will determine in what sense we can attribute to man existence as a free being.

"This additional evidence comes from moral experience".<sup>1</sup>

Professor Körner sympathetically detects two stages in Kant's argument. The first stage is the defence in principle of the possibility of a moral causality which could be termed freedom. The second stage is the proof that man does exist as a free being, the evidence for which comes from moral experience. In appealing to moral experience, Kant is developing the possibility for further discussion of religion which he had established in the KRV by means of the distinction between phenomena and noumena.

G gives Kant's account of moral experience, and of how experience of the moral law can be evidence of freedom. He argues that freedom of the will is autonomy, the property of the will to make laws for itself which conform to the moral law. "Thus a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same thing".<sup>2</sup>

However, Kant recognises the circularity of this position when he admits that in "the order of efficient causes we take ourselves to be free so that we may conceive ourselves to be under moral laws in the order of ends; and we then proceed to think of ourselves as subject to moral laws on the ground that we have described the will as free. Freedom and the will's enactment of its own laws are indeed both autonomy - and therefore are reciprocal concepts - but precisely for this reason one of them cannot be used to explain the other or to furnish

1 Stephan Körner "Kant" (Pelican Books 1960) p. 152-3.

2 G p. 114.

its ground".

It is here that he draws upon the distinction between phenomena and noumena. "One shift however, still remains open to us. We can enquire whether we do not take one standpoint whereby we conceive ourselves as causes acting a priori, and another standpoint when we contemplate ourselves with reference to our actions as effects which we see before our eyes".<sup>3</sup>

Developing the possibility of two standpoints from which the same action may be viewed, Kant argues that man may be considered as belonging to two orders. As a member of the sensible order, the realm of phenomena, he contemplates himself with reference to his actions as he sees them before his eyes - namely as effects. Therefore, he is part of a causal order of nature. When, however, he contemplates himself as a member of the intelligible order, he conceives of himself as a cause, acting a priori under freedom. Therefore, man as phenomenon is part of the causal process. Man as noumenon is a causal agent - a rational being under freedom.

This distinction is one of Kant's most valuable contributions to ethics, and certainly is a most useful argument in the traditional philosophical problem about human freedom and causality.

"When we think of ourselves as free, we transfer ourselves into the intelligible world as members and recognise the autonomy of the will together with its consequence - a morality".<sup>4</sup>

Kant of course never undertakes to explain how

<sup>3</sup> G p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> G p. 121.

freedom is possible. His argument is bent on proving simply that freedom is possible, and further that moral experience demonstrates its actuality. This in principle answers the first question which concerned the manner in which Kant defined and defended freedom.

The second question must now be taken up, to see how Kant uses the concept of freedom to speak of God, immortality and faith. The 'Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason' in the KPV is the text to be examined. The relevant argument starts from the resolution of the Antinomy of Pure Practical Reason, which Kant states thus: "In the highest good which is practical for us, i.e. one which is to be made real by our will, virtue and happiness are thought of as necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by a practical reason without the other belonging to it. Now this combination is, like every other, either analytic or synthetic. Since it cannot be analytic, as has been shown, it must be thought synthetically and, more particularly, as the connection of cause and effect, for it concerns a practical good, i.e. one that is possible through action. Therefore, the desire for happiness must be the motive to maxims of virtue, or the maxim of virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness. The first is absolutely impossible ..... maxims which put the determining ground of the will in the desire for one's happiness are not moral at all ..... The second is, however, also impossible, since every practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will, is dependent not on the moral intentions of the will but on knowledge of natural laws ..... consequently, no

necessary connection, sufficient to the highest good between happiness and virtue in the world can be expected from the most meticulous observance of the moral law".<sup>5</sup>

Kant, however, notes that: "In the antinomy of pure speculative reason there is a similar conflict between natural necessity and freedom in the causation of events in the world. It was resolved by showing that there is no true conflict if the events and even the world in which they occur are regarded only as appearances....." <sup>6</sup>

Applying this insight to his problem, he says: "It is just the same with the present antinomy of pure practical reason. The first of the two propositions, viz. that striving for happiness produces a ground for a virtuous disposition, is absolutely false; the second, viz. that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness, is not however, absolutely false but false only insofar as this disposition is regarded as the form of causality in the world of sense. Consequently, it is false only if I assume existence in this world to be the only mode of existence of a rational being, and therefore, it is only conditionally false". <sup>7</sup>

Kant then brings in a reference to phenomena and noumena as used in his defence of freedom: "But not only since I am justified in thinking of my existence

<sup>5</sup> KPV p. 117-118.

<sup>6</sup> KPV p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> KPV p. 119.

as that of a noumenon in an intelligible world, but also since I have in the moral law a pure intellectual determining ground of my causality (in the sensuous world), it is not impossible that the morality of intention should have a necessary relation as cause to happiness as an effect in the sensuous world: but this relation is indirect, mediated by an intelligible author of nature. This combination, however, can occur only contingently in a system of nature which is merely the object of the senses and as such is not sufficient to the highest good".<sup>7</sup>

He concludes: "..... the highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will and a true object thereof ....." <sup>7</sup>

The next step is the establishment of the PRIMACY of Pure Practical Reason in its Union with the Speculative Reason.<sup>8</sup> This is the most important conception in the entire KPV.<sup>9</sup> By primacy here, Kant means: "..... the prerogative of one by virtue of which it is the prime ground of determination of the combination with the others".<sup>10</sup> The interest of speculative reason "consists in the knowledge of objects up to the highest a priori principles; that of its practical employment lies in the determination of the will with respect to the final and perfect end".<sup>11</sup>

Kant defines the relationship of theoretical and

<sup>7</sup> KPV p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> KPV p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis White Beck A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason p. 47 - section 4.

<sup>10</sup> KPV p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> KPV p. 124.

practical reason in this way: "Thus in the combination of pure speculative reason with pure practical reason in one cognition, the latter has the primacy, provided that this combination is not contingent and arbitrary, but apriori, based on reason itself and thus necessary. Without this subordination, a conflict of reason with itself would arise ..... Nor could we reverse the order and expect practical reason to submit to speculative reason, because every interest is ultimately practical, even that of speculative reason being only conditional and reaching perfection only in practical use".<sup>12</sup>

What is Kant saying here? He is saying first of all that we have real conflicts between reason and inclination. Reason in its practical employment is reason that withstands inclination's pressures by legislating morally so that we may act freely. The primacy of practical reason means that reason combined with our moral experience is empowered to speak in a way in which reason from a pure speculative standpoint may not.

The postulates of pure practical reason are justified through the establishment of freedom as a postulate. Of the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, Kant says "The achievement of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. In such a will, however, the complete fitness of intentions to the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. This fitness, therefore, must be just as possible as its object, because it is contained in the command that requires us to promote the latter. But complete fitness

of the will to the moral law is holiness which is a perfection of which no rational being in the world of sense is at any time capable. But since it is required as practically necessary it can be found only in an endless progress to that complete fitness; on principles of pure practical reason, it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will.

This infinite progress is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called the immortality of the soul. Thus the highest good is practically possible only on the supposition of the immortality of the soul, and the latter as inseparably bound to the moral law. By a postulate of pure practical reason, I understand a theoretical proposition which is not as such demonstrable, but which is an inseparable corollary of an a priori unconditionally valid practical law." 13

The EXISTENCE of GOD is dealt with in the succeeding section. Kant says: "..... the same law must also lead us to affirm the possibility of the second element of the highest good, i.e. happiness proportioned to that morality; it must do so just as disinterestedly as heretofore, by a purely impartial reason. This it can do on the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect, i.e. it must postulate the existence of God as necessarily belonging to the possibility of the highest good ....." 14

Kant says of the three postulates: "The Postulates of pure practical reason all proceed from the principle

13 KPV p. 126-127.

14 KPV p. 129.

of morality..... These postulates are not theoretical dogmas, but presuppositions of necessarily practical import; thus, while they do not extend speculative knowledge, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason in general (by means of their relation of the practical sphere) and they justify it in holding to concepts even the possibility of which it could not otherwise venture to affirm".<sup>15</sup>

Kant anticipates the possible criticism that he is extending theoretical knowledge by his argument under the guise of practical reason: "..... Therefore, through the practical law, which requires the existence of the highest good in the world, there is postulated the possibility of those objects of pure speculative reason whose objective reality could not be assured by speculative reason. By this then, the theoretical knowledge or pure reason does not obtain an accession, but it consists only in this - that those concepts which for it are otherwise problematical (merely thinkable) are now described assertorically as actually having objects, because practical reason inexorably requires the existence of these objects for the possibility of its practically and absolutely necessary object, the highest good. Theoretical reason is therefore justified in assuming them.

The extension of the theoretical reason, however, is not an extension of speculation. That is, a positive use cannot be made of those objects for theoretical purposes ..... no synthetic proposition is made possible by conceding their reality",

<sup>15</sup> KPV p. 137.

<sup>16</sup> KPV p. 139-140.

This does not mean that nothing meaningful is communicated to us, however, since "Nevertheless, knowledge not of these objects, but of reason in general was extended so far that, by the practical postulates, objects were given to those ideas, and a merely problematical thought thereby obtained objective reality. It was therefore no extension of knowledge of given supersensuous objects, but still an extension of theoretical reason and of its knowledge with respect to the supersensuous in general, inasmuch as knowledge is compelled to concede that there are such objects without more exactly defining them ..... " 17

Kant's own words are his best explanation and defence. As to whether or not he justifies his position, each must judge for himself. For Kant, however, this train of thought leads up to FAITH, as the following quotations explain: "It is well to notice that this moral necessity (i.e. of God's existence) is subjective i.e. a need, and not objective i.e. a duty itself. For there cannot be the duty to assume the existence of a thing, because such a supposition concerns only the theoretical use of reason ..... Considered only in reference to the latter (speculative reason) it is a hypothesis i.e. a ground of explanation. But in reference to the comprehensibility of an object (the highest good) placed before us by the moral law, and thus as a practical need, it can be called FAITH and even PURE RATIONAL FAITH, because pure reason alone (by its theoretical as well as practical employment) is the source from which it springs". 18

Again, he says that "though the concept of the highest

17 KPV p. 140.

18 KPV p. 130-131.

good as the object and final end of pure practical reason the moral law leads to religion. Religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions ..... " 19

Section eight of the "Dialectic" (Chapter II) is entitled: "On Assent (or Belief)<sup>20</sup> arising from a need of Pure Reason". Kant argues that there is "An absolutely necessary need (the objects of morality represented by the postulates)" which "justifies its presupposition not merely as an allowable hypothesis but as a practical postulate. Granted that the pure moral law inexorably binds every man as a command (not as a rule of prudence) the righteous man may say: I will that there be a God, that my existence in this world be also an existence in a pure world of the understanding outside the system of natural connections, and finally that my duration be endless. I stand by this, and will not give up this belief, for this is the only case where my interest inevitably determines my judgement because I will not yield to anything of this interest; I do so without any attention to sophistries, however little I may be able to answer them or oppose them with others more plausible".<sup>21</sup>

The argument is that there is a justified need for faith in order to explain the full meaning of the facts of moral experience, and the binding nature of the moral demand. We are not merely believing out of interest, or believing because we want to have something in which to

19 KPV p. 134.

20 T.E. Abbot cf. "Kant's Critique of Practical Reason" (Longman's repr. 1959 p. 240)

21 KPV p. 148-149.

believe. We have a need to believe which stems from the very nature of our moral experience. This is not a commanded faith, but a practically necessary faith, a faith we find ourselves requiring to hold in order to complete our understanding of the experience of the categorical Imperative, to which we feel compelled to submit as rational beings.

The status of the Ideas of Reason then is not that of empirically justified hypotheses, nor of theoretically proved concepts, but of PRACTICAL beliefs, the objects of a moral faith.

These selected passages from Kant's G and KPV, with connecting comments, state in outline his defence of freedom, and the establishment through freedom of the Postulates of Pure Practical Reason. The Postulates of God, Freedom and Immortality give rise to the need for a moral faith, of which they are the objects. The distinction between phenomena and noumena is the keystone in the argument which justifies the concept of freedom. Therefore, there is a connection in argument between Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena and the defence of the concept of the "Ding-an-Sich", and Kant's justification of the need for faith.

Having reviewed the argument to this stage, it is now appropriate to make reference to one or two who have noted the connection and who have commented upon it.

Caird, who was mentioned earlier, says of the argument of the Dialectic, and Kant's statement of the postulates: "Kant's distinction between 'Noumena' and 'Phenomena' left him with a metaphysical dualism, and so he uses the two traditional methods of overcoming dualism,

viz. the infinite progress (which leads him to postulate immortality) and the Deus ex Machina, which of course leads him to introduce the idea of God. Although ethics is introduced to explain the origin of the two ideas, basically this is what he is about, and the guise of ethics should not be allowed to conceal his real activity".<sup>22</sup>

These criticisms imply that Kant's distinction between 'Phenomena' and 'Noumena' is not valid, and that he was being forced to go back on it. They stand only if the distinction between practical and speculative reason is not considered, and the role of faith is ignored. Kant withholds a certain status from his postulates which Caird would like him to have afforded them, and it should be remembered that Caird, like Hegel who had influenced him, rejected the concept of the "Ding-an-Sich".

Criticising the place of the postulates within the system is irrelevant. Such criticism fails to see how FAITH belongs as an integral part of the system, as the epistemic mode of holding what Practical Reason shows that it is necessary to believe. George Schrader in his article on "The Thing in itself in Kantian philosophy"<sup>23</sup> tries to take a broad view of the problem of interpreting the relation between the "Thing in itself", the nature of what information it offers us, and how it is related to faith and moral knowledge.

His general criticism of Kant is that of inconsistency. "Kant's position was ambivalent. He insisted

<sup>22</sup> Edward Caird op. cit same ref. as Chapter III.

<sup>23</sup> Kant - modern studies in philosophy ed. R.P. Wolff, Macmillan 1968. Schrader p. 172-188.

upon the autonomy of the practical reason, declaring that the postulates of morality have no theoretical validity whatever. At the same time, he provided a theoretical foundation for the metaphysics postulated by the practical reason, maintaining that the realm of the practical reason is the 'intelligible' or 'noumenal' world. This is a fundamental inconsistency in his position. The implicit rationalism of his philosophy is only partially concealed by his insistence that the metaphysics of morality is based upon faith rather than knowledge. (B xxx, B 499)"

Schrader continues then to attack Kant's use of the term faith: "The term faith is not used in any conventional sense and serves to confuse the function of the critical method as applied to moral experience. Kant was attempting to make a theoretical claim for metaphysical concepts without being willing to accept all of the implications involved".<sup>24</sup>

Further on, and more specifically about Faith, Schrader comments: "As Kant uses the term faith in referring to the concepts of moral experience, it has little of the traditional meaning and certainly none of the religious meaning which is usually associated with the concept. It is not an irrational faith, a faith that is blind or mystical to which Kant refers. He is at great pains to point out that the faith presupposed by morality is a rational faith (Vernunftglaube). For Kant as a person, I suspect that more than a rational faith was involved. Thus the term faith has a double meaning for him. It refers to the critical or transcendental meaning for him and to Kant's private meaning

<sup>24</sup> Schrader op. cit. p. 182-183.

which was not at all dependent upon his critical analysis. He really tried to say two things which are incompatible: (1) that things in themselves are given in the case of practical reason (2) that the concepts of the practical reason have no theoretical validity when extended beyond the moral realm.

"There can be little doubt that Kant actually believed that the practical reason gets at the heart of reality, that in a literal sense it presents us with things as they really are. It is the latter aspect of the practical reason, the latter type of faith which has been most influential in modern theology". 25

Schrader is simultaneously fair and unfair to Kant. He is fair in recognising that Kant uses the term faith in an unorthodox sense. He is unfair in attributing to Kant personal views which he claims are not consistent with his Vernunftglaube. In any event, the meaning of this personal faith of Kant is not defined, and in view of the fact that Schrader rejects Erich Adickes' view that Kant later in life abandoned the 'moral argument' in favour of a personal subjective view, his meaning is even more difficult to ascertain. It is hard to know if Schrader is arguing for an inconsistency in Kant's position about the 'thing in itself' from an inconsistency in his view of faith, or the other way round. Schrader's main weakness is that he fails to distinguish clearly between the functions of theoretical and practical reason. However, he deserves credit for the fact that he treats the Kantian position as a whole, and recognises that Kant was trying to say something new. Although, in Schrader's

opinion, he was able to do so only at the price of self-contradiction.

Lewis White Beck in a sympathetic treatment of the same general problem, answers one of Schrader's points, when he notes: "The epistemic mode in which a postulate is held is a "faith of pure reason", "moral belief" or "rational belief". Through this epistemic mode, Kant encompassed within philosophy what had previously been an epistemic resource outside of, or hostile to philosophy. The faith-reason contrast before Kant was parallel to that between revealed theology and philosophy".<sup>26</sup> He then distinguishes between several ways in which Kant speaks of faith.

The faith referred to in connection with the postulates he characterises thus: "The faith of pure reason is needed to 'orient ourselves' in the 'empty space' of thought beyond experience, in that 'wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fogbank and many a swiftly moving iceberg give the deceptive appearances of farther shores. It must be faith in objects of practical reason, since theoretical reason, in default of intuition, gives no point of orientation".<sup>27</sup>

The second of the two expressions in inverted commas in this quotation belongs to the KRV. The first refers to Kant's own work: "What does it mean: to orientate oneself in thinking?" (1786)

"..... The faith required by reason is a postulate.

<sup>26</sup> L.W. Beck "A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason" (U. Of Chicago Press 1966) p. 255.

<sup>27</sup> Lewis White Beck op. cit. p. 256.

As regards the degree of certainty, it is not inferior to any knowledge, while an opinion, say concerning some historical fact, may change if new material turns up. I am absolutely certain that no one can ever refute my proposition that 'there is a God', for whence could he gain such insight?" 28

Lewis White Beck's exposition of Kant recognises that the epistemic mode of holding the postulates is that of faith, and this means that therefore the epistemic status of the postulates is that of 'moral beliefs'. Schrader ignores the significance of moral experience which has to be taken along with the 'Ding-an-Sich' in order to reach the need for faith. He merely regards moral considerations as included in his reference to practical reason, which I have suggested is inadequate.

These critics, Caird, Schrader and Beck and their respective attitudes to Kant illustrate the thesis that it is necessary to see the entire Kantian framework before making any judgement upon Kant with anything resembling an air of finality. Beck's more sympathetic interpretation stems from the fact that he accepts that Kant's views on faith and religion are an integral part of his system. He discusses Kant's views on faith seriously and as part of his thought which requires consideration alongside his other ideas. He does not look upon Kant's views on religion as an 'optional extra' which goes along with the Kantian outfit.

The conclusion from this discussion is that it is necessary to consider R in order to see the outcome of Kant's critical thesis as he understood it. We turn to

R not merely to find his views on religion, but to observe the climax of a long argument which starts in the KRV, moves to the G, thence to the KPV, and finally to R. Some of the critics I have discussed see the need to relate the various strands of Kant's thought and the arguments which lead through his writings if his idea of faith is to be discussed at all. To ascertain Kant's final position, a study of R is required. R is not a Kantian afterthought on the subject of religion, but essential to complete the work on the critical programme, and essential as an object of study to see where the long argument of the critical philosophy comes to rest.

One of the most competent surveys of the history of Kantian thought, which pays due attention to the historical circumstances which gave rise to R also is quick to recognise that it is not in any way inconsistent with the Kantian programme.

"His (Kant's) book Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone was a public confession of Deism, which the authorities interpreted at its face value, namely as a challenge to the reactionary forces in the government .....

This work on religion after all owes its origin and its strange composition simply to the political circumstance of the period. However, Kant had a much too systematic temperament not to seek to integrate it at once with the Critical synthesis in the strict sense".<sup>29</sup>

Thus de Vleeschauwer's assesses R and its place in Kant's thought.

John R. Silber is another critic who sees a place

<sup>29</sup> "The Development of Kantian thought" tr. A.R.O. Duncan (Nelson 1962) p. 177-178.

for R alongside other Kantian writings. In an essay entitled "The Ethical Significance of Kant's 'Religion'",<sup>30</sup> he has this to say: "Kant's Religion we may say without exaggeration compares in importance for the understanding of his ethics, with his 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals' and the second 'Critique'. Kant's ethical STATICS, to borrow a term from physics, may be found in varying degrees of systematisation in most of his post-critical works. Only in 'Religion' do we find what might be called his ethical DYNAMICS. Kant has discussed the nature of the good, the character of the Imperative, and the methodology of moral enquiry in his earlier works; in the Religion he addresses himself to the problem of evil - its nature, its origin and the possibility of its eradication. In the process he raises questions which necessitate an understanding of the will in its full complexity and dynamic unity. We therefore find in the Religion, in his struggle with the problem of evil, Kant's most explicit and systematic account of the will and of human freedom - an account which in turn clarifies his system of ethics".<sup>31</sup>

These remarks by Silber are highly suggestive. He sketches in a few words, the idea of a new relationship between the G and R, based on the fact that the one commences with the concept of the Good Will, and the other starts by accepting the fact of radical evil. However, Kant's own remarks in the KPV about faith also lead naturally to R, and Silber is in fact indicating one

<sup>30</sup> Published as part of the introduction to the Harper Torchbook (Edn. of 'Religion'. pp. lxxix - cxxxiv.)

<sup>31</sup> Silber op. cit. p. lxxx

way of describing the already implicit relationship between these documents.

What in effect I have been doing here is to argue the justification of a significant place for R within the framework of the Critical Philosophy. As I have also suggested, not every Kant scholar would accord R such a place. For example, Caird wrote that in R: "Kant sets himself to consider how far, from his own point of view he can appropriate these fundamental conceptions of the Christian religion, or at least, give them an interpretation in harmony with his own ideas; and also, though in a less direct and conscious way, how far he can stretch or modify his own ideas, so as to admit new elements from Christianity".<sup>32</sup>

Coming from a scholar of Caird's standing, this is not only cruel and unfair, but involves a complete disfiguration of Kant's argument. This view implies that the three Critiques or perhaps only one Critique completes the work of the Critical Philosophy, and that all else is superfluous afterthought. It certainly refuses to regard R as the summary of Kant's answer to the claim of KRV (B xxx).

Kant's arguments in the Prefaces to R will add weight to what I have been saying, and will offer clarification of his views on how morality leads to religion.

The first Preface to R deals with the relation between ethics and religion. It is in fact a particular argument for the general relationship which is implicit in the KPV. It clarifies the final stage of Kant's

32 Caird: op. cit. Vol. II p. 566.

passage from rationalist theology to the need for rational faith, because R itself is an attempt at an exposition of that rationalist faith.

However, before commencing to look in detail at the first Preface, one preliminary observation must be made.

It is addressed to those who are critical of the idea that significant place should be given to R amongst Kant's critical writings. They often refer to the external circumstances through which the various essays passed before they finally became R. However, facts about the composition of the work should be set in perspective. Does, for example, the 'patchwork' theory of the Transcendental Deduction affect the significance of what Kant is trying to say? To answer in the affirmative would be suggesting that an artist's painting must be de-valued if he painted it from a number of earlier sketches. The work must surely be judged by what it says, not by how it came to its extant form?

To proceed with the argument, Kant understood moral experience as the starting point for his re-appraisal of the possibilities of theology. Rationalist theology, which he rejected, was speculative in its character, and was based upon the illusion that transcendent knowledge was possible for man. Kant believed that reason in its practical employment created both the possibility and the necessity to speak about God, freedom and immortality (the postulates of pure practical reason). Discussing them from the standpoint of practical reason ascribes no objective reality to them. Their defence, Kant argued, is, however, of equal validity in the courts of reason

with speculative proofs, although of a different order. The moral proof is based upon the inner necessities for understanding which arise out of moral experience rather than upon external reasoning based upon logic.

This is most clearly demonstrated by the manner in which Kant argues that morality leads ineluctably to religion. *Prima facie*, this appears to contradict the principle of the autonomy of morality, but carefully considered, it is merely an extension of his view that moral experience requires that we should postulate the existence of God, the reality of freedom and the possibility of immortality. It is at this point that the argument in the first Preface to R becomes relevant.

He begins by stating the doctrine of the autonomy of morality quite categorically and unequivocally and thus reiterating the conclusions established in G. "So far as morality is based upon the conception of man as a free agent who, just because he is free, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it stands in need neither of the idea of another Being over him, for him to apprehend his duty, nor of an incentive other than the law itself, for him to do his duty ..... morality requires absolutely no material determining ground of free choice, that is, no end in order either to know what duty is, or to impel the performance of duty".<sup>33</sup>

He illustrates this by arguing that we should require no incentive to make us give a true testimony in court, other than referring ourselves to the fact that it is our duty. This is the familiar argument in G.

This position has been regarded by some critics as suggesting that Kant had no place for religion in his scheme. The KPV answers that view, but does not resolve the final tension between the autonomy of the categorical imperative, and the conception of religion as either 'beyond' morality, or 'proceeding from' morality.

However, Kant does bridge the gap between morality and religion quite specifically in the ensuing argument: "..... It is true that morality requires no end for right conduct; the law which contains the formal conditions of the use of freedom in general suffices. Yet an end does arise from morality; for how the question 'What is to result from this right conduct of ours?' is to be answered, and towards what as an end - even granted it may not be wholly subject to our control - we might direct our actions and abstentions, so at least as to be in harmony with that end; these cannot possibly be matters of indifference to reason".<sup>34</sup>

He then concludes that "Morality thus LEADS INELUCTABLY TO RELIGION, through which it extends itself to the idea of a powerful moral Lawgiver, outside of mankind, for Whose will that is the final end (of creation) which at the same time can and ought to be man's final end".<sup>35</sup>

Kant maintains that morality is independent of religion, but later says that morality leads ineluctably to religion. Is this blatant self-contradiction, or can the apparent discrepancy be reconciled?

34 R p. 4.

35 R p. 5.

It is worthy of note that the argument which leads to the Divine Lawgiver is not quite the same argument as the argument which leads to God as the distributor of the summum bonum. The Divine Lawgiver's function seems more significant than the mere computing of virtue and happiness in the ethereal spheres of immortality. However, I would like to discuss three possible lines of comment on Kant's seeming inconsistency:-

(a) The first is that Kant undermines his own concept of duty by asserting the possibility of a move from morality to religion. The argument would run thus: "Kant argues that practical reason offers and indeed requires a way of speaking about religion. However, Kant's conception of duty is such that he can insist upon the independence of morality from religion. The basis of his starting point concerning practical reason is moral experience of the categorical imperative itself. Therefore, while it expresses the moral demand fully, it also creates the need to go beyond itself. While saying that his concept of duty is adequate from one point of view, he is admitting that it is inadequate from another, because it leads on to something else. Therefore, having argued thus, can Kant make so much out of duty after all, and can his concept of duty be held to be independent of religion from the beginning of the argument, so that we can see the need for a reference to religion later on? Kant would appear to be undermining the concept of duty when he claims that morality leads ineluctably to religion such that it cannot have any longer the autonomy of morality as its complement which is so essential in G. Kant's argument is thus circular".

(b) The second line of comment has been raised already by Kant when he anticipates the argument which would be advanced against him - viz. that what the KRV forbade, the KPV permitted. This line of argument would claim that the Postulates of Pure Practical Reason are the result of speculative reason being employed under another name. Kant's own defence has been outlined and this, it has been suggested, must be judged as a separate issue by each individual for himself.

(c) The third line of comment is recommendation that final judgement should be suspended until Kant's total position on religion has been developed. The significance of what he is saying and the detail of the argument should be considered side by side. On occasions, the value of the former might outweigh any devaluation caused by slight discrepancies in the latter. We have seen that the programme which develops from the second Critique should not be prematurely judged until Kant has fully worked out his position. Likewise, his step from morality to religion should not be crushed until it has been fully determined whether or not what he means by religion really affects his position on morals.

Returning to the test of R, the key move Kant makes comes in these words: "Take a man who, honouring the moral laws, allows the thought to occur to him (he can scarcely avoid doing so) of what sort of world he would create under the guidance of practical reason, were such a thing in his power, a world moreover into which he would place himself as a member ....."

"It cannot be a matter of unconcern to morality as to whether or not it forms for itself the concept of a

final end of all things (harmony with which, while not multiplying men's duties, yet provides them with a special focus for the unification of all ends); for only thereby can objective practical reality be given to the union of the purposiveness arising from freedom with the purposiveness of nature, a union with which we cannot possibly dispense".<sup>36</sup>

Kant is arguing that while we cannot question the authority of duty, we may still wonder at the overall significance of a life lived in accordance with duty, and of the collective life of humanity, lived in accordance with duty. There are thus two senses of the question "Why should I do my duty?" which must be distinguished. This distinction answers the criticism of comment (a). The first sense of the question is illegitimate - it is the sense discussed in G. When someone reflects "X is my duty, but why should I do it?" the only reply to be given is simply the general statement "A duty is something to undertake without question". The second sense, however, is legitimate, because the force of the question is this: "what will result from a life of duty?" or "what is the meaning of duty for the good of the world?" The important difference is that both questions view duty differently, but neither require a reference to consequences in order to support the authority of duty. The need to perform a duty is not being justified. The second sense of the question is an attempt to seek deeper understanding of the significance of duty. The interest in the consequences of morality which it expresses is not a moral interest,

but the interest of the enquiring mind.<sup>37</sup>

For Kant, the autonomy of morality is never questionable. When faced with a duty, we may never say "Why should I do this?" if by that we are seeking a justification for doing our duty. We may only say "I cannot know the consequences of doing my duty, but I believe it is right that it should be undertaken".

However, the idea that we may be interested in what morality will produce by way of its effects is important. It enables us to raise the question of the ends of morality, but not as something that precedes the determination of the will. Morality is what each individual engages in in the performance of duties. It is not a totality of affairs at which we may aim our actions. The idea of the end arises out of morality. It does not precede it in any way. The heart of Kant's claim that morality leads to religion becomes exposed, and may be more easily grasped. From consideration of

<sup>37</sup> Kant indulges in an expression which is most dangerous, when he suggests in a secondary way that we enquire about this end of morality so that "We might direct our actions and abstentions so as at least to be in harmony with that end". (R p.4.) This form of expression would have devastating consequences for his views on morality if he had given this idea a more prominent place in his views. It would imply that once we have apprehended the end of morality, we could 'short cut' duty by laying our plans to fit the end. The problem of end and means for Kant would then remain unsolved. I do not regard his remark in this vein as an essential part of the argument. Therefore there is little purpose in dealing with it in detail. It does not add anything to his argument and for present purposes is disregarded. Why Kant should have said this, admittedly remains a problem.

the question of the end to which morality leads, Kant finds himself driven to speak of religion. Man needs to be able to envisage some final end or ultimate set of consequences which arise from doing his duty throughout life, and this leads us to religion. The end is no more than "the idea of an object which takes the formal condition of all such ends as we ought to have (duty) and combines it with whatever is conditioned and in harmony with duty, in all the ends we do have (happiness proportioned to obedience to duty) ....."<sup>38</sup> Only a higher moral and omnipotent Being can unite the two elements here presented. So it would seem that while morality can be known and understood in and by itself qua moral experience, it cannot be known and understood in its fullest significance as a way of life without reference to God, at least as a Being who can combine the prescriptive end of morality with the concept of a highest Good for all moral agents.

This argument bears strong resemblance to the 'moral argument' as found in the KPV, although both arguments have slightly different emphases.

The KPV view is basically that of God as a Moral Being who balances duty and happiness. This argument makes God into One who relates duty to the pursuit of happiness. This is present in the R argument to the extent that God is called a Divine Lawgiver, who indeed gives the law, but who also effects a balance between happiness in the world and the worthiness of those who deserve to be happy (i.e. those who do their duty) since man himself does not have the power to achieve this.

<sup>38</sup> R p. 4.

The main emphasis, however, of R could be stated as follows: "If morality has an overall end, then someone must be organising it, and have so made man, or arranged that within him, the sense of duty is his guide as to how to achieve that end, (whether he knows of its existence or not). We do have the idea of an ideal world even after a very little reflection about morality, but the pursuit of our duty makes us a participant in the production of that ideal world. God has made us so".

The justification for this interpretation should become clearer in the course of the argument, and I think proves to be the dominant insight and emphasis of R. Kant speaks about having faith in the outcome of moral living, and when he speaks in that way, he is relying upon the second rather than the first emphasis.

A. D. Lindsay in his monograph on Kant expounds this emphasis in the following terms: "We are to do our part (by doing our duty) trusting that others will do the same. We must do this, for we are, if acting morally, willing that the maxim of our action should be a universal law. This implies that we must for right action have faith in something that is not within our power, and yet that we must not demand that this faith should become knowledge".<sup>39</sup>

He continues by contrasting Kant's position with that of Hobbes: "The nerve of this position may be seen most clearly if we are to compare it with that of Hobbes. (Leviathan c. xv) 'He that would be modest and tractable, and perform all the promises in such time

39 A.D. Lindsay Kant p. 250 ff.

and place as no other man should do so, should but procure his own ruin, which is against all the laws of nature. But he that having surety that other men shall regard the laws of nature, doth not do so himself, endeavoureth not peace but war'. If you are guaranteed the kingdom of heaven as a result of your actions, you are called on to act as a member of it; if not, not. From which follows Hobbes position that the setting up of a guarantor in the person of the sovereign must precede all morality. This is to make the result willed in action the determining ground. Kant is right in thinking such a position immoral. 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?' And yet at the same time, such a 'bestowing virtue' as Neitzsche called it, implies necessarily trust and faith in the consequences of our actions. That faith is the outcome of the action, not its determining ground; but it is not an accidental outcome. The action implies faith".<sup>40</sup>

Lindsay then points out the relation between faith and reason entailed in this position: "Notice what a revolutionary conception of the relation between faith and reason this position involves. Instead of the two being separate as though we were first rational and then faith gave us something more, faith is for Kant, part and parcel of rational willing. True faith is, therefore, for Kant, always rational faith. It is the faith implied in the rational will".<sup>40</sup>

Lindsay is taking Kant to mean that we believe our actions will have consequences which we cannot know. This

<sup>40</sup> A.D. Lindsay op. cit. p. 250.

is implied in the notion of willing that they become universal laws. And further we believe that often moral agents will do the same. To this extent Lindsay is correct in his interpretation of Kant.

However, he draws another and I think mistaken conclusion, that if we thought that our actions were not to bear fruit because the world was totally alien to our moral actions, then we should think that moral action was futile. He says: "In a world in which our moral purposes were known to be incapable of fulfilment, it would not be enough for us to say: 'let us at least do our duty' ..... it cannot be our duty to will what has no consequences".<sup>41</sup>

This implies that if we know consequences only, we can will and act. This interpretation does not do proper justice to the significance of Kant's view of duty for duty's sake. He accepts that duty has unquestionable authority, and that faith is involved in rational willing, but then concedes that this is conditional upon us knowing that the consequences of our actions are attainable.

The heart of Kant's position is that there can never be an excuse for the moral agent's failure to undertake what he sees as his duty in any given situation. Were Lindsay's view valid, and were Kant saying this, we would be excused from the effort of trying to attain any morally good end, or from doing a duty which would help bring this about, unless there were a sufficient number of others willing to do the same. This would reduce morality to nought, and make as the maxim of our life "If no one else cares, I will not". This maxim is most

<sup>41</sup> Lindsay op. cit. p. 208.

immoral.<sup>42</sup> It reduces the Categorical Imperative of moral obligation to the hypothetical imperative of the selfish child or the apathetic adult.

Lindsay misinterprets Kant on this vital point. Kant maintains the independence of duty's demand from any consideration of possible consequences of doing our duty or possibility of attainment of any end. Our Faith in the possible consequences of doing our duty may lie in deciding to adopt the proper maxim, but whether or not that faith is justified, is of no moral interest. We do our duty because it is our duty. Thought about consequences are not relevant considerations at the time, but merely confirmatory after thoughts.

Kant is suggesting in a general way that without a definite goal, the will can achieve no satisfaction. This may be true. But he constantly maintains that morality requires no end for right conduct, and this position he holds as unconditionally true. The man who may feel the duty to face even failure in order to act rightly under whatever circumstances may face him, may indeed perform actions that might bear fruit. Then again, he may be no more than a failure altogether. Nothing however, can

42 Surely the duty to rouse public interest in a subject about which there appears to be little social concern may fall into this category? It would be totally immoral to say 'No one else cares, why should I?' or 'I shall probably fail, so I will not attempt anything'. Is not the entire conception of a protest movement based upon the repudiation of this immoral slogan, which lacks conscience, and sees nothing as its duty except circumstances be favourable? The failure of Jesus in His crucifixion, His faith in the principle of Love, the 'Here I stand' attitude of Luther, the passive suffering of Ghandi and Luthuli would seem to illustrate the duty to 'die a failure' if necessary.

divest him of his duty at that time, and no amount of consideration of consequences or contemplation of ends envisaged will weigh either for or against. This is for Kant the essence of the moral attitude to life. Can Kant, from his own words, be understood to mean anything else?

To this general comment may be added the conclusion already outlined that Kant, while insisting upon the autonomy of morality, sees that the end of the totality of moral action is of interest to us, and that from this consideration the need to speak about religion arises.

A modern echo of Kant's view on the relation of morality and religion may be heard in these words of Professor McLagan; on the theme of the moral utility of religion: "I therefore heartily agree that ..... a man who sets himself to get on without religion may be like a man who persists in hopping on one leg along a road on which he might more comfortably and quickly proceed by walking on two. Nonetheless a man who is under the honest impression that he has only the one leg not only must, but can, however painfully and slowly, travel that way".<sup>43</sup>

In the Preface to the 1794 edition of R, Kant takes up a point which helps to set into better perspective his progress from rationalist theology to rational faith. He distinguishes between Biblical theology and Philosophical theology as separate and independent disciplines: "Among the sciences, however, there is, over and against Biblical theology, a philosophical theology which is an estate entrusted to another faculty. So long as this philoso-

<sup>43</sup> McLagan Theological Frontier of Ethics (George, Allen & Unwin 1961) p. 185.

phical theology remains within the limits of reason alone, and for the confirmation and exposition of its propositions makes use of history, sayings, books of all peoples, even the Bible, but only for itself, without wishing to carry these propositions into Biblical theology or to change the latter's public doctrines - a privilege of divines - it must have complete freedom to expand as far as its science reaches".<sup>44</sup>

This passage clearly demarcates the province within which Kant is operating. He is attempting to think theologically, but clearly is making use of philosophical criteria for assessing and deciding what may or may not be said, and any religious material (even the Bible) for illustration. Kant is not merely writing a philosophy of religion, but is conducting an exercise in 'philosophical theology' within the limits of reason alone, within the framework of the critical philosophy.

The difference of emphasis between a philosophy of religion and philosophical theology may indeed be rather subtle, but Kant implies that his awarenesses are theological, and this is justifiable, since God, freedom and immortality are established in the KPV. However, he still permits no reliance upon revelation, tradition or holy books.

Kant classifies as within theology "a knowledge of God and His existence",<sup>45</sup> and his contrast between an ethical theology and a theological ethics, may be useful in this context. He argues that an ethical theology is quite possible, since "morality without

44 R p. 8.

45 KU p. 163.

theology may carry on with its own rule".<sup>46</sup> But then he adds that "it cannot do so with the final purpose which this very rule enjoins, unless it throws reason to the winds as regards this purpose". However, "a theological ethics - on the part of pure reason - is impossible, seeing that laws which are not originally given by reason itself, and the observance of which it does not bring about as a practical capacity, cannot be moral".<sup>47</sup>

The import of his insights in this regard is first that his awarenesses are primarily theological in that he was trying to discover a pathway from experience to belief in God and His existence. His insights are also ethical, since that aspect of experience from which the pathway commences, is moral experience. Hence his notion of a philosophical theology which arises out of ethics. This could be called an expansion in methodological terms of his claim that morality leads ineluctably to religion.

The difficulty which has faced R is that it has been regarded by philosophers as intended for theologians, since it occasionally makes reference to Biblical concepts. On the other hand, some theologians have viewed it as an attempt by Kant to explain something he does not fully appreciate, in a language alien to themselves. This conflict of attitudes may account for the lack of attention paid to R by either discipline. Kant, however, was trying to communicate with both disciplines, by cutting out a pathway from one to the other. I would suggest that he was attempting to set Christianity within a philosophical perspective, to see which elements of the traditional faith could be reached by other than

<sup>46</sup> KU p. 163.

<sup>47</sup> KU p. 163.

revelation.

Through moral experience he believed he had discovered that alternative approach to God, freedom and immortality. The faith which arose out of these considerations, was derived from reason in its practical employment. This faith he calls both rational faith and moral faith. This concludes the study of the movement in Kant's thought from rationalist theology to the rational faith of an ethical theology. The nature of this faith, however, calls for further clarification.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**THE PURE MORAL FAITH OF REASON.**

The enquiry so far has centred upon the analysis and criticism of certain misrepresentations and misinterpretations of the Kantian view of the nature of Faith. From these corrections was developed an outline of both the ideas Kant rejected and how he made provision for the possibility of faith within the self-imposed limitations of his critical programme. The conclusions which were reached may be summarised as follows:

1. Kant's conception of faith is not, as Vaihinger suggested, a mere pragmatic device, introduced to justify the use of otherwise unbelievable ideas, as working hypotheses. He argued that Kant's view of faith was a matter of acting 'as-if' x or y were true. With regard to the status of the objects of this pragmatic faith, Vaihinger claimed that Kant held the views of an agnostic, if not indeed those of an atheist.

This, however, was shown to be a misrepresentation of Kant. When Kant declared that he had made room for faith, he was speaking not of a mere pragmatic faith or a hypothetical faith which withheld any positive assertions. His faith did not remain silent about such ideas as the existence of God. Kant rather claimed that his faith would supplement knowledge. It would be an injustice to the psychology of Kant to disbelieve his stated intention in B xxx. In addition, the test of the KRV will not stand such a one-sided reading.

2. On the other wing of misunderstanding, there is the position represented by those who claim that Kant was tinged with some form of Romanticism. Otto's attempt to construct a phenomenology of religious experience, using Kant's schematism, is an example of such a position.

While in isolated passages, Kant does appear to speak in a romantic vein, and while his enthusiasm for the teleological structure of nature, and the argument (for God's existence) from design is undeniable, these factors must be viewed cautiously. Careful scrutiny of the text, and careful observation of his most emphatic pronouncements on the subject confirm the view that Kant permitted no element of 'experience' to enter into the determination of the nature of religious faith. He regarded 'religious experience' as a dangerous concept, and one which was the source of "Schwärmerei" - fanaticism.

His understanding of faith had no element of so called "religious experience" in it, and made no provision for an account of such religious experience. He claimed that he was not discussing transcendent entities which could be reached only by mystical meditation, or by experiencing feelings of the numinous, if such experiences were at all valid. Therefore, while he was interested intellectually in the phenomena of Romanticism, his thinking was quite uninfluenced by this.

3. With the extremes eliminated, the next stage was to consider the compatibility of Kant's assertion that faith was necessary with his outright rejection of the traditional arguments for God's existence. In fact, he rejected all speculative theology. The thinkers whose views he was rejecting were Descartes, Leibniz, Wolff, and indeed the entire panorama of rationalist philosophers and theologians. Kant concluded that the purely theoretical employment of reason could not sustain any discussion of God. How then did he proceed to make room for faith?

The key to the mystery was found to lie in the concept of the "Ding-an-Sich". Kant defended this concept and the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal with dialectical ferocity, because upon its validity depended the very possibility of the employment of reason in another manner. The other manner, Kant calls 'Practical Reason', as against 'Theoretical Employment of Reason'. I suggested that this part of the Kantian argument is at least underrated in its importance and value. Kant saw this as not only an integral part of his system, but as necessarily completing it. While the KRV opens the possibility to our view, the KPV develops the theme after a preliminary investigation in G. It is through the need for an understanding of the meaning of the Moral Demand that Kant sees a way of expressing the place of faith. It is out of moral experience that the need for faith arises.

In this way, he moves from his rejection of rationalist theology to his conception of rational faith - namely, faith based upon reason in its practical employment. In the KPV, he establishes moral justification for speaking about God, freedom and immortality. In the first preface to R, he justifies the passage from morality to religion, and this leads into the work itself which affords elucidation and clarification of his conception of the nature of faith.

The close relationship between G and the KPV and R was argued for on the grounds that first G analyses the concept of good, and from the KPV, Kant proceeds in R to face the problem of evil. Secondly, in so far as the idea of faith is developed further in R, not only is it

necessary to give it full consideration, but it may also be looked upon as the final clarification of the statement made in the KRV at B xxx.

Certain questions now arise. Having established that Kant had a religious faith, the nature of that faith has to be determined. Once this has been achieved, there is the further problem of how this faith of Kant's matches up to any of the traditional views of Christian faith. Is Kant merely an ethical theist? Or with regard to Christian revelation, is he an ethical relativist? Or was he perhaps trying to say something more significant, and therefore, correspondingly more difficult to express? These questions must be faced. But before offering a preliminary solution to them, a brief outline of the argument of R would serve us useful background to the detailed arguments to follow.

R consists of four parts with a General Observation appended to each section. The first part appeared separately and the three successive sections were added together in the following year (1793) to complete the work in its present form.

The first section is the crucial one. In it, Kant developed his contribution to the problem of evil. G began with an analysis of the good will whereas part I of R opens with the statement: "That 'the world lieth in evil' is a plaint as old as history ....." <sup>1</sup>

Evil is defined, as is goodness, in terms of the maxims according to which a man acts, and from this starting point, Kant proceeds to analyse the original predisposition to good in Human Nature, and its propensity

<sup>1</sup> R p. 15.

to evil. Having done this, he arrives at the conclusion that man is evil by nature. This is so because evil acts may be predicated of mankind as a species, and because man has a tendency to act from morally mixed motives. Therefore evil originates within man himself.

This part of the work is most important, because it contains implications for Kant's doctrine of freedom. Kant critics have not been slow to argue that Kant departs from his earlier doctrine of freedom, and finally ends up in self-contradiction, with two inconsistent accounts of freedom. This challenge will be answered in due course.<sup>2</sup>

Book II of R introduces the concept of der Kampf,<sup>3</sup> the struggle for supremacy of the good principle and the evil principle. This of course is a moral struggle and takes place within men as individuals. The ideal of moral perfection is adequately presented to men in the form of a Son of Man - a person morally pleasing to God - the archetype present in man's morally legislative reason. With this example before them, men should be able to adopt only proper maxims of conduct, and so be, so to speak, morally converted, by making a 'meta-decision' to act only on moral maxims. There are clearly implications in what Kant says about the Son of Man ideal for Christology.

Among the difficulties Kant sees in this idea is that it is unable to solve the problem of atonement for

<sup>2</sup> "Kant's alleged Romanticism". The General observation at the close of this section as with the three at the close of the other sections have already been discussed.

<sup>3</sup> R p. 50-53.

past guilt and wrong actions. They still remain, although the moral agent decides in future to act only on moral maxims. In the eyes of Supreme Justice, no one who is blameworthy can ever be guiltless, and therein lies the problem of reparation. This leads to the antinomy of saving faith, and its solution has implications both for Kant's conception of faith, and for the relation of his views on faith to Christian doctrine.

The second section of Book II deals with the Scriptural 'mythology' (history recited in order to convey some vital truth) in which der Kampf is expounded. It concerns an evil power establishing a kingdom on earth, and the conflict of this power with the power of good for supremacy over man. Through history man was prepared for the appearance of one who was not implicated in the original errors of the human race, and who therefore was independent of the Kingdom of Evil, but who was persecuted by that evil power. The physical victory of the evil power, when that Person was killed, became the moral victory of the good power.

Kant closes this discussion by explicitly suggesting that the account thus given in Scripture, being stated so vividly, was meant for popular consumption. The real significance of the story lies in the universally valid truths it conveys.

The third Book introduces the idea of the Church, as a moral commonwealth, designed to help men to collectively resist the assaults of the evil principle. Man lives in an ethical state of nature, in which he stands judged by his own actions in light of the moral law. However, because he is a solitary individual, he

is weak and prone to assault and defeat by the evil principle. Therefore, Kant argues, he should leave the ethical state of nature to become part of an ethical commonwealth, acting under universally recognised moral laws. These moral laws are not made by the community itself, but are recognised as prior to the community and therefore they emanate from God. This ethical commonwealth of people obeying the moral law of God can only be achieved by human organisation, through the form of a Church. The different forms of Church are described by Kant. At this stage, he distinguishes between pure religious faith, which is the heart of the moral ideal, and the different historical faiths, which, using various Holy Scriptures, have been organised to band men into different unions (an approximate to the ideal), and Kant speaks interestingly, but enigmatically of the day when men will be able to dispense with Churchly faiths in favour of the pure religion of reason.<sup>4</sup>

In the second section of Book III, Kant treats the Victory of the Good over the Evil Principle, historically, and in the course of his exposition, makes many interesting comments and evaluations upon specific periods in the history of Christianity which are of note in and by themselves. His rather critical conclusions on the morally dubious history of Christendom are summarised by himself in the words of the Roman poet Lucretius: "Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum" <sup>5</sup>

The fourth and final section of R concerns Service and Pseudo-Service of God under the sovereignty of the

<sup>4</sup> R p. 112-113.

<sup>5</sup> R p. 122 Lucretius "De rerum natura" I, 101  
'Such greatly evil deeds as religion can prompt'

Good Principle. It is subtitled - Religion and Clericalism. The argument opens by claiming that the founding of a Kingdom of God is something which can be done only by God Himself. For the practical purposes of public organisation, there must be clergy and laity, but the pure rational religion of the 'church invisible' knows nothing of these artificially created distinctions. The concept of the service of God is discussed, and Kant, working from his definition of religion,<sup>6</sup> considered subjectively as regarding all duties as Divine commands, argues that God wishes the recognition of duty as true and proper worship. Anything else that men command on behalf of God, other than the moral conduct of life, is so much superstition and falsity. Religious illusion has given rise to much fanaticism and cruelty during the course of history.

Kant distinguishes between Christianity as a Natural Religion, and Christianity as Learned Religion. As a Natural Religion, it consists in the first place of morality along with the necessary beliefs in God and Immortality. He includes in this section an exposition of some of Jesus' words as implying that He taught not statutory religious duties, but, in fact, pure morality.

As a learned religion, Christianity should be taught as a fides elicitata. This means a faith which stands and maintains itself on rational grounds, and not as a fides imperata (a commandal faith). In speaking of this, he makes indirect reference to the edict of Frederick William II, which has caused him so much trouble; "It

<sup>6</sup> R p. 142.

(Christianity) must therefore always be taught as at least a fides historice elicitae; that is, learning should certainly constitute in it ..... not the rear guard but the vanguard, and then the small body of textual scholars (the clerics), who, incidentally, could not dispense with secular learning, would drag along behind itself the long train of the unlearned (the laity) who, of themselves, are ignorant of Scripture (and to whose number belong even the rulers of world states)." 7

Kant's clarification of the distinction between his idea of moral faith, (religion conceived in ethical terms), and pseudo-service of God makes use of the antithesis he draws between the obligation upon man to live a good course of life and the illusion that something more than this is required to please God. In the light of this, he evaluates public worship and the Sacraments of the Church as merely encouragements to moral sentiments. He ultimately reaches the point where in the last chapter,<sup>8</sup> he claims that conscience is the guide man must accept in matters of faith. It should be clear from this survey of the argument of R, that the entire work arises out of the position established in Book I, which deals with the problem of evil.

At the close of the preceding part of this work, it was established that Kant regarded his faith as both rational and moral. The full significance of this has yet to be developed. However, it would appear that some account must now be taken of the argument of R Book I, for at least two reasons.

First, from the standpoint reached in the first

7 R p. 152.

8 R p. 173 f.

Preface of R and in the KPV, it is possible to review Kant's argument in such a way that it is clear that his doctrine of freedom in G, is the basis upon which the discussion of faith is possible. As has been already shown, the defence of freedom rests upon the crucial argument in the KPV for the distinction between phenomena and noumena. The basic position in G, is that the only free acts are acts performed in obedience to the moral law. Therefore, freedom in G has nothing to say about the problem of evil. R Book I opens by raising this problem. Therefore the question automatically arises: 'what is the relationship in R between evil and human freedom?'

Secondly, and arising out of the first point, is the problem of the relationship of faith to the act of moral willing. The moral faith of reason arises out of the exercise of freedom, and is in the KPV the epistemic mode in which the postulates of pure practical reason are held. The fact that R introduces the problem of evil must surely affect the conception of faith as defined earlier in the KPV. A subtle difference of emphasis has been already underlined between the conception of God in the KPV, and the Moral Governor of the Universe in the Preface to the first edition of R.

Therefore, both Kant's view of freedom, and possibly also his view of faith would seem to be necessarily affected by the introduction to his ethical discussion of the problem of evil. The nature ascribed to each will depend upon the position he adopts with regard to the definition of the nature of evil.

Tentatively, I would suggest that Kant extended the

meaning of the concept of freedom in R, and from there amplified and expanded his conception of pure moral faith accordingly. This leaves two problems to be discussed. First, 'Is this enlarged conception of freedom still consistent with the conditions of knowledge set out in the KPV?' And second 'What is the relation between Kant's 'Faith' and any traditional views of Christian faith?' Kant claimed initially to have silenced all objections to both morality and religion, and this claim, as I have argued, must be seriously regarded. For him there is only one true religion, because there is only one morality valid for all men.<sup>9</sup> Again, I would suggest tentatively, and to offer justification for the manner in which my own argument will develop, that in trying to make a place for faith out of the nature of moral experience, Kant was trying to define a universally acceptable and recognisable foundation for the insights both of Christianity and indeed of all 'moral' religion. In morality, he believed, I think, that he had discovered a pathway from human experience direct to God, which could universally express the natural impulse for religious faith, so adequately expressed in Christianity. Therefore, what my argument will try to detect is evidence that from his ethical theism, Kant was seeking to develop a Christian universalism.

<sup>9</sup> P footnote to p. 31. "Difference of religion - singular expression. It is as if one spoke of different moralities. There may very well be different kinds of historical faiths attached to different means employed in the promotion of religion, and they belong merely in the field of learned investigation. Similarly, there may be different religious texts ..... But such differences do not exist in religion, there being only one religion valid for all men and in all ages".

We may now proceed to examine in detail the argument of Book I about freedom and the nature of the faith implied in the act of moral willing. What sort of faith is involved in the exercise of freedom as freedom is defined in R? This will lead to full definition and expansion of the terms Kant uses to describe his concept of faith - rational and moral.

Kant opens the argument of Book I by refuting from experience, the false optimism of the Aufklärung that the world was becoming better and better, by emphasising that human history will not bear this view out. However, he refuses to accept the extreme alternative, that the world was collapsing into chaos. Seeing the weakness of both, he asks if there is not some other way of understanding the situation. This desire to seek a road which combines the authentic insights of both extremes of interpretations illustrates the whole objective of his theory - to combine two apparently contradictory sets of insights, so that respect may be paid to the truth which lies in both. Therefore he asks: "..... since it may well be that both sides have erred in their reading of experience, the question arises whether a middle ground may not at least be possible, namely, that as a species man is neither good nor bad, or at all events, that he is as much the one as the other, partly good, partly bad".<sup>10</sup>

He then refers to the concept of maxim, first introduced in G: "We call a man evil, however, not because he performs actions that are evil (contrary to the law) but because these actions are of such a nature

that we may infer from them the presence in him of evil maxims".<sup>11</sup>

Kant's maxims are principles of volition.<sup>12</sup> They are sources of willing, and they have implications for more than just our projected action at the given moment when we employ one. He argues for the importance of the maxim in relation to the problem of the origin of evil in these words: "..... the source of evil cannot lie in an object determining the will through inclination, nor yet in a natural impulse: it can lie only in a rule made by the will for the use of its freedom, that is, a maxim".<sup>13</sup>

Only free actions may be imputed to the agent in terms of guilt or innocence. Actions caused by impulse or any other external determining factor do not belong in the category of free actions. Thus to say that a man is good or evil by nature is to say that "there is in him an ultimate ground (inscrutable to us) of the adoption of good maxims or of evil maxims (those contrary to law), and this he has, being a man; and hence he thereby expresses the character of his species".<sup>14</sup>

Kant's view clearly is that actions caused by anything other than the adoption of maxims are not performed as the proper exercise of freedom. No actions which are the result of the proper exercise of freedom are morally indifferent, and this is so because they involve an attitude towards the law. This is a definite

11 R p. 16.

12 See Appendix III.

13 R p. 17.

14 R p. 17.

advance on the position in G.

"If now, this law does not determine a persons's will in the case of an action which has reference to the law, an incentive contrary to it must influence his choice; and since by hypothesis this can only happen when a man adopts this incentive (and thereby the deviation from the moral law) into his maxim (in which case he is an evil man) it follows that his disposition in respect to the moral law is never indifferent, neither good nor evil".

The next stage of the Kantian argument centres on the concept of GESINNUNG. He defines disposition in these terms: "..... the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of maxims", which, he continues, "can be one only and applies universally to the whole use of freedom. Yet this disposition itself must have been adopted by free choice, for otherwise it could not be imputed".<sup>15</sup>

Kant argues that man has an innate disposition to neither good nor evil, in the sense of something he did not choose in time. He is not teaching the total depravity of man, but is quite emphatic that there is a

<sup>15</sup> Note: R p. 17 footnote: "That the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of moral maxims is inscrutable is indeed already evident from this that since this adoption is free, its ground (why for example I have chosen an evil and not a good maxim) must not be sought in any natural impulse, but always in a maxim. Now since this maxim also must have its ground, and since apart from maxims no determining ground of free choice can or ought to be adduced, we are referred back endlessly in the series of subjective determining grounds, without even being able to reach the ultimate ground".

susceptibility to good in man. Such is human nature.<sup>16</sup>

Kant appears to see man, not as a being progressing from a condition in which he is evil to one in which he is good, but rather as one who acts from mixed motives, and who must learn and re-learn his priorities, and who can within time choose to honour duty as he ought.<sup>17</sup> This is clearly a different position from the basic view in G, that only moral actions were free actions.

Kant introduces the idea of an original predisposition to good in human nature, <sup>18</sup> but speaks of a propensity to evil <sup>19</sup> in human nature. That he introduces both is important for his new understanding of freedom, but before dealing with this, it is best to be clear as to exactly what he says about both these notions, and the precise conclusions he draws from them. This of course means a precise definition of his doctrine of radical evil.

The original predisposition to good is part of the

16 "..... by 'nature of man' we here intend only the subjective ground of the exercise (under objective moral laws) of man's freedom in general; this ground - whatever its character - is the necessary antecedent of every act apparent to the senses". R p. 16.

17 Clement J. Webb Kant's Philosophy of Religion (OUP 1926) "I have already called attention in a different connection to this feature of Kant's ethical doctrine; for it is this sharp opposition of good and evil, this division of the field between them that indisposes him to conceive of moral improvement as a gradual passage from worse to better, and makes him see a truer conception of it in such a notion of conversion as must have been familiar to him from his pietistic training, than the establishment of a harmonious mean, as suggested in Aristotle's *Ethics*". p. 95.

18 der ursprünglichen Anlage zum Guten in der menschlichen Natur.

19 der Hange Böze in der menschlichen Natur.

'decided character' or determined destiny of man.<sup>20</sup> He detects three elements of Gesinnung. First, there is animality,<sup>21</sup> which regards man purely as a living being with social impulses and instincts to procreate and preserve himself. These impulses can give rise to awful vices like gluttony, lawlessness and lasciviousness.

Secondly, there is the predisposition to humanity.<sup>22</sup> In this context man is viewed as a rational being, who may judge himself to be happy or unhappy when he compares himself with others. The desire to be equal with others can give rise, when permitted to go to excess, to jealously and rivalry and the vices of culture.

The third element of predisposition is to personality,<sup>23</sup> which Kant says is "the capacity for respect for the moral law as in itself a sufficient incentive of the will. This capacity for simple respect for the moral law within us would thus be moral feeling which in and through itself does not constitute an end of the natural predisposition except in so far as it is the motivating force of the will. Since this is possible only when the free will incorporates such moral feeling into its maxims, the property of such a will is good character".<sup>24</sup>

Considered in terms of their possibility, the first of these dispositions requires no rationality, the second is based upon practical reason, but subservient to other incentives while "the third alone is rooted in reason which is practical of itself, that is reason

20 als Elemente der BESTIMMUNG des Menschen.

21 Tierheit.

22 Menschheit

23 Persönlichkeit

24 R p. 23.

which dictates laws unconditionally ..... " 25 He also adds, concerning the dispositions, that "they are original, for they are bound up with the possibility of human nature". 25

Having defined Hange (Propensio), 26 Kant speaks of the propensity to evil in human nature in this way: "Here however, we are speaking only of the propensity to genuine, that is, moral evil; for such evil is possible only as a determination of the free will, and since the will can be appraised as good or evil, only by means of its maxims, this propensity to evil must consist in the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law". 27

He outlines three distinct degrees in the capacity for evil. He speaks first of a "weakness of the human heart in the general observance of adopted maxims, or in other words the frailty of human nature". He explains fragilitas 28 in this way: "..... I adopt the good (the law) into the maxim of my will, but this good, which objectively, in its ideal conception (in thesis) is an irresistible incentive, is subjectively (in hypothesis) when the maxim is to be followed, the weaker (in comparison with the inclination)". 29

25 R p. 23.

26 R p. 23-24. "... the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination (habitual craving, concupiscentia) so far as mankind in general is liable to it. A propensity is distinguished from a predisposition by the fact that although it can indeed be innate, it ought not to be represented merely thus: for it can also be regarded as having been acquired (if it is good) or brought upon himself (if it is evil)".

27 R p. 24.

28 Gebrechen lichkeit

29 R p. 24-25.

Secondly, Kant speaks of impurity,<sup>30</sup> and impuritas is defined as "the propensity for mixing unmoral with moral motivating causes (when it is with good intent and under maxims of good)".<sup>31</sup> The will which is motivated by impurity stands in need of incentives other than duty, in order to perform what duty demands. "Actions called for by duty are done not purely for duty's sake"<sup>32</sup> and of course, the moral assessment of an action depends not upon whether the agent did his duty, but whether he did so for any other motivating cause than merely obedience to the imperative of duty.

The third degree Kant speaks of is that of wickedness,<sup>33</sup> and this is defined as "the propensity to adopt evil maxims". Kant elaborates this definition in the following terms: "the propensity of the will to maxims which neglect the incentives springing from the moral law in favour of others which are not moral ..... it reverses the ethical order (or priority) among the incentives of a free will; and although conduct which is lawfully good (i.e. legal) may be found with it, yet the cast of mind is thereby corrupted at its root (so far as the moral disposition is concerned) and the man is hence designated as evil".<sup>34</sup>

As to the origin of this propensity to evil, Kant says that "..... a propensity to evil can only inhere in the moral capacity of the will. But nothing is morally evil (i.e. capable of being imputed) but that which is our

30 Unlauterkeit

31 R p. 25.

32 R p. 25.

33 Bösartigkeit.

34 R p. 25.

own act".<sup>35</sup> However, "by the concept of propensity, he states "we understand a subjective determining ground of the will which precedes all acts and which therefore is itself not an act".<sup>36</sup>

The apparent difficulty Kant faces here is resolved when he distinguishes between two senses of the term "act". The distinction is defended by reference to the distinction between Phenomena and Noumena. This distinction is important for his final statement of the doctrine of radical innate evil.

The term act can mean the exercise of freedom in general by which the supreme maxim (in harmony with the law or contrary to it)<sup>37</sup> is adopted by the will. "This is an intelligible action, cognizable by means of pure reason alone, apart from every sensible condition".<sup>38</sup> In this sense of the term act, the propensity to evil is an act, but also the "ground of all unlawful conduct in the second sense".<sup>39</sup> That is to say that "act" in the second sense of "the exercise of freedom whereby the actions themselves (considered materially i.e. with reference to the objects of volition) are performed in accordance with that maxim. This is a violation of the law, and is really a vice (peccatum derivatum) and is a sensible action, empirical, given in time - a "factum phaenomenon".<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> R p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> R p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Note here again that Kant departs from the position in G that only the adoption of maxims in conformity to the law can be regarded as the exercise of freedom.

<sup>38</sup> R p. 26-27.

<sup>39</sup> R p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> R p. 27.

Having drawn this distinction between act in the sense of adopting a supreme maxim, which is an intelligible act,<sup>41</sup> and act in the sense of adopting maxims of action in the process of living, which is the other sense, namely sensible as distinct from intelligible, Kant is able to reach the following important conclusion: "In view of what has been said above, the proposition, Man is evil, can mean only, He is conscious of the moral law, but has nevertheless adopted into his maxims the (occasional) deviation. He is evil by nature means this, that evil can be predicated of man as a species; not that such a quality can be inferred from the concept of his species (that is, of man in general) for then it would be necessary; but rather that from what we know of man through experience we cannot judge otherwise of him, or that we may presuppose evil to be subjectively necessary to every man, even the best. Now this propensity must itself be considered as morally evil, yet not as a natural predisposition but rather as something that can be imputed to man, and consequently it must consist in maxims of the will which are contrary to the law".<sup>42</sup>

Kant's own words are the best summary of his position: "Further, for the sake of freedom, these maxims must in themselves be considered contingent, a circumstance which on the other hand will not tally with the universality of this evil unless the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims somehow or other is entwined with

<sup>41</sup> The argument here should be compared in detail with the argument in G based on the same distinction.

<sup>42</sup> R p. 27.

and as it were, rooted in humanity itself. Hence we call this a natural propensity to evil, and as we must, after all, ever hold man himself responsible for it, we can further call it a radical innate evil in human nature, (yet none the less brought upon us by ourselves)".<sup>43</sup> The ground of this evil in man, Kant concludes, lies in reversing the moral order of the incentives when he adopts them into his maxims.<sup>44</sup>

Kant reaches this conclusion by arguing that the ground of this evil cannot be located in man's sensuous nature, since he is not responsible for this. Nor can it be located in a corruption of the moral legislative reason, for reason cannot destroy the authority of the law which it makes.<sup>45</sup> These two points merit further consideration. Man's sensuous nature cannot be the ground of radical innate evil, since man would then not be responsible for the ground of his actions or adoption of maxims. Neither however can man be exempt in any way from the law, since "to conceive of oneself as a freely acting being and yet exempt from the law which is appropriate to such a being (the moral law) would be tantamount to conceiving a cause operating without any laws whatsoever (for determination according to natural laws is excluded from the fact of freedom) this is a self contradiction".<sup>46</sup> A reason exempt from the moral

<sup>43</sup> R p. 27.

<sup>44</sup> R p. 31.

<sup>45</sup> "when the incentives which can spring from freedom are taken away, man is reduced to a merely animal being".  
R p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> R p. 30.

law is not possible, because man cannot repudiate the law. The subject would become devilish being were this possible, and this is, he claims, not a proper description of man.

He then says that: "even if the existence of this propensity to evil in human nature can be demonstrated by experiential proofs of the real opposition, in time, of man's will to the law, such proofs do not teach us the essential character of that propensity or the ground of this opposition. Rather because this character concerns a relation of his will, which is free (and the concept of which is therefore not empirical) to the moral law as an incentive (the concept of which likewise is purely intellectual) it must be apprehended a priori through the concept of evil, so far as evil is possible under the laws of freedom (of obligation and accountability .....)" 47

Man does not repudiate the law, because the moral law forces itself upon him by virtue of the moral predisposition in all men. Were there no other incentives working against the law, he would adopt it as his maxim to determine the will, simply because men cannot repudiate it.<sup>48</sup> However, the incentives of the sensuous nature play a part also in determining his will. Normally and naturally, man adopts both into his maxims. Either would be adequate on its own, and if he acted on either alone, he would be either morally good simpliciter or

47 R p. 30.

48 Kant is emphatic that man cannot repudiate the law. By this he means that it is impossible for the human will to be used diabolically. This is a questionable assertion.

morally evil, simpliciter. But he does adopt both, and therefore the difference between the maxims amounts to the incentives in them (their content). Therefore the difference between the moral and the non-moral lies in the subordination of the one to the other. In other words, a non-moral maxim is one in which the moral order of the incentives has been reversed, and this Kant claims, men do habitually. "Now if a propensity to this ..... does lie in human nature, there is in man a natural propensity to evil; and since this very propensity must in the end be sought in a will which is free, and can therefore be imputed, it is morally evil. This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could only occur through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free".<sup>49</sup>

In these terms, Kant defines the concept of the radical innate evil of human nature. He considers also the question of the origin as distinct from the ground of this evil, and answers with the one word inscrutable: "The rational origin of this perversion of our will, whereby it makes lower incentives, <sup>supreme</sup> among its maxims, that is, of the propensity to evil, remains inscrutable to us ....."<sup>50</sup>

, This inscrutability is not a convenient escape route, but like all of Kant's statements, reached by reasoning

49 R p. 32.

50 R p. 38.

that "because this propensity itself must be set down to our account, and because as a result, that ultimate ground of all maxims would involve the adoption of an evil maxim (as its basis). Evil could have sprung only from the moral-evil (not from mere limitations of our nature); and yet the original predisposition (which no one other than man himself could have corrupted, if he is to be held responsible for this corruption) is a predisposition to good; then there is no conceivable ground from which the moral evil in us could have originally come".<sup>51</sup>

Therefore he concludes that "in the search for the rational origin <sup>52</sup> of evil actions, every such action must be regarded as though the individual had fallen into it directly from a state of innocence".<sup>53</sup>

By saying that each action of evil must be regarded as a direct fall from innocence, Kant is saying that man

<sup>51</sup> R p. 38.

<sup>52</sup> The concept of origin is defined thus: "the derivation of an effect from its first cause, that is from the cause which is not in turn the effect of another cause of the same kind". R p. 35. Therefore, since no evil action can be considered as in any way determined by its antecedents without prejudicing its character as a free act, the idea of seeking an origin in time for evil acts is impossible. Kant therefore rejects the idea of inherited evil in man's character; because "It is a contradiction to seek the temporal origin of man's character, so far as it is considered as contingent, since this character signifies the ground of the exercise of freedom; this ground (like the determining ground of the free will generally) must be sought in purely rational representations" R p.35. Kant claims also that even the Genesis narrative of the origin of evil places it not in man himself, but in a "spirit of an originally loftier destiny" R p. 39.

<sup>53</sup> R p. 36.

is not basically corrupt, and that each time an evil action is performed, he has a duty not to do so again, and to commence the process of moral improvement. While the origin of our moral perversity to reverse the order of the incentives in our maxims is inscrutable, we have the duty to undergo a moral conversion which will lead us to adopt the maxim of the law as the supreme determining ground of the adoption of all other maxims which influence our willing.

There are many specific points which would merit separate and careful treatment: for example, Kant's notion of 'inscrutability', his refusal to seek a temporal origin for evil acts, the question of whether or not reversal of the order of incentives affects the quality of the act in terms of its effect, and the notion of the 'meta-decision' required to complete our moral conversion. However, the purpose of this discussion of Kant's notion of radical evil is to discover its implication for his doctrine of freedom. Emil L. Fackenheim is the first critic to whom I would refer in this connection.

In an essay commemorating the 150th anniversary of the death of Kant, he fastens on to the fact that Kant changed his views in order to improve upon his doctrine of freedom. He says: "Kant's shift to radical evil is made for a strictly philosophical reason; and this reason is, strangely enough, the need to give a full and adequate justification of moral freedom".<sup>54</sup> In elucidating the nature of this need he says: "Kant became gradually convinced that moral freedom can have

<sup>54</sup> University of Toronto Quarterly Vol. 23 (1954) p. 339-353. "Kant and Radical Evil" p. 340.

no other meaning than the freedom to choose between good and evil and he finds it necessary to introduce the doctrine of radical evil so as to make freedom, in this sense intelligible".<sup>55</sup>

Fackenheim makes the criticism that there is in Kant a fundamental ambivalence in his exposition of human freedom, an ambiguity which really amounts to two doctrines of freedom. He characterises them in this way: "According to the one, man is free in the degree to which he is determined by the moral principle; according to the other, he is free to choose good or evil".<sup>56</sup> Fackenheim takes the view that the first idea takes predominance in Kant's earlier ethical writings, and that the second is explicitly embraced in the essay on radical evil. As suggested earlier, there is an advance in R upon the doctrine of freedom as expounded in G which contains the view that the will which acts in accordance with the moral law is the only will which acts under freedom. In his earlier writings, Kant makes the explicit assimilation that "..... a free will and a will subject to moral laws are one and the same thing".<sup>57</sup>

If this earlier position is carried to its logical conclusions, it implies that the will can be self-determining in one way only, namely in obedience to the moral law. Any other form of determination is not self-

<sup>55</sup> University of Toronto Quarterly Vol. 23 (1954) p. 339-353. "Kant and Radical Evil" p. 340.

<sup>56</sup> Fackenheim op. cit. p. 343.

<sup>57</sup> AB "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals" p. 66

determination, but determination by some object of inclination, and therefore not a free act. Fackenheim claims that Kant saw the impossible difficulty which this raised and that he wrote the essay on radical evil in an attempt to solve it. He goes as far as to say that Kant abandoned the doctrine of freedom as he stated it in G. He argues that "..... this account of moral freedom is open to so grave an objection that Kant in the essay on radical evil, abandons it. For the account is compelled to deny that there can be such a thing as an evil will. Along with the evil will, it must deny evil itself. And in denying both, it cannot justify moral responsibilities for moral evil".<sup>58</sup>

The criticism of the earlier doctrine of freedom is both valid and understandable. A person of weak will who yields to inclination rather than obeys the moral law is yielding and not willing, and therefore since it is not a free action, he is technically not responsible. In order to be free and responsible, man must have the right to choose not merely between either willing the good, which in G is the only expression of freedom, or not willing at all, but between good and evil alternatives. He must be able to choose freely against the moral law, and be responsible for doing so in order to make his choice for the law equally responsible.

Leaving for the moment Fackenheim's criticism of Kant at this level, useful reference may be made to a similar criticism made by John R. Silber (in an introductory Essay to the Hudson and Greene Edition of R)<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Fackenheim op. cit. p. 345.

<sup>59</sup> John R. Silber: R p. lxxix - cxxxxiv "The Ethical Significance of Kant's Religion".

In that essay, Silber discusses basically the same problem in different terms, and by a different route of analysis, subtly reaches the same point. Silber discusses the question which Kant had to face, of whether or not human beings can misuse their freedom. He argues that Kant reached his new position in this way: "Dissatisfied with Plato's cavalier rejection of man's experience of moral obligation/ <sup>and with all Christian attempts to reduce moral obligation</sup> to a hypothetical imperative subservient to a Divine decree, Kant tried to explain categorical moral obligation in such a way as to make it consistent with the Christian insight into the dark and irrational depths of human nature, and, simultaneously with Platonic confidence that freedom and obligation are ultimately grounded in freedom".<sup>60</sup>

He continues: "Kant was aware that his earlier attempt in the Groundwork to explain how the categorical imperative is possible was a failure because his comprehension of freedom and the will was too fragmentary".<sup>60</sup>

While there are differences in their individual views on the nature of the doctrine of freedom in Kant's earlier writings,<sup>61</sup> they are in agreement over the fact that in his earlier work, Kant does not solve the problem of the man who chooses against the moral law being able to claim that he is acting neither responsibly nor freely.

<sup>60</sup> Silber R p. lxxx1

<sup>61</sup> Silber distinguishes between phases of the doctrine in earlier writings whereas Fackenheim assumes a uniform view of freedom in the earlier writings. This is a separate problem of Kant exegesis, but the contrast between G and R upon which they are ostensibly agreed is the only matter of concern here.

Silber poses the problem by attacking Kant's distinction between autonomy and heteronomy, and argues that Kant's distinction in G between the autonomous will and the heteronomous will will not solve the problem. Kant, he claims, has to face the fact that heteronomy was a mode of freedom also. This is the corollary to the point which Fackenheim made when he said that a will which was free only when it obeyed the moral law could never be responsible.

"On the basis of his insight that heteronomy is a mode of freedom and that the will is both practical reason and the faculty of desire, Kant could account for the will's being torn between the moral law and its natural desires".<sup>62</sup>

Silber summarises his conclusions in these terms: "Kant's theoretical advance beyond Plato in the understanding of freedom is now apparent. Like Kant, Plato identified freedom with rationality. Unlike Kant, however, Plato understood reason only in its honorific meaning. Anything that was not in accord with the fulfillment of reason as a canon, as the static form of the good, was non-rational, determined either by non-rational desires or non-rational spirit or blind necessity but not by the

<sup>62</sup> Silber R p. lxxxv The next stage for Silber is a discussion of the problem from the view that the moral law is part of the structure of human personality. He argues from the Metaphysics of Morals (AB p. 279) that Kant identifies personality and responsibility when he says that "a person is the subject whose actions are capable of imputation". Therefore, by obedience to the moral law, man affirms his real self, and this is rational action. Heteronomous action, on the other hand, is the negation of freedom, and therefore the denial of self.

misuse of reason itself ..... " 63 Kant recognised this limitation of the Platonic view and so he defined freedom and reason as spontaneity and pointed to rationality and autonomy as fulfilled and to irrationality and heteronomy as deficient modes of its expression. It was because the irrationality of rejection was itself an expression of some aspect of the rational that Kant developed the idea, (according to Silber) that the moral law is part of the structure of human personality.

Allowing for the different manner of approach to the problem in each case, both Fackenheim and Silber argue together that Kant's doctrine of freedom in R marks an advance on his earlier position in G, and that this advance took place to give an account of freedom which makes freedom a genuine choice between good and evil.

I suggested earlier that by introducing the problem of evil, Kant broadened his conception of freedom, and from there necessarily expanded the view of faith implicit in the KPV. Both Fackenheim and Silber offer proof of the first part of that argument. However, before the matter may be left, certain questions must be faced before the implications which this new view of freedom has for faith, may be examined. Does Kant have two distinct doctrines of freedom, supported on separate grounds, and quite inconsistently irreconcilable? Did he see the impossibility of his position in G and merely reject it in favour of the doctrine contained in R?

This problem is important for two reasons. It calls in question the earlier relationship I sketched between G and R as part of the Critical programme. Secondly, if

63 Silber R p. xcii-xciii

Kant maintains freedom on grounds distinct, in principle, from those earlier expressed, then perhaps the faith of R is irrelevant for the assessment of the position of faith within the Critical framework. In other words, is the new doctrine of freedom consistent or inconsistent with the canons of the critical philosophy?

Consider first the antinomy of freedom and necessity as stated in G. Kant argues that the concept of freedom is not a concept of experience, since it still holds although experience appears to prove the opposite. But in the interests of empirical science, it is necessary that everything which occurs should be determined in accordance with the laws of nature. This is a dialectic of reason, since for the purpose of speculative reason, causal necessity must be affirmed, while for the purposes of action, freedom is necessary. Therefore since reason cannot afford to surrender either, it must be proved that freedom and necessity in the senses defined are not only compatible but necessarily concomitant in experience.

This Kant achieves by introducing the distinction of sensible and intelligible, the distinction between the realms of Noumena and Phenomena. Considered as a member of the intelligible order (the noumenal) man is a free rational being. Considered as a member of the sensible (intelligible order) man's actions may be seen as part of a causal nexus. Therefore as a member of the intelligible world, man acts under laws of nature (heteronomously), while as a member of the intelligible order he acts under the laws of freedom, (i.e. the laws of reason (autonomously)).

The whole argument here depends, as does the entire

success of the critical programme on the distinction between phenomena and noumena. In this way, Kant establishes freedom in G.

In contrast to this position, R tries to express as free acts, those which before were accepted as part of a causal process. I think it is fair to say with Silber that Kant saw the weakness of <sup>the</sup> position in G, and therefore attempted to face the problem of evil. I am not persuaded, however, with Fackenheim that we have two entirely separate accounts of freedom. Prima facie, we may have, but closer inspection shows that they may be reconciled and that the latter is merely an expansion of the insights of the former, because ultimately they rest on the same grounds.

Kant's analysis in G stands unaffected, because it concerns the analysis of the good will, the ideally perfect will, which does not exist, except ideally. He is discussing the ideal, and not a concrete instance of human willing. This might be justified by saying that in a perfect world, if everyone obeyed the moral law, and someone deviated, they would have acted not freely but under some external incentive. However, Kant did recognise that people choose against the moral law, and are able freely to choose so. Therefore, these must be free acts, and must be explained.

Kant's explanation depends again upon the distinction between phenomena and noumena. First he introduces the concept of Gesinnung, the ultimate subjective ground for the adoption of maxims. Man has such a Gesinnung for good. He also has a possibility in him of deviating from the maxims of the moral law, and the subjective ground of

this is a propensity to evil. While men have a disposition for good, they also have a propensity to evil. This means that considered as members of an intelligible order, they have made as a ground of their will, the possibility of reversing the moral order of the incentives which are adopted into their maxims. This means that man is capable of acting with moral incentives coming first in his maxims, or of acting with moral incentives being subordinated to considerations of self-interest. Therefore what before was heteronomous action may now be considered as free action; considered as noumenal action. Kant is recognising the point, and by this means, enshrining within his system the simple fact that people can and do often act from a variety of motives. They may do what is right, but in different circumstances do so for other than purely ethical reasons. Therefore freedom to choose good or evil is open to men by virtue of the fact that they have a propensity to do so, one which belongs to them, considered as intelligible agents. Unlawful conduct is of course, causally determined within the processes of the sensible world.

This can be reconciled with the KIV view, and so far as G is concerned, it is merely an expansion of the notion of freedom as the action of man considered as part of an intelligible order. Man's radical evil lies in the fact that since his underlying maxim allows for deviation from the law by reversing the order of incentives, then it is technically, an evil propensity. Kant has thus proved that evil is innate and radical - the property of all men, and yet they are still totally responsible for it each time an evil act is committed. The main

difference this theory makes in contrast to the former is that Kant makes the exercise of freedom, the freedom to order motives in our maxim of action. This leaves freedom defined as being in the noumenal order.

One problem which Kant does have to face in this context is that of how the individual succeeds in reforming himself morally. How can an empirical act, an act in the phenomenal realm restore goodness in a corrupted condition which exists in the intelligible order? If the ground of evil actions is located in the intelligible realm, how can this be reversed? Kant however says that "..... if a man reverses by a single unchangeable decision, that highest ground of his maxims whereby he was an evil man, (and thus puts on the new man), he is, so far as his principle and cast of mind are concerned, a subject susceptible to goodness, but only in continuous labour and growth is he a good man".<sup>64</sup>

He argues that we have a duty to change our evil cast of mind and therefore, we are able to do so, since 'ought implies can'. This idea of an inexplicable decision to become moral which Kant claims that men must make, is perhaps the least convincing part of his argument. Certainly it is neither easy to understand nor to accept. The problem of how an empirical decision, a decision taken in the phenomenal realm can affect the ground of maxims in the noumenal realm seems intractable. Kant would have been better to have stopped short, and been optimistic about moral improvement at the level of isolated actions, perhaps because of a decision by the moral agent to try to be moral. But the propensity

cannot be wiped out. If however it is self-determined, then the individual can choose not to act on his propensity. To say more than this is to weaken the position gained.

Therefore I would suggest that Kant's doctrine of freedom in R is not fundamentally in contradiction with the doctrine of freedom in G. The former may be integrated into the insights of the latter. The doctrine of freedom in R, while certain questions emerge from it, may be permitted to stand as on the grounds of the basic critical philosophy concept of the "Ding-an-Sich". Therefore it is related to the original claim by Kant to have made room for faith. Now we must examine the form of faith implied in this moral freedom.

In what way does this enlarged doctrine of freedom affect Kant's conception of the nature of the faith for which he had made room? In the KPV, faith is the way in which we have knowledge of, and an understanding of, the Postulates of Pure Practical Reason. Faith is synonymous with practical knowledge. It is epistemic. In R, if first the conception of relation between morality and religion from the Preface to the 1973 edition of R is taken along with the implication of the view that man may freely choose good or evil, then clearly, faith becomes more than just the epistemic mode of holding certain postulates. Faith becomes related, if it is implied in moral willing to possible consequences of action, and therefore to the problems surrounding human conduct.

I shall now attempt to summarise the full significance of Kant's use of the terms rational and moral as applied

to his concept of faith, indicating the advance made by R on his earlier position in each case.

Taking the term rational first, Kant claims that while faith does not yield knowledge of the supersensible, it is rational. In a letter to Lavater, he claimed: "Anyone can be convinced of the correctness and necessity of moral faith, once it is made clear to him".<sup>65</sup> This must surely be the ultimate confident expression of the claim to rationality. In R, this rationality is extended to include also the insights of Christianity.

In distinguishing between natural and revealed religion, he claims that natural religion is based upon itself. Revealed religion is subjective in that the revelation upon which it is based has a subjective appeal. If the revelation is valid, (i.e. it can be shown to be true for all men) then the revelation itself ceases to be crucial in its significance, and men can grasp by reason, the truth they first experienced through revelation: "..... the occurrence of such a supernatural revelation might subsequently be entirely forgotten without the slightest loss to that religion either of its comprehensibility or of certainty or of power over human hearts".<sup>66</sup>

Kant claimed that men ought to, and therefore can, discover the truth for themselves, but that a historical revelation might be of assistance to them. Applied to Christianity, he argues that as a learned faith, it relies upon history, and is therefore not a free faith which may be deduced from adequate insight into theoretical

<sup>65</sup> Z p. 81.

<sup>66</sup> R p. 144.

proofs. But he claims also that Christianity may be taught and spoken of so that it appeals to man's reason. This means that it can be built upon the concepts of reason, but "..... from the point where the Christian teaching is built not upon the bare concepts of reason, but upon facts, it is no longer merely the Christian religion, but the Christian faith which has been made the basis of a Church".<sup>67</sup>

It should be noted in passing that Kant tends to speak of pure rational faith in his earlier references to faith, but the faith concerned is faith in a rational religion - the religion of reason. This religion of reason has certain historical approximations, called Churchly faiths, and therefore the two usages of faith should be carefully distinguished.

Christianity may be taught as a fides elicita, a faith whose content may be elicited from the concepts of reason as against a fides historice elicita, a faith which may be elicited from a historical revelation. These both stand in contrast to a fides imperata - a faith based upon some authority, external to reason.

" ..... recognition and respect must be accorded in Christian dogmatic to universal human reason as the supremely commanding principle in a natural religion, and the revealed doctrine, upon which a Church is founded and which stands in need of the learned as interpreters and conservers must be cherished and cultivated as merely a means, but a most precious means of making this doctrine comprehensible, even to the ignorant, as well as widely diffused and permanent".<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> R p. 151.

<sup>68</sup> R p. 152-153.

At an earlier stage in his argument, while describing the Church as universal,<sup>69</sup> Kant argued that there was a universal foundation which could rationally justify the need for religious faith - namely morality.

The rationality of Kant's faith lay in this, that he claimed that it could be derived from the concepts of reason (in its practical employment), and that men could discover it for themselves. Through moral experience, he was attempting to close the gap between reason and faith, while maintaining the gap between faith and knowledge. Towards the end of R, he offers a concise and a masterly summary of the meaning of the essential rationality of his religious faith. This rationality is derived from the fact that the moral law is what gives rise to faith.

"There exists meanwhile a practical knowledge which while resting solely upon reason and requiring no historical doctrine, lies as closely to every man, even the most simple, as though it were engraved upon his heart - law which we need but name to find ourselves at once in agreement with everyone else regarding its authority and which carries with it in everyone's consciousness unconditioned binding force, to wit, the law of morality. What is more, this knowledge either leads, alone and of itself to belief in God, or at least determines the concept of Him as that of a moral Legislator; hence it guides us to a pure religious faith which not only can be comprehended by every man, but also is in the highest degree worthy of respect. Yea it leads thither so naturally that if we care to try the experiment, we

shall find that it can be elicited in its completeness from anyone without his ever having been instructed in it".<sup>70</sup>

This statement so suffused with Socratic confidence, emphasises two points. First, it emphasises that it is the concept of morality which leads to the concept of the Moral Legislator of the Universe. And because morality is universal, all men should be able to see, by means of reason, the need to believe in God as Moral Legislator of the Universe. In the light of this, men will be able to see for themselves that obedience to the demands of duty is the ultimate form of respect for God, the author of the moral law. Kant claims that it would be possible to elicit from anyone, the nature of pure religious faith, without ever having to give any instruction in its concept. This part of his argument rests firmly upon G, and from the position that from the concept of a categorical imperative, its content may be inferred.<sup>71</sup> Given this, and the authority of the moral law which belongs to it, then logically and inevitably, in the manner in which Kant argues, morality leads to religion. In this consists the rationality of his religious faith.

The second point which the statement underlines with regard to the rationality of Kant's faith is that it is practical reason which affords the possibility of this species of proof of its postulates - i.e. reason in its practical employment. While the proofs are not valid for speculative reason, they are valid for the purposes of morality. This means again that Kant's faith is grounded in reason.

<sup>70</sup> R p. 169.

<sup>71</sup> G p. 88 line 420-421.

The second adjective which Kant applied to his faith is the term moral. It is in the manner in which he uses this term that the advance in R upon his position may best be seen. There are three distinct ways in which Kant's faith may be characterised as moral faith. The first of these may be detected in the KIV. The other two are the proper consequences of his enlarged doctrine of freedom.

The first reason offered by Kant for describing his faith as moral has already been explained. It is that his faith arises inevitably out of moral experience. This is the term faith as meaning the epistemic mode in which the postulates of pure reason are held. Belief in these is rationally demanded because it arises out of moral experience, and therefore his faith is simultaneously both rational and moral.

However, a second sense of the term moral which may be applied to Kant's faith stems from the fact that human freedom means the freedom to choose between good and evil, which in turn becomes clear when once we ask the question "What is the overall purpose of morality itself in the designs of the Moral Legislator?" The fact that man can choose between good and evil means that he is involved in a continual moral struggle, and that he is aware of being involved in a conflict. He may perform his duty to the detriment of his own personal interest, and therefore has some faith in the value of what he is doing. In the KPV, this faith is stated in the form of a faith in God as the Moral Governor who will after death, apportion the summum bonum to those who failed to receive it in this life by virtue of their fulfilling the moral law to their own

personal loss. This negative form of faith becomes transformed into a positive belief in the value of moral conduct as achieving what is beyond our power and perhaps even beyond our imagination. The need for such a faith is what lies behind his question in the first preface to R: "What is to result from this right conduct of ours?" <sup>72</sup> This question, as has been explained, asks what is the overall end of the totality of moral actions men are called upon to perform?

In the same letter to Lavater quoted earlier, Kant wrote: "By 'moral faith' I mean the unconditioned trust in Divine Aid, in achieving all the good that, even with our most sincere efforts, lies beyond our power".<sup>73</sup>

By "Divine Aid to achieve the good which lies beyond our power", he does not mean supernatural assistance to act morally. This would be a wrong interpretation for two reasons. First, from G "ought implies can". Secondly, from R, the idea of Means of Grace is rejected as "Schwärmerei". Therefore, he means that in every act of moral willing, faith in the ultimate purpose and value of moral action is implied. Each time a moral agent does what he conceives to be his duty, he is expressing his faith in a Moral Universe under a Moral Governor, and in his own duty as a means of achieving the purpose of

<sup>72</sup> R p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Z p. 81. In the KU p. 146, lines 4-8, the same point is made slightly differently: "Faith, in the plain acceptance of the term is a confidence of attaining a purpose the furtherance of which is a duty, but whose achievement is a thing of which we are unable to perceive the possibility".

that higher power. This makes faith optimistic as against being merely epistemic, because faith is conceived of as possessing an element of hope. Its hope is that it is assisting in an overall purpose by being part of victory in the struggle of good against evil. The ultimate hope is in the victory of the good over the evil principle, and the founding of a kingdom of God upon earth. The meaning of this faith is developed in detail in Books III and IV of R, and the analysis of the content belongs in connection with the question how Kant's faith be described as Christian?

The answer to the question of the nature of the faith implied in willing is this - faith in the outcome of struggle between the good and the evil principle for supremacy over man, and faith that each moral act is helping the Moral governor of the Universe, to achieve His purposes in that struggle.

The third sense in which Kant's faith is moral emerges from the second sense, and also from the rationality of his view of faith. It is best expressed in the contrast between der reine Religionsglaube (pure religious faith) and Churchly faiths.<sup>74</sup> Here again, he makes reference to Christianity. He relates them in this way: "Pure religious faith alone can found a universal Church; for only such rational faith can be believed and shared by everyone; whereas an historical faith, grounded solely on facts can extend its influence no further than tidings of it can reach, subject to circumstances of time and place, and dependent upon such capacity to judge the credibility of such tidings. Yet

74 R Book III.

by reason of a peculiar weakness of human nature pure faith can never be relied upon as much as it deserves, that is a Church cannot be established on it alone".<sup>75</sup>

The distinction is that pure religious faith is moral and is based upon reason. Therefore all men can recognise it. Church faiths are based upon Scriptures or traditions, and are expressed through visible institutions.

The fact that visible institutions exist such as the Churchly faiths of men is because men do not see that "Religion is (subjectively regarded) the recognition of all duties as divine commands".<sup>76</sup> They think that more is required. "It does not enter their heads that when they fulfil their duties to men (themselves and others) they are, by these very acts, performing God's commands, and that it is absolutely impossible to serve God more directly in any other way (since they can affect and have influence upon earthly beings alone and not upon God .....)" <sup>77</sup> Because of such a lack of discernment, there arises "the concept of a religion of divine worship (Gottesdienstliche) instead of the concept of a religion purely moral".<sup>78</sup>

Kant is arguing that if the question of how God is to be honoured is to be answered in a way universally valid for all men, then morality is the only imperative universally recognisable. The rules and regulations of

<sup>75</sup> R p. 94.

<sup>76</sup> R p. 142.

<sup>77</sup> R p. 94.

<sup>78</sup> R p. 94.

particular church faiths may be acceptable to their adherents or followers, as based upon some revelation or scriptural authority. However, they can never be regarded as authoritative or binding upon all men. The demands of duty in contrast, may be seen as universally authoritative. Therefore, Kant proceeds to the logical limit of this line of thought and claims that "whatever, over and above good life conduct, man fancies that he can do to become well pleasing to God is mere religious illusion and pseudo-service of God".<sup>79</sup> This is so because ".... pure religious faith is concerned only with what constitutes the essence of reverence for God, namely obedience, ensuing from the moral disposition to all duties as His commands".<sup>80</sup>

Pure religious faith is moral then, in that its expression is found in a life lived in accordance with the moral demand. This happens because religion is understood as duty seen as Divine command.

A strong argument in favour of this view is that it is possible to criticise all historic traditions of faith from the standpoint of a higher canon of judgement, to which all may be equally subjected. This criterion can claim the highest characteristic of universality. Kant states this by saying that all churchly faiths have as their 'Highest Interpreter', pure religious faith.

He argues that all ecclesiastical structures have

79 R p. 158.

80 R p. 96.

within them some form of religious dictatorship,<sup>81</sup> and this gives them their characteristic feature as churchly faiths.

A church, dominated by 'spiritual fathers' of any form, whether one might suppose a prelate upholding the authority of tradition, or a preacher affirming the authority of the written word of Scripture, is a Church of fetish-worshippers. "In this condition is always found ..... instead of principles of morality, statutory commands, rules of faith and observance".<sup>82</sup> In such organisations, the rules of the organisation are substituted for the principles of morality. Therefore, the conduct of the organisation may be criticised on moral grounds. This point seems to be valid and justifiable. It may be expressed in a number of ways. It may be affirmed quite simply that conscience should be the only guide in matters of faith.<sup>83</sup> Alternatively, it may be argued from history for example, that while the torturers of the Spanish Inquisition may have been doing what they thought was right, within of course the limits of their understanding as members of a statutory faith, they may be judged on moral grounds. It can be asked if they acted from conscience, or from a complete lack of

<sup>81</sup> "The name (*παιτήριον*), signifying merely the authority of a spiritual father (*παιτήρ*) possess a censorious meaning as well, only because of the attendant concept of a spiritual despotism, to be found in all forms of ecclesiasticism, however unpretentious and popular they may declare themselves to be". R p. 165.

<sup>82</sup> R p. 167-168.

<sup>83</sup> R p. 172.

conscience? They may have been acting on the instructions of their superiors, who in turn may have been acting upon a claim of divine authority for their position. But would the moral law itself not condemn the acts perpetrated, and would not the moral law within Scripture require to be ignored or subordinated in order to claim that these acts were right?

Or perhaps an instance may be quoted from the Bible itself. Does the incident of Abraham and Isaac <sup>84</sup> not suggest the question that although he felt commanded by God to perform the sacrifice, may he not also have felt that it was morally wrong? Is this not in fact a proper and legitimate explanation of the action of Abraham in not sacrificing his son? While scholars may argue that the story was written to assist in the process of preventing the practice of infant sacrifice arising within the religion of Israel, surely it could be argued that it was on moral grounds that the prophets objected to the practice? Therefore the moral significance of the narrative becomes its most important feature.

Kant suggests the following test to all leaders of churchly faiths: "Let the author of a creed or the teacher of a church, yea, let every man, so far as he is inwardly to acknowledge a conviction regarding dogmas as divine revelations ask himself: Do you really trust yourself to assert the truth of these dogmas in the sight of Him who knows the heart and at the risk of losing all that is valuable and holy to you?" <sup>85</sup>

Kant's contention is that the laws of morality of which all men are aware, may be their guide when forming

<sup>84</sup> Genesis 22: 1-14.

<sup>85</sup> R p. 177-178.

attitudes to matters of belief, and conscience may be the judge of alleged revelation from God. Kant thus not only emphasises the contrast between pure religious faith and all churchly faiths, but based upon the fact that churchly faiths and their activities have been susceptible to criticism in the light of reason and morality, in the past, he is saying that pure religious faith is the judge of all historical churchly faiths.

There is however a need for these churchly faiths, a need which lies within men themselves. However, they have no claim to ultimacy or universality: "We have noted that a Church dispenses with the most important mark of truth, namely a rightful claim to universality when it bases itself upon a revealed faith ..... yet because of the natural need and desire of all men for something tenable, and for a confirmation of some sort from experience of the highest concepts and grounds of reason (a need which really must be taken into account when the universal dissemination of a faith is contemplated) some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually to be found at hand, must be utilised".<sup>86</sup>

In other words, the pure religion of reason requires some kind of vehicle upon which it may be conveyed to men. However, once they have received it and appropriated it, the faith can then maintain itself upon rational grounds alone, without such a vehicle for its expression. The moral and rational grounds are the marks of universality which belong only to pure religious faith. Churchly faiths do not have these characteristics. Therefore, while there is a need for these churchly faiths to exist,

the need is limited, and their function limited also. The churchly faiths themselves also stand under the judgement of pure religious faith.

These considerations clarify the third sense in which Kant's faith is "moral faith". This third sense has two distinct aspects to it. The first is that morality is the critic of all religious institutions. The pure moral faith of reason can stand in judgement of all historical religious organisations, because it is the highest interpreter of all religious faiths.

The second aspect of this particular characterisation of Kant's faith as moral faith lies in the implication which becomes gradually more and more explicit in the working out of the content of the faith in R that pure religious faith as the highest interpreter of all churchly faiths, founded as it is upon moral experience, is the only universal faith possible for all men. The development of this concept of the Universality of Kant's faith which takes place in R presents interesting possibilities which will be discussed. However, for the present, and in conclusion, to summarise Kant's position - Kant's pure moral faith of reason is the essential rationality developed in the KPV and its moral aspects are developed in R, particularly in light of the enlarged view of freedom as a choice between good and evil. Morality is regarded as a form of rationality, and reason has an ethical aspect. This mode of rationality leads however to faith rather than to knowledge.

The different aspects of the moral significance of Kant's faith have been developed. It now remains to determine the relation of this faith to Christian faith,

and as been suggested, it is my view that Kant's claim that his pure moral faith of reason possesses the characteristic of universal validity for all men may be interpreted as a claim for a Christian universalism based on morality. These two related problems must now be considered.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**"GLAUBENSSACHEN UND GLAUBENSARTIKEL"**

Having given more precise meaning to Kant's concept of the pure moral faith of reason than the bare terms imply, the way is paved for the final stage of the enquiry. However, this stage presents the most complications. The basic question being asked is straightforward enough: "Can Kant's faith be described, in any proper usage of the term, as 'Christian'?"

While the question might be simple enough, the answer is not so easy. There are a number of ways in which the problem might be posed. The term faith, in ecclesiastical circles and in theological circles is usually taken as meaning the traditionally handed on 'Faith of the Church'. It then refers to the doctrines and dogmas which have been seen, through the centuries, to be the central doctrines of the Christian faith. The Apostle's Creed<sup>1</sup> is a good example of a very ancient formulation of 'Church Faith'.

<sup>1</sup> "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost  
Born of the Virgin Mary  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate  
Was crucified dead and buried  
The third day He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven  
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty  
From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church  
The Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins  
The Resurrection of the body  
And the Life everlasting".

The commentary on the Creed by the conservative theologian Karl Barth is appropriately called The Faith of the Church (English translation - Fontana 1960)

The Creed is a straightforward collection of articles of Christian belief, and its recitation is the Church expressing its Faith. Often it is referred to as "der Glaube" - the belief, or the faith.

In light of this we might ask: "Does Kant's concept of faith have any dogmatic content which resembles this array of Christian theological concepts?" Or alternatively: "Does Kant's view of Faith resemble the view of faith implied by, or enshrined in a collection of statements such as the Apostle's Creed?" Or again more simply and directly: "In any references to any of the articles of the Creed, does Kant indicate his belief or disbelief in any or all of them?"

These questions would be a direct assault on the problem. This would be a simple enough line of action, but I think neither fair nor fruitful. It would lead to a recitation of pieces of Kant's writings, and quotations of extracts, and the dangers of this would be that an overall perspective was lost in the process. It was this kind of piecemeal interpretation which lead to the circumstances of the historical controversy surrounding the publication of R in 1793.

The Lutheran Church in Prussia in Kant's own day found difficulty in affording any official recognition to his views. The second part of R was not satisfactory to the censorship board, and Kant was forbidden to publish it. The details of the incident are not irrelevant. The office of Minister of Public Worship and Education was occupied by von Zedlitz, during the reign of Frederick the Great. He had pursued a policy of free thought and Kant would have had no conflict with

him. Two years after the accession of Frederick William II ( in 1786 ), the office was taken over by Wöllner, a known bitter opponent of the Aufklärung. He was an ex-priest who was associated with the pseudo-mystical and (both theologically and politically) conservative movement called 'Rosicrucianism'.

On 9th July, 1788, a royal edict was issued which declared that all 'unorthodox' teachers of subjects bearing on religion would be removed from either their academic chairs or their pulpits. All books dealing with such matters were henceforth to be submitted to a commission which was set up in 1791, consisting of three members with most extensive powers of censorship. They were to examine with authority the doctrines of school teachers, university lecturers and professors and parish priests of the Lutheran Church.

Kant submitted his essay on 'Radical Evil' to the Berlin Commission, although the work had been published in Jena. This was passed as being philosophical, and mainly for scholars. It then appeared in the 'Berlinische Monatsschrift' (April 1792). However, when he submitted the second part of R, approval was not given.

A member of the commission called Hillmer objected on the grounds that it ventured into 'biblical theology'. Hermes, another member of the commission, supported Hillmer, and Kant was refused permission to publish the essay because, it was claimed, in it, he controverted the teaching of the Bible. Kant, however, completed his work, and asked for the approval of the Faculty of Theology at Königsberg to publish the book. This was duly granted. In 1793, R was published in its first

edition.

In fact, Frederick William's censors charged Kant with formally 'depreciating Christianity', and in a letter to him, Frederick William made this point: "..... Our All-highest Person has noticed for some time with great displeasure how you abuse your philosophy for the distortion and depreciation of certain fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture and Christianity, especially in your book 'Religion &c/' but similarly in other short treatises ....."<sup>2</sup>

To this Kant made a respectful reply, and as his defence, offered the following argument: "As the said book contains no appreciation of Christianity it could not be guilty of depreciation. By quoting of Biblical passages to confirm certain doctrines of natural religion may have given rise to this misinterpretation. I have expressed my great esteem for the Biblical doctrine of faith and praised the Bible as the best available guide for public religious teaching. I see in the accord between Christianity and the purest rational faith, its most permanent eulogy; by this accord, and not by historical scholarship, can an often degenerated Christianity always be regenerated".<sup>3</sup>

Leaving Kant's reply for the moment, the attitude of the Commission and the attitude of Frederick William are both based upon Kant's handling of certain Biblical passages. There is no doubt that from the point of view of orthodox theology, Kant's use of certain texts taken in isolation suggest at least dubiously Christian notions, if not explicitly heretical opinions.

<sup>2</sup> letter 1st October 1794 (Quoted by Kant in "Der Streit" tr. GR p. 328)

<sup>3</sup> GR p. 329.

This fact has been fastened on to by a number of writers. For example, John Oman quite openly accuses Kant and all the rationalists of Pelagianism in respect of their doctrine of evil.<sup>4</sup> He also quite explicitly contrasts the moral attitudes of Kant to the Augustinian doctrine of grace, and by implication, places Kant in the Pelagian camp.<sup>5</sup>

Friedrich Delektat, in a discussion of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, in a book on Kant, describes Kant's basic position as Gnostic, and his treatment of the historical life of Jesus as Docetic.<sup>6</sup>

While there may be detailed justification for these charges, depending upon readings of individual texts, if all these charges were substantiated, Kant's final attitude to religion (i.e. Christianity) could be summed up as either simple depreciation or a coagulation of heresies. It could be said that either he had rejected Biblical belief, or that he was guilty of Pelagianism, Gnosticism, Docetism, and I rather suspect that a case

4 Oman Grace & Personality p. 29 (Fontana 1962)

5 Oman op. cit. p. 59.

6 Friedrich Delektat Immanuel Kant (Quelle & Meyer, Heidelberg 1963) p. 353.

"The history of dogma calls Docetic the Christology of those Gnostics who deny that Christ has a terrestrial body and by this they understand the divine man as a mythological principle. The fact that Kant's doctrine of the divine man points in the same direction is clearly shown by the passage 'On the legal claim of the principle of evil for the power over man and on the struggle between both principles'. The life of Jesus in this passage is described in the form of a myth".

could be made out for him having Arian tendencies also! Is it theologically possible for one man to be guilty of so many heresies at the one time and all within the one document? Given selective reading of the book, and taking the use of Biblical quotations as expositions in context and not illustrations, this might be possible.

How then is it possible to discern whether or not Kant's conception of Faith had anything in common with Christian Faith? It would appear that Kant is trapped every way into some form of, at least, a Christian position. First, if his references to the Bible were altogether omitted, then his work would be one of ethical relativism, or ethical theism, with perhaps the theism fundamentally superfluous. If his use of Biblical texts is taken in the sense of the Commission or Frederick William, Kant becomes either a heretic at least or an opponent of Christianity at worst. In fact, many of the sceptics of his day rejected him because of his apparent affiliation with Christianity. This affiliation, the officials of the Church would not recognise! Neither wished to recognise his thought as belonging to their 'camp', so to speak.

This, of course, raises a question, namely 'Did Kant fall between two stools?' or 'Did he run with the hares and hunt with the hounds?', which would be a more cynical way of stating the problem. Again for an answer, we must turn to Kant himself. His defence to Frederick William was that he was examining certain religious concepts from within his philosophical terms of reference. But ultimately, he was concerned about Christianity, and in

that reply, explained that he was offering a means of regenerating Christianity.

To set Kant's own thought into perspective here, it is useful to connect two things. First, there is the distinction already discussed between Glaubenssachen and Glaubensartikel.<sup>7</sup> Second, there is his comment about the possible compatibility of the pure religion of reason and a historical revelation, given certain conditions.<sup>8</sup>

First, the distinction between Glaubenssachen and Glaubensartikel: "Being a matter of faith does not make a thing an article of faith, if by articles of faith we mean such matters of faith as one can be bound to acknowledge, inwardly or outwardly - a kind therefore that does not enter into natural theology. For, being matters of faith, they cannot, like matters of fact, depend upon theoretical proofs, and therefore the assurance is a free assurance, and it is only as such that it is compatible with the morality of the subject".<sup>9</sup>

Only the objects of pure reason, claims Kant, may be matters of faith. God, freedom and immortality are these. The nature of assurance about them is moral, not theoretical. Articles of faith, however, would belong to the province of Biblical theology, with which Kant declares that he is not dealing. Articles of faith are therefore not the subjects of natural theology.

However, Kant was also aware that Glaubenssachen

7 KU p. 140.

8 Preface to 2nd Edition of R

9 KU footnote p. 143.

and Glaubensartikel may not be entirely prised apart.

In the introductory Preface to the Second Edition of R he recognises the "wider sphere" of faith, which includes the narrower sense of faith as based upon pure reason: The broader sense is that of the 'churchly faith' based upon revelations: "From this standpoint, I can make a second experiment, namely, to start from some alleged revelation or other and, leaving out of consideration the pure religion of reason (so far as it constitutes a self-sufficient system) to examine in a fragmentary manner, this revelation, as an historical system, in the light of moral concepts; and then to see whether it does not lead back to the very same pure rational system of religion. The latter, though not from the theoretical point of view ..... may yet, from the morally practical standpoint, <sup>be self sufficient for genuine religion</sup> which indeed, as a rational concept a priori (remaining after everything empirical has been taken away) obtains only in this (morally practical) relation".<sup>10</sup>

Having suggested that he should take some revealed faith, and by this, it is safe to presume he was referring to Christianity, he then proceeds to anticipate the following interesting result: "If this experiment is successful we shall be able to say that reason can be found to be not only compatible with Scripture, but also at one with it, so that he who follows one (under guidance of moral concepts) will not fail to conform to the other. Were this not so, we should have either two religions in one individual, which is absurd, or else one religion and one cult, in which case, since the second is not

(like religion) an end in itself but only possesses value as a means, they would often have to be shaken up together, that they might, for a short while, be united".<sup>11</sup>

Kant is claiming that his pure religion of reason, the pure rational moral faith, should not be inconsistent with faith based upon revelation. Therefore, while Glaubenssachen and Glaubensartikel are quite distinct expressions of faith, they should not stand in contradiction to one another.

What does this imply? Taken at face value, it means that a philosophical evaluation of Biblical concepts (if carried out in moral categories) should not produce a refutation of such a faith. It should produce the view that pure moral faith is contained in Biblical thought. The faith in the Biblical revelation of Christ should not be inconsistent with the pure moral faith of reason. This would imply that Biblical revelation must contain some approximation to pure rational faith, or even enshrine it at its heart. If so, and remembering that pure moral faith can be rationally substantiated, then Kant is implicitly saying that the basis of Christian revelation, understood, in moral categories, may be proved by reason!

While he was not evaluating the concept of Christian Faith, as delivered through Scripture, he was offering a rational justification for certain Christian doctrines, as understood with regard to their ethical significance. This would justify his claim to have offered a way of regenerating Christianity, and his claim to have been trying to make Christianity more acceptable to the

intelligent and the uncommitted.

The pure moral faith of reason is the source of this justification, and it makes justification possible. Does this make faith based upon revelation superfluous? On this point, Kant is mute. But certainly the pure moral faith of reason can be defended, and this is the basis for the defence of Biblical concepts.

It is now possible to make two apparently contradictory statements about Kant's faith in relation to Christian revelation. First, having rejected as criteria of revelation any objective proofs, he submitted pure moral faith as a possible candidate for the title 'defender of the faith'. That is to say, he is offering what amounts to a subjective proof of what are claimed to be objectively true concepts.

This statement is not so paradoxical when considered carefully. But it merely reflects the situation Kant found himself in when he drew severe limits round knowledge, to make himself look almost like an agnostic. It was at this point, he introduced the concept of practical reason, in order to speak about ideas which otherwise would admit of no discussion. He thus moved from rational speculative theology to rational faith. This rational faith he now placed at the service of Christian theology.

The significance of Kant's move from rationalist theology to rational faith in this situation may be usefully described by means of Kant's own self-styled 'Copernican Revolution'. This was the title he gave to the philosophical revolution which he claimed to have

instituted. Copernicus substituted the heliocentric for the geocentric point of view: "failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved round the spectator, he tried whether or not he might have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest".<sup>12</sup>

Thus Kant interpreted the work of Copernicus. His own philosophical revolution, he claimed, followed the same principle: "Hitherto, it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concept, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge".<sup>13</sup>

"Copernicus ..... dared in a manner contradictory of the senses and yet true, to seek the observed movements not in the heavenly bodies, but in the spectator .....",<sup>14</sup> and similarly, Kant tried to find the explicit orderly structure of nature not in the external world itself, but within the spectator, in the structure of the apprehending mind.

In both Kant and Copernicus, we are being offered an explanation, in terms of the subject, of that which to the senses had appeared both objective and external.

<sup>12</sup> KRV B xvi.

<sup>13</sup> KRV B xvi.

<sup>14</sup> KRV B xxii (footnote)

This hypothesis helps to clarify the standpoint which Kant is adopting. Man becomes a spectator, within existence, and the world exists for him only as he is able to apprehend it. There is no objective knowledge, or objective world which he may discover. His knowledge is limited to himself, and everything he apprehends is governed by this fact.

The significance of the Kantian departure from the then traditional ways of thinking is described by Heidegger as the "structure of traditional metaphysics" undergoing its "first and most profound shock".<sup>15</sup> The Aristotelian view that insight into things was gained by focusing upon that which was to be known had been called into question. Kant had reversed the common sense view of the relationship between the knowing subject and the object known, because he located the ground of any knowledge within the knowing subject. If the object is to be known, it must conform to the requirements of the knower.

Where then does faith come in? Kant is acting on the principle that just as the ground of knowledge must lie within the knowing subject, the GROUND OF FAITH lies within the believer. God, freedom and immortality, the matters of Faith are introduced under the domain of practical reason. They arise necessarily out of the nature of moral experience.

By implication from the analogy of the Copernican Revolution, faith must conform to moral experience, which in fact is the implicit argument of the KPV. Kant introduces discussion of God, freedom and morality, because they are morally necessary concepts. It is not

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics  
tr. Churchill (Indiana Press 1962) p. 16.

surprising then to find that Kant's evaluation of all Biblical concepts is made on moral considerations, because of the moral necessity of objects of pure rational faith.

Having said all this, in possible answer to the original question as to the relation between Kant's faith and Christian theology (putting the problem in its broadest possible terms) there are only two alternatives. I have ruled out the point by point comparison of for example, the doctrines of the Apostle's Creed with Kant's references to any such doctrines in R, because it could lead to Kant being accused of a multiplicity of heresies, through considering his words out of the context of his general purpose.

Therefore, taking his view as a whole, and taking note of his Copernican Revolution, either Kant, through his pure moral faith was attempting to reduce Christianity to a simple ethical theism, or he was using ethical theism (if his pure moral faith of reason may be so succinctly characterised), as a basis for a Christian universalism.

This latter alternative, however difficult to defend appears to me to be most consistent with all that Kant says in his books in his letters, and with the whole spirit of R. While his idea of a Christian universalism may not be the ideal of many, I hold the view that his was an attempt, similar to many made in the history of Christianity to interpret the Christian revelation in terms which transcend historical particularities, and which make Christian faith more plausible by setting it into a universal context. Throughout its long history,

Christianity has been expressed in many terminologies and has been expounded through many different systems of thought. Broadly speaking, these can be classified into two main groups. There are those which are conservative in that they have tied themselves quite firmly and rigidly to the thought forms of the New Testament. They admit little variance or reinterpretation for succeeding generations, of ideas which become inevitably dated. Such groups feel basically that the battle for Christian 'victory' may be fought within the frontiers of traditional or 'orthodox' thought, and in the terms which Christianity makes. Even in the 20thC, representatives of this attitude remain a powerful wing of the Christian tradition. Such thinkers are basically exclusivist in their attitude of thought which they claim is alien to the New Testament understanding of Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

The other main element of thought in the Christian tradition may be broadly described as liberal and inclusivist. There is a great range of possibility in what may be called liberal or non-exclusivist thought. However, all the possibilities stem from the common principle that Christian thought not only is capable of, but also requires expression in alien and non-Christian terms, in order to continue to be meaningful.

The former position makes certain questionable assumptions. First it over readily assumes that there

<sup>16</sup> In the 20thC, the general contrast may be illustrated by comparing the Christological exclusiveness of Karl Barth with the willingness of Rudolf Bultmann to make the analytic of Dasein in Heidegger the existential framework for his exposition of Christian faith.

is such a thing as 'orthodox belief' openly and easily known, and that this may be easily elicited from Scripture. Further it is assumed that Scripture itself presents such a plain statement of the essentials as may be conveniently transmitted, without too much thought, to a believer. It is also taken for granted that Scripture is both consistent and uniform in its statement of such ideas. Therefore, since the heart of the Christian Faith consists in timeless truths, plainly set forth, there is little need for either theology or philosophy of religion.

This was basically the view of the pietist group which opposed Kant's publication of the second part of R.

Biblical scholarship itself, without any theological considerations, has proved the utter naivete of that view. For example, the differences between the terminology of Pauline and Johannine theology represent an important difference in emphasis. While Paul's account of Christ centres upon the significance of His death, John interprets His significance starting from the Incarnation. Interestingly enough, neither mention the Virgin Birth. These facts surely pose questions.

Further to that, two different traditions of Christianity emerged and developed, not perhaps from the specific difference between Paul and John, but from the different cultural background which their particular differences represented. The Eastern Church's theology was dominated by the concept of *λογος* and of course this 'incarnational' preoccupation lead to the great Christological controversies which raged over many centuries. The Western Church, however, which developed

an emphasis upon the mass and the sacrificial death of Christ was dominated more by the legal demands of the Roman mind, and the necessary Jewish concept of the atonement to meet that demand. This distinction has been well documented by both historians<sup>17</sup> and theologians.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that such a distinction exists must be attributed to the different cultural settings in which Christianity has found itself. Its desire to communicate has compelled it to look into the riches of its Sacred literature to see if a meaningful set of ideas may be extracted to serve as a medium for communication in this situation or that. Often, some theological emphasis of the New Testament has been used. However, this has not always been possible. Even the great Christological debates were conducted, in the main, by means of non-biblical language. This fact represents the basic problem: 'How is the basic message of Christianity to be communicated where the presuppositions of Biblical thought are either not known or not accepted?' 'How can the Christian Faith's insights be transmitted in a situation where some of the key philosophical notions behind the expression of its doctrines are not understood?'

It is in answer to this problem that most of the

17 L.W. Grenstead Doctrine of the Atonement Ch. IV p. 56 and Ch. V p. 83. (Manchester UP 1962)  
Hans Lietzmann History of the Early Church Vol. III p. 107 ff. (Meridian Books 1961)

18 A.H. Fairbairn Christ in Modern Theology (Hodder & Stoughton 1893) p. 74 §II The Greek & Latin Father's (cf. p. 78 - 110).  
Sydney Cave Doctrine of the Person of Christ (Duckworth 1962) Ch. IV p. 88 Ch. V p. 122.

'heresies' within Christianity's history have arisen - not perhaps all, but certainly a great many. In the main they have been attempts to express the significance of Christ or Christian Faith in language which is based on different philosophical structures from those in the New Testament. It could be argued, that why his doctrine may have given rise to disputes, is because John in speaking of Christ as *λογος* 19, was bringing into Christian thought the alien tradition of Greek philosophy. Therefore, while it is neither competent or essentially relevant to argue the case here, it is of interest to note in the passing, that a case could be made that the New Testament itself, is an experiment in conceptual translation which has given rise to internal conflict.

I would like to suggest that there is within the corpus Christianorum, and always has been, a dialectical tension between these two positions - on the one hand, those who have tried to take Christianity into the world by translating its insights into conceptually speaking, foreign languages. Their intent has been to liberate Christian thought into a 'universal' context. On the other, there have been those who have tried to restrain such liberation by either repressing such expressions or by extending the frontiers of Christian thought as they see it so that it becomes the norm of all thought.

The Mediaeval Church is an example of Christian thought being the basis of society. This explains the inevitable repression of science in the Middle Ages, and even the rejection of Copernicus theory, because it conflicted with one point in a closed system of thought.

19 John 1:1-14.

The Reformation attempted to re-express Christianity in terms of the Renaissance learning, and it could achieve this because the basic thought forms of the Mediaeval Christian church was a premise from which the reformers could commence with confidence.

Immanuel Kant lived at a later era of history, when the presuppositions of the Reformation thinkers could not be taken for granted. He lived in the age when learning was advancing rapidly, and when science in particular was raising questions for Faith. The Church in Kant's day appeared to be offering merely authoritative statements of belief, and demanding of its members the surrender of intellectual integrity.

Kant saw two things. First he recognised the value of Christianity itself, and believed in certain basic items of faith. However, he was also aware of the utter absurdity of speaking to intelligent people in 'mythological' thought forms. Added to these two points was his doctrine of practical reason and the primacy of ethical experience. In this he saw a universal language for expressing Christian Faith to an age which did not share the Weltanschauung of the Scriptures. Naturally, he assumed that Scripture would not ultimately conflict with the pure moral faith of reason. To set his position in sharp relief, and to distinguish the subjectivity of moral experience as the ground of religious faith from subjective 'religious' experience, he rejected all attempts to objectively (or in this latter sense, subjectively) prove Christianity. He discovered another species of assurance in matters of Faith - moral assurance. This is the key to his Christian universalism - the facts

of moral experience, and the necessary concepts which arise from it, in order to give it meaning. I would argue that the desire for a Christian universalism is in itself Biblical. The tension within Christianity I have described in fact originates within the New Testament itself because it grew up within the New Testament Church. It is this fact which makes it possible to argue that Kant was seeking to express a Christian universalism.

These words from St. Paul provide a good illustration: "For we see divine retribution revealed from heaven and falling upon the godless wickedness of men. In their wickedness they are stifling the truth. For all that may be known of God by men lies plain visible before their eyes; indeed God has disclosed it to them. His invisible attributes, that is to say His everlasting power and deity, have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made".<sup>20</sup>

This passage from St. Paul is not to be taken in isolation, but along with, for example, part of his reported address to the people at Lystra: "The good news we bring you tells you to turn from these follies to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In past ages he allowed all nations to go their own way; and yet He has not left you without some clue to his nature, in the kindness he shows: he sends you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons, and he gives you food and good cheer in plenty".<sup>21</sup>

In these two passages, Paul is clearly appealing

<sup>20</sup> Romans 1:18-20 (N.E.B.)

<sup>21</sup> Acts 14:16-17.

to his hearers on grounds which are distinct from those provided by revelation.<sup>22</sup> Paul is definitely approaching the proclamation of the Gospel by first engaging in a piece of natural theology. Perhaps his most outstanding effort in this direction was in his sermon to the philosophers on Mars Hill in Athens. Here he begins by referring to the "Altar to the unknown God", and through natural theology offers conceptual content and then positive identification with the God who raises the dead.<sup>23</sup>

However, the fact that Paul speaks this way illustrates the tension even within his own thought, and which certainly is alive in the entire New Testament. One practical expression of it was in the question of admitting Gentiles to the early Church.<sup>24</sup> This debate raged around the issue of whether Gentiles could be admitted directly, without first becoming Jews. When Paul had won that victory, in fact he had universalised the ethical insights of Judaism by interpreting them through the symbolic figure of Christ, whom he then interpreted in the context of an even greater universalism<sup>25</sup>: "He is the image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things. In Him everything in heaven and earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible order of thrones, sovereignties, authorities,

<sup>22</sup> Acts 17: 22-31.

<sup>23</sup> C.H. Dodd (Moffat Commentary on Acts 1:18, "There is no other passage where Paul so explicitly recognises natural religion as a fundamental truth of human nature".

<sup>24</sup> Acts 15 documents the debate in the Church after Paul and Barnabas returned from their journey to Asia Minor, where they had been baptising non-Jews. The council decided in their favour.

<sup>25</sup> Colossians 1:15-20 (N.E.B.)

and powers: the whole universe has been created through Him and for Him. And he exists before everything, and all things are held together in Him. He is moreover, the Head of the body, the Church. He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme. For in Him, the complete Being of God, by God's own choice came to dwell. Through Him, God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross - to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven through Him alone".

The breadth of thought within this passage speaks eloquently for itself of Paul's cosmic conception of Christ.

The significance of St. Paul's situation is well summarised by Paul Tillich when he says: "Paul is in a situation which is typical of all later developments. He has to fight on two fronts - against the legalism of Christianised Jews and against the libertinism of Christianised pagans. He has to defend the new principle revealed in the appearance of Christ. But as always defence narrows down. So his first condemnations are uttered against Christian distorters of his message; anathemas are always directed against Christians, not against other religions or their members. With respect to other religions, he makes the assertion unheard of for a Jew, that Jews and Pagans are equally under the bondage of sin and equally in need of salvation - a salvation which comes not from a new religion, the Christian, but from an event in history which judges all religions including Christianity".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Tillich Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions p. 33.

With the point established that there is emanating from New Testament writings and New Testament times, a tension within Christianity about how it should express itself to the world, between universalists and conservatives (as these groups have been earlier characterised), it remains to see what grounds there are for affirming that Kant's conception of faith can be classified among that of the universalists.

When Kant refers to Christian dogmatic theological concepts, he introduces them either with reference to, or interprets them in the light of the very important consequences of his enlarged doctrine of freedom - namely, in the context of the struggle between the Good and the Evil principles for supremacy over man. Consider the title of Book II: "Von dem Kampf des guten Princips, mit dem bösen um die Herrschaft über den Menschen"<sup>27</sup> - which Hudson and Green translate as "Concerning the Conflict of the Good with the Evil Principle for sovereignty over man". The second section of Book II deals in detail with the concept of der Kampf, the moral struggle.

Using the Biblical account of the Fall Kant begins: "Holy Scripture (the Christian portion) sets forth this (i.e. the struggle) intelligible moral relationship in the form of a narrative, in which two principles in man, as opposed to one another as is heaven to hell, are represented as persons outside him; who not only pit their strength against each other, but also seek (the one as man's accuser, the other as his advocate) to establish their claims legally as though before a supreme judge".<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> R p. 50.

<sup>28</sup> R p. 73.

The way that Kant states this implies two things. First, that the conflict between the two principles is not only the key to understanding Scripture, second, that the Christian documents, when speaking of the struggle in the form of a narrative are not expounding the moral conflict, but rather, the moral conflict affords us a means whereby we may expound Scripture. The narrative is couched in the language of a legal discourse over property involving God, man and the Devil as parties to the action. Man was "originally constituted proprietor of all the goods of the earth".<sup>29</sup> This proprietorship was in effect a tenancy (dominium utile) with God as Dominus Directus. Then appears some being, originally good, but mysteriously corrupted, who wishes to have dominion over spiritual nature upon earth. He has already been dispossessed of his heavenly estate. He caused man's first parents to be disloyal to their overlord and therefore dependent upon himself. He sets himself up as prince of this world, and as proprietor of the goods of this earth.

God could have annihilated this being, but the Supreme wisdom left man to exercise the principle of his freedom so that the good or evil that befalls him is imputable to himself: "A kingdom of evil was thus set up in defiance of the good principle, a kingdom to which all men descended in natural wise from Adam became subject, and this too, with their own consent, since the false

<sup>29</sup> R p. 73 Genesis 1:28 "God blessed them and said to them 'Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth'." NEB.

show of this world's goods lured their gaze from the abyss of destruction for which they were reserved".<sup>30</sup>

Kant moves on through the Old Testament arguing that the good principle maintained its claim to lordship through the Jewish system of theocratic government, ordained for the honouring of the Name of God. Unfortunately, however, the system was dominated by the outlook of rewards and punishment within this life. Therefore this world's values dominated it and consequently, the system became characterised by shallow external observance. Compulsion and external sanctions were required to obtain conformity. The inner essence of the moral disposition, although kept alive by the prophets, was not taken seriously at all.

Then, at a suitable time, when the influence of Greek philosophy and its doctrine of freedom had become fused with Hebrew thought, there appeared in the world "a person whose wisdom was purer even than that of previous philosophers as pure as though it had descended from heaven. This person proclaimed himself indeed as truly human, with respect to his teaching and example, yet also an envoy of heaven, who through an original innocence was not involved in the bargain with the evil principle ....."<sup>31</sup> The Devil tried to bargain with him, but to no avail, and so he set about persecuting this person. This took place as a physical occurrence in which this person was killed.

Viewed legally, in terms of the principles and their struggle, the death of this person was a manifestation of the good principle, of humanity in its moral perfection giving an example for all to emulate.

A hint at Kant's universality comes when he comments

<sup>30</sup> R p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> R p. 74-75.

that the one historical appearance of Christ should not be read in any exclusivist manner: "Yet the good principle has descended in mysterious fashion into humanity not at one particular time alone, but from the first beginnings of the human race (as anyone must grant who considers the holiness of this principle, and the incomprehensibility of a union between it and man's sensible nature in the moral predisposition) and it rightfully has in mankind its first dwelling place".<sup>32</sup>

Here Kant is implying that the historical Christ as the manifestation of the good principle should not be regarded as its only appearance, since whenever men have understood the claims of the good principle, then they have understood what later appeared as a historical manifestation, and which has repeatedly appeared to men, through, of course, the light of moral reason.

Kant then points out that the moral outcome of this battle is not the defeat of the evil principle, because its kingdom still exists and continues, but at least the power to hold men has been destroyed. A moral dominion was then offered to man as an asylum from the evil one, whereby they could find protection for their morality. It also appears that the evil principle is still in the world and still the prince of this world, and that, therefore, those who adhere to the good principles should always be prepared for physical suffering, sacrifices and tribulations as persecutions by the evil principle.

Then comes the explicit statement of principle which

underlies all Kant's exposition: "Once this vivid mode of representation which was in its time probably the only popular one, is divested of its mystical veil (die Hülle) it is easy to see that, for practical purposes its spirit and rational meaning have been valid and binding for the whole world and for all time, since to each man it lies so near at hand that he knows his duty towards it. Its meaning is this: that there exists absolutely no salvation for man apart from the sincerest adoption of genuinely moral principles into his disposition; that what works against this adoption is not so much the sensuous nature, which so often receives the blame, as it is a certain self incurred perversity, or however else one may care to designate this wickedness which the human race has brought upon itself - falsity".<sup>33</sup>

To summarise Kant's position it could be said that he regarded der Kampf as the context and framework in which all human lives are lived. The struggle between these two principles is the key to understanding human behaviour and the necessity for a moral law.

The struggle between the principles is a mythological way of setting forth the implication for all human beings, individually and collectively of the doctrine that their freedom is the freedom to choose between good and evil. The struggle is a personal one, but it is real. Therefore, in any consideration of religious or theological concepts, if they are to be valuable in this life/death struggle, priority must be given to their moral helpfulness. That is to say, we should ask of them "will this or that doctrine or idea be morally helpful in der Kampf?" What

is meant here by helpful? What does it mean to be morally helpful?

I would suggest that to be morally helpful means that the concept concerned would help the mind to better understand the nature of the struggle and how vital it is. It might perhaps also encourage him to adopt the moral disposition and choose against the evil principle. This of course is the purpose of Kant's faith - to give men reason to choose for good.

One major problem must be faced before the implications of this for Kant's faith and its relation to Christian faith can be determined. Can Kant's concept of der Kampf be credited with the description Christian, or perhaps, can Kant be justly accused of Gnosticism? This must be settled before proceeding any further, since this concept appears very important.

This issue is important because the problem of Gnosticism is one form of the general question - how far can Christianity be expressed in alien terminologies without losing its identity? There are two basic views of Gnosticism. There is the view of Burkitt that Gnosticism arose within Christianity since the struggle between early catholic Christians and Gnostic Christians took place as a debate within the Church. Later Gnostics were, through the elaborate cosmologies they introduced and in which they interpreted Christian thought, Burkitt claims, apologists for Christianity. They were re-interpreting Christianity in terms of modern science, that is to say, modern for their day. On Burkitt's reading of Gnosticism, a line of criticism could be developed which would declare as forms of Gnosticism, all attempts to

re-interpret Christianity in contemporary terms. For example, in so far as Rudolph Bultmann tries to express the significance of the freedom which Christ brings to man through the interpretation of Dasein found in the thought of Heidegger, Bultmann could be labelled a modern Gnostic. In so far as Kant then tries to interpret Christianity in terms of a moral struggle, he could be accused of a form of Gnosticism.

Professor Burkitt's view however, is not popular, and a conservative historian and New Testament scholar such as Professor F. F. Bruce tends to side on this issue with Professor Bultmann. However, this does not completely exonerate Kant from the Gnostic charge.

If consideration is given to the basic themes of the Gnostic myth as they are set out by Professor Bultmann<sup>34</sup> himself, certain motifs in common may be observed.

According to Professor Bultmann, basic Gnosticism was a cosmology based upon the myth that certain demonic powers have succeeded in capturing a being from the realm of light, and from thus original cosmic fall resulted the imprisonment of this being in a structure which is the world as we know it. The world is then a place where the heavenly being is imprisoned by the demonic. Salvation comes when another heavenly being in the image of the Most High comes down from the realms of light, appearing on earth, disguised in human form to avoid recognition. He imparts Gnosis to his followers so that they can come after Him in safety. By this he has outwitted the demonic powers and broken up their world. There is added to this the belief that the Redeemer and the pneumatic souls

<sup>34</sup> Bultmann Primitive Christianity (Fontana 1960)  
p. 194-195 ff.

constitute one body and hence whatever happens to Him happens to them.

Prima facie, it is clear that in some ways, Kant's ideas resemble the Gnostic myth, but not of course completely. His conception of der Kampf, while based upon the Old Testament myth, undoubtedly resembles the Gnostic myth. The manner in which his view of the Son of God resembles the heavenly being who defeated the demonic is clearly reminiscent of Gnosticism. When Kant declares that the descent of the good principle is not a conquering of the evil principle, but a breaking of its power to hold men against their will, he appears to be following the Gnostic myth.

However, other comments could be made about Kant's concept of der Kampf. The way in which Kant speaks of this conflict between two forces, implies the use of a metaphysical dualism, which is not a characteristically Biblical viewpoint. Such a dualism in Scripture may be traced to the Zoroastrian period of influence in the Old Testament during the latter period of the Babylonian Exile. The concept of Lucifer falling from heaven, and associated ideas are only a small part of Biblical tradition. The concept of the 'Prince of this world' which Kant uses, does not belong to the New Testament. This is a Gnostic idea. However, at this point it should be remembered that those men of faith in Babylon, were if one could so style them 'Hebrew Gnostics' who were trying to set out the implications of their faith in Yahweh through the media of Persian thought. They used a contemporary epic about a world flood and so on and from this has arisen the problem of interpreting Genesis 1-12.

The fact that different traditions even in Scripture can be examined for their moral insight, and all be seen to set out in their own terminology some concept of a moral struggle within man, would surely confirm Kant's use of the concept of der Kampf rather than require him to be tried for heresy. May not the validity of his methodology be substantiated on the grounds that he is giving Christianity's moral insights expression in a universal language?

Furthermore, it could be argued that Kant's thought contains probably less Gnosticism and more ethical thinking than the New Testament. St. Paul is not free from what could be called Gnostic forms of expression: "I speak God's hidden wisdom, his secret purpose framed from the very beginning to bring us to our full glory. The powers that rule the world have never known it; if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory".<sup>35</sup>

St. Paul is here expressing his thought in at least the terminology of the Gnostic myth. Perhaps further questions might be asked such as 'Is Kenotic theology Gnostic?' 'Is the doctrine of the Body of Christ Gnostic?' 'Is Kant's view of the Church as a moral commonwealth, which is close to the Old Testament ideal for Israel, less under Gnostic influence than the New Testament idea of the Church, as, for example, the Body of Christ?' One might even go further and ask 'Is the New Testament idea of the Church not simply a Gnostic creation, and in contradiction to Jesus' idea of a Kingdom of God?' The implication of this, if answered in the

<sup>35</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8 NEB. Bultmann op. cit. p. 233.

affirmative might be that Kant was nearer to the intended teachings of Jesus than much of the New Testament!

The Johannine doctrine of the Logos, which featured so strongly in early Christian thought, was a doctrine based upon one of the most universally recognised concepts of the era. John 1:1-14 certainly also contains traces of the Gnostic myth. Therefore, the New Testament writers did not shrink to borrow from a variety of contexts, thoughts in which they could express their insights.

The purpose of this apparent digression is not to throw dust in the air to blind the observer, but to illustrate two points. First, that some early Christian writers wrote in a 'universalist' frame of mind, making use of the concepts which had universal currency in the period. Secondly, Gnostic mythology and terminology as used in the New Testament writings should be accepted in the same way that Zoroastrian influence and concepts were used to express the thoughts of Old Testament writers. Since Kant in many respects appears to draw on both, which may indicate little more than that he was aware of the framework of discussion in both Testaments, his views should not be regarded as suspect because *prima facie*, he appears to be tinged with Gnosticism.

It is only just to examine Kant's thought in its entirety. Taking sections in isolation (such as the concept of der Kampf) can lead to misunderstanding. This, I have claimed, was the error in method adopted by the Commission which attacked Kant's writings on religion.

Therefore, Kant's ethical principle<sup>36</sup> for interpreting the Bible and dogma cannot be ruled out as being any way contrary to Christian Faith. In fact, certain aspects of Kant's attitude - his strong emphasis upon the fact that religion is seeing duty as Divine demand, and his insistence upon the need for obedience to the Moral Law to please God - are similar to the message of, for example, the prophet Micah, when he says:

"What shall I bring when I approach the Lord?  
How shall I stoop before God on high?  
Am I to approach Him with whole offerings or yearling calves?  
Will the Lord accept thousands of rams  
Or ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I offer my eldest son for my own wrongdoing?  
My children for my own sin?  
God has told you what is good  
and what it is that the Lord asks of you?  
Only to act justly, to love loyalty,  
to walk wisely before your God".<sup>37</sup>

Allowing for certain differences in general outlook and for the fact that Kant would have maintained that acting justly and loving loyalty was doing one's duty, (which in Kant is walking with God,) the stern ethical

<sup>36</sup> R footnote to p. 101 Kant says "I raise the question as to whether morality should be expounded according to the Bible or whether the Bible should not rather be expounded according to morality". This he suggests because "... the final purpose even of reading these Holy Scriptures ..... is to make men better" II Timothy 3:16 is adduced because it adds that Scripture is 'profitable for doctrine, reproofs, improvement .....' &c.

<sup>37</sup> Micah 6:6-8 NEB.

demand in both Micah and Kant are comparable demands. Micah rejected the ceremonial functions of religion in favour of ethical conduct. Kant's attitude was identical in his rejection of fetish worship, in favour of good life conduct - the only true worship.

Allowing then a close similarity between the Old Testament prophetic religion and the ethics of Kant, the situation becomes interesting when his principle of evaluation is applied to the teaching of Jesus, because it can claim the sanction of Old Testament tradition. This provides both an illustration of his principle in operation, and provides necessary background information to explain his attitude to Christology at a later stage.

To many Christians, the ethical teaching of Jesus is teaching which, for want of a better word, they might tend to describe as 'super-ethical'. The idea is that Jesus' teaching in some ways transcended ethical categories, and is therefore a 'higher' ethic than any other. Is this so?

Take for example Jesus' pronouncement about killing: "You have learned that our forefathers were told "Do not commit murder; anyone who commits murder must be brought to judgement". But what I tell you is this: Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgement ....."<sup>38</sup> Here it would be claimed Jesus is transcending the negative Decalogue with a positive ethic based on love. However, careful examination of this view should lead to its rejection rather than confirmation.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 5:21-22 NEB.

In the first place, the idea that Jesus is propounding his new ethic on his own authority requires support from a quite specific reading of the text in the light of certain presuppositions. The fact that he declares "But I say to you ....." does not imply that the moral sanction which these new laws have emanate from him as their source. In fact, it could be equally argued, and in light of the moral sanction which the Decalogue has per se, it might be argued with greater force, that the ethical norms propounded by Jesus are able to stand by themselves without the justification of his authority. This is so, because the ethical demand is expressed in them in perhaps a highly idealised form.

Another important point is that in the course of rejuvenating the ethics of Judaism, Jesus did not simply replace an ethic of duty with one of love. The Old Testament tradition of loving one's friends, and hating one's enemies he declared should be replaced by the maxim of loving one's enemies. Put another way, this could merely be regarded as the expression of the moral requirement to be dutiful towards one's neighbour. Is it conceivable that men should have a moral duty to hate anyone? An institution like primitive Judaism, to protect the purity of the nation may have laid this upon its people as an obligation - but this makes it an institutional demand, and not a moral one. Jesus is then introducing the moral demand in contrast to the morally wrong institutional demand.

Kant's view of the priority of the ethical may then be justified and applied with justification to the manner in which Jesus propounded his teaching, and illustrated

with instances from the 'Sermon on the Mount' (as that collection of teachings is normally designated). Jesus from an ethical standpoint assails many of the dubious demands of institutional religion, and is in fact, criticising a churchly faith from the standpoint of the pure religion of reason. The ethical demand is something which is implicit within humanity itself - enshrined in conscience. Jesus merely reminded the world of the duty all men have towards their neighbours. His universal appeal lies in the fact that he universally extended the class of persons who could be called neighbours.

This, on the basis of Kant's priority of the ethical, would be a possible line for exegetical work on the teaching of Jesus. The view is not without features to commend it, because it appeals to conscience as the canon of judgement, and not to textual scholars and archaeologists nor to Biblical historians. Faith in the value of Christ's teaching becomes a free moral faith, dependent not upon the uncertainties of Biblical scholarship nor upon uncertain historical considerations. This, of course, was Kant's purpose. Some might feel that it is an inadequate view. However, at least it can be called Christian, which was what this section of the enquiry set out to discover.

Kant's approach to the theological problem in general takes him within the area of thought that would have to be called Christian, in distinction to what would be humanist or otherwise non-Christian. The Commission's

rejection of his work was the result of premature judgement, and within the basic principles of Kant's position, there are hints of a universalism. The nature of that universalism must now be determined.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

**KANT'S UNIVERSALIST THOUGHT.**

The purpose of this section of the argument is to analyse certain passages in Kant's writings with a view to detecting the manner in which he applies his principle of ethical evaluation towards the exposition of a Christian universalism.

As has already been said, Christianity throughout its long history, and particularly in the era of the Church Fathers, had an ambiguous relation to non-Christian thought. It had a tension within itself between the view of those who wished Christian thought to subsist in an exclusivist manner, on an exclusivist (which usually meant Biblical) basis, and those who wished Christian thought to exist on an all-inclusive universalist basis.<sup>1</sup>

The universalist attitude is well summarised by Tillich: "The Church Fathers emphasised the universal presence of the Logos, the word, the principle of Divine

<sup>1</sup> Consider for example the conflict between Paul of Samosata (Bishop of Antioch 200AD) and Origen of Alexandria over certain formulations of the faith. It is documented in Lietzmann's A History of the Early Church (Meridian Books 1961) p. 99 ff (Vol. III) "....Origen's system of thought appeared to be repellent to him, and he felt it ought to be attacked; in fact, he would have nothing at all to do with movements dominated by philosophy. The Biblical account of Jesus occupied the centre of his thought ....." The theologian Lucian, teacher of Arius, who commenced a debate with Alexander the Bishop of Alexandria in 318, had been a pupil of Paul of Samosata. The background to these disputes is the general conflict between the Antiochene and Alexandrian outlooks on everything. As Lietzmann comments: "Alexandria and Antioch had always been rival cities, hating and envying one another, and matters had not changed in the Christian era. Hence we find them also as the rallying points of two antagonistic types of theology ....." (p. 100)

self-manifestation in all religions and cultures. The Logos is present everywhere like the seed on the land, and this presence is a preparation for the central appearance of the Logos in a historical person, the Christ ..... They tried to show the convergent lines between the Christian message and the intrinsic quests of the pagan religions. In doing so, they used not only the large body of literature in which the pagans had criticised their own religions (for example, the Greek philosophers) but also made free use of the positive creations from the soil of the pagan religions. On the level of theological thought, they took into Christianity some of the highest conceptualisations of the Hellenistic and more indirectly, of the classical Greek feeling towards life - terms like physis (nature), hypostasis (substance) ousia (power of being,) prosopon (persona, not person in our sense) and above all logos (word and rational structure in the later Stoic sense). They were not afraid to call the God to whom they prayed as the Father of Jesus, the Christ, the unchangeable one".<sup>2</sup>

The obvious difference between these early universalists and Kant must be this. They were preachers and declarers of the faith. They wished, in the interests of communication and better understanding, to speak in a universal way to make the faith more acceptable to a world steeped in Greek thought. Kant, however, was a philosopher of the Aufklärung, who while being immersed in learning and in the disciplines of reason, saw Christianity as a reasonable mode of belief. He wished to remain a Christian, but on a universalist rather than

<sup>2</sup> Tillich Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions p. 34-35.

an exclusivist basis. It now remains to examine whether or not his writings will support this view. Since the early Christian controversies centred upon rival interpretations of the person of Christ, the key to all universalism, it is appropriate to begin with Kant's view on the Son of God as he states them in Book II of R.

Section one of Book II, which concerns the "Legal Claim on the Good Principle to sovereignty over man" <sup>3</sup> opens with a discussion about the personification of the good principle: "Mankind (rational earthly existence in general) in its complete moral perfection is that which alone can render a world the object of a Divine decree and the end of creation".<sup>4</sup> The idea of moral perfection proceeds from God Himself. It is not a created thing, but "the word through which all things are".<sup>5</sup> It is our duty to elevate ourselves to this ideal, to the "archetype of the moral disposition in all its purity".<sup>6</sup>

Since mankind is not the author of this ideal, in that it presents itself to his mind as originating elsewhere, then it could be argued that it has "come down" to us. Man, by nature, having a radical innate evil cannot be spoken of as raising himself beyond what he is, without the help of such an ideal. Therefore the idea of the descent of the good principle into a human form in order to make visible the moral ideal may be regarded as a manner in which to speak of the significance

<sup>3</sup> R p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> R p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> John 1:1-2.

<sup>6</sup> R p. 54.

of the Christian doctrine of the humiliation of the Son of God. Kant is implicitly arguing that the view of Jesus as the Head of the Church, the Son of God, (or indeed any view which particularises Him as the possession of a group who have special knowledge by revelation) should be replaced by this broader view - namely of Jesus as the personification of the moral ideal for all humanity.

The full implications of Kant's position become clearer when his discussion of the objective reality of the idea is considered along with the discussion of various difficulties which the idea encounters. He begins with a remark which sounds reminiscent of the KRV and the KPV: "From the practical point of view, this idea is completely real in its own right, for it resides in our morally-legislative reason. We ought to conform to it; consequently we must be able to do so".<sup>7</sup> This view is in line with Kant's justification of the Ideas of God and Immortality as 'objective for practical reason' only. "..... we need no empirical example to make the idea of a person morally well-pleasing to God our archetype; this idea as an archetype is already present in our reason".<sup>8</sup> "Moreover, if anyone, in order to acknowledge for his imitation a particular individual as such an example of conformity to that idea ..... goes on to require, as credentials to belief, that this individual performed miracles or had them performed for him - he who would demand this thereby confesses his own moral unbelief, that is, his lack of faith in virtue".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> R p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> R p. 56.

Any historical proof of the reality of the human manifestation of the moral archetype is discarded as both unnecessary and irrelevant. It is unnecessary because the moral ideal already exists within our practical reason. It is irrelevant because it lifts the mind from the moral ideal to historical considerations which are quite distinct from the problem of living according to the moral ideal.

The real problem is how we appropriate the moral disposition exemplified by the moral archetype.<sup>10</sup> Earlier he says that "Man may then hope to become acceptable to God (and so be saved) through a practical faith in this Son of God (so far as He is represented as having taken upon Himself man's nature). In other words, he alone is entitled to look upon himself as an object not unworthy of Divine approval who is conscious of such a moral disposition as enables himself to have a well grounded confidence in himself, and to believe that under like temptations and afflictions (so far as these are made the touchstone of that idea) he would be loyal unswervingly to the archetype of humanity and by faithful imitation remain true to his example".<sup>11</sup>

This passage paves the way for the general problem of the nature of saving faith in this idea of practical reason along with the relation of the moral agent to this moral archetype in time. The problem of appropriating the moral disposition Kant states in the form of three questions<sup>12</sup>: First, how is it possible in time, for a

<sup>10</sup> R p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> R p. 55.

<sup>12</sup> R p. 60 ff.

man to fulfil the requirements of a law when the gap separating "good which we ought to effect in ourselves from the evil whence we advance is infinite, and the act itself, of conforming our course of social life to the holiness of the law is impossible of execution in any given time?"<sup>13</sup>

Secondly,<sup>14</sup> he asks, given the possibility of a change of disposition, how can a man be assured of the permanence of his changed disposition? The third problem is the most difficult of all to answer.<sup>15</sup> Even if a man does change his moral disposition, and so to speak undergoes a moral conversion, and thereafter does nothing wrong, how can such a man make satisfactory reparation for the evil he has done before his change of heart? Kant states the third question quite unequivocally, recognising it as a serious consideration which must be answered: "Whatever a man may have done in the way of adopting a good disposition, and indeed however steadfastly he may have persevered in conduct conformable to such a disposition, he nevertheless started from evil, and this debt he can by no possibility wipe out. For he cannot regard the fact that he incurs no new debts subsequent to his change of heart as equivalent to having discharged his old one".<sup>16</sup>

Kant's solution to these problems depends largely upon that very important distinction between Phenomena and Noumena. In facing the question of how a man in time, fulfils the requirements of a law, when in fact, the gap

<sup>13</sup> R p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> R p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> R p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> R p. 66.

between himself and the law is one which cannot be closed in time, Kant argues that although actions must be viewed as part of a causal process (part of a cause effect sequence), God perceives the noumenal self as against the phenomenal self. He perceives that true moral conversion is something which does not rightly belong in time, in the phenomenal realm, but is something which belongs to the exercise of freedom when man is considered as a member of the noumenal order. Therefore, through an intellectual intuition of which He alone is capable, man's change of heart is known by God. God sees the new disposition, and therefore is pleased.

This use of the distinction between sensible and intelligible does appear to stretch the meaning of the distinction as originally drawn. However, if the distinction is viewed as Kant saying that there is another way of looking at human wills and intentions which human beings are incapable of seeing objectively, then its significance and importance becomes clearer. Further, while the original distinction pointed to the reality of a noumenal order, of which we can know nothing, and this present use of the distinction implies some knowledge of that realm, it should be remembered only God is capable of an intelligible intuition. From the human point of view, the unknowability of the noumenal is safeguarded.

The second question regarding the permanency of the moral disposition is answered by the suggestion that only a retrospective comparison between life before and life after conversion to the moral law can furnish material for a solution. "And so that good and pure disposition

of which we are conscious (and of which we may speak as a good spirit presiding over us) creates in us, though only indirectly, a confidence in its own permanence and stability, and is our Comforter (Paraclete) whenever our lapses make us apprehensive of its constancy".<sup>17</sup> Therefore, hope in our own growing moral strength is at most what we may rely upon.

However, most important, but most difficult, is the third question Kant poses about how man can make reparation for past evil. While Kant poses a solution to the problem in the context of his discussion of the Son of God, he takes up the problem in Book III of R, in the context of his discussion of the Church. Perhaps he felt a little dissatisfied with his earlier solution, but comparison of the two is important for its bearing upon his view of the Son of God.

In the solution in Book II, he falls back on the distinction between Phenomena and Noumena. The punishment takes place during the change of heart in this way that considered phenomenally, it is the same man who exists before and after moral conversion, but considered noumenally, it is a new man who has come alive after the moral conversion. Considered as a sensible entity, man persists before and after conversion, and as part of the causal process, retains his identity. Considered as an intelligible entity, there is a new man.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> R p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> Kant brings certain passages from the New Testament into his account of moral conversion. His use of these texts would appear to be quite in order and exegetically correct: e.g. Colossians 3:9-10 "...now that you have discarded the old nature with its deeds and have put on the new nature..." Ephesians 4:22 & 24 "...you must lay aside that old human nature ... and put on the new nature of God's creating" Romans 6: 2 & 6 "We died to sin: how can we live in it any longer? ... the man we once were has been crucified with Christ ..." cf. Galatians 5:24. (Quotations from NEB)

"And this moral disposition which in all its purity (like unto the purity of the Son of God) the man has made his own (or if we personify this idea) this Son of God Himself bears as vicarious substitute the guilt of sin for him, and indeed for all who believe (practically) in Him; as Saviour he renders satisfaction to the supreme justice by His sufferings and death; and as advocate He makes it possible for men to hope to appear before their judge as justified. Only it must be remembered that (in this mode of representation) the suffering which the new man, in becoming dead to the old must accept throughout life, is pictured as a death endured once and for all by the representative of mankind".<sup>19</sup>

The concept of atonement is introduced into this discussion, as having two morally relevant aspects. First, it is a symbol of the need for man to atone personally for his "pre-conversion sins". Secondly, it serves as a reminder of the need for man to suffer after his conversion as part of his duty to obey the law. Kant asks, however, whether this "deduction of the idea of a justification of an individual who is indeed guilty, but who has changed his disposition into one well pleasing to God possesses any practical use whatever?"<sup>20</sup>

He sees in it ".... a negative benefit to religion and morality ..... For we learn from this deduction that only the supposition of a complete change of heart allows us to think of the absolution, at the bar of heavenly justice of the man burdened with guilt".<sup>21</sup> No penances

<sup>19</sup> R p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> R p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> R p. 70-71.

or prayers can supply the change of heart. If it is absent, then nothing can appeal on man's behalf at the bar of Divine justice. Kant places great emphasis upon the conscience of man as his own best judge, since "a man cannot bribe his own reason".<sup>22</sup> Therefore, bringing this discussion into focus, the practical faith in this Son of God, with which this section began, becomes ultimately faith in uncorrupted human reason, reason in its practical aspect.

In the context of Book III, in the course of discussing the relation between pure rational faith and the various ecclesiastical faiths which partially convey and express it, Kant again takes up the theme of the nature of saving faith, and this time introduces the term atonement and in addition, the term redemption. Faith in atonement is faith of course in what man himself cannot accomplish - namely, undoing lawfully before a Divine Judge, all evil actions performed in the past. Faith in redemption refers to what himself ought to, and therefore can do, namely, lead a life conformable to duty so that he may become well pleasing to God in the future. Both these elements are constituent parts of one faith. The only way, Kant argues in which the connection between them may be necessarily asserted is by affirming that one may be derived from the other. This would mean saying that either from absolution of evil results good life conduct, or that good life conduct results in absolution. This is the antinomy of saving faith.

<sup>22</sup> R p. 72.

The antinomy<sup>23</sup> is stated in this form:

Can it be believed by anyone conscious of sin in himself that mere belief in atonement will make him live a good life in the future?

or

How can sinful man with the nature he has, make himself well pleasing to God and indeed a new creature without believing that God's justice has been satisfied by an Atonement?

With regard to the first part, Kant says that "... it is quite impossible to see how a reasonable man can in all seriousness believe that he only needs to credit the news of an atonement rendered for him to accept this atonement utiliter (as the lawyers say) in order to regard his guilt as annihilated - indeed so completely annihilated (to the very root) that good life-conduct, for which he has hitherto not taken the least pains, will in the future be the inevitable consequence of this faith and this acceptance of proffered favour. No thoughtful person can bring himself to believe this ....."<sup>24</sup>

On the second part of the antinomy, he says that

<sup>23</sup> The term ANTINOMY originates in the KPV. Kant defines an antinomy in the following terms: "all transcendental illusion of pure reason rests on dialectical inferences whose schema is supplied by logic in the three formal species of syllogism ....." B 432 The categorical syllogism gives rise to the paralogism, and the hypothetical syllogism gives rise to the antinomies. The antinomy arises in any situation when there is a search for an ultimate ground, since a hypothetical proposition alone can express the relation between ground and consequent. To draw conclusions from a schema provided by logic, therefore is illusion.

<sup>24</sup> R p. 107.

"..... if he cannot regard justice which he has provoked against himself as satisfied through atonement by another, and cannot regard himself reborn, so to speak, through this faith and so for the first time be able to enter upon a new course of life - and this would follow from his union with the good principle - upon what is he to base his hope of becoming a man pleasing to God?"<sup>25</sup>  
Facing these questions, Kant comes to the conclusion that "..... faith in a merit not his own must precede every effort to good works".<sup>26</sup>

Theoretically speaking, these questions must transcend the capacity of reason, and since the ground of our freedom is inscrutable, we cannot tackle the problem from that angle. Considered, however, as a problem of practical reason, this question may be asked: "Which comes first in the exercise of freedom - faith in what God has done on our behalf, or what we must do to become worthy of God's assistance?"

Kant argues that from the standpoint of the pure religion of reason, it is what we must do to become worthy of God's assistance which comes first. However, from the point of view of the ecclesiastical, or churchly faiths, their historical character requires that they should see the action of God on our behalf as coming first in the exercise of freedom. He says that "Ecclesiastical faith, being historical, rightly starts with the belief in the atonement, but since it merely constitutes the vehicle for pure religious faith (in which lies the real end), the maxim of action which in

<sup>25</sup> R p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> R p. 108.

religious faith (being practical) is the condition, must take the lead and the maxim of knowledge or theoretical faith, must merely bring about the strengthening and consummation of the maxim of action".<sup>27</sup>

Churchly faiths naturally see belief in the atonement as a duty from which springs good life conduct. From the point of view of pure religious faith, good life conduct is the duty, and atonement becomes merely a hope. Therefore, those who hold a churchly faith, could be accused of a superstitious belief in the need for some kind of divine worship in addition to good life conduct, and therefore of either indifference to the moral demand, or complete moral unbelief. Alternatively, those who respect the moral demand, and who believe that good life course and obedience to duty is what God requires, could be accused of "naturalistic unbelief" and appropriately, of indifference to revelation.

How can this antinomy be resolved? It is in solving this that Kant clarifies his attitude towards the Son of God, and brings the statement of his position to completion. He begins his answer by drawing a contrast in points of view with regard to belief in a Son of God. He says: "The living faith in the archetype of humanity well pleasing to God (in the Son of God) is bound up, in itself, with a moral idea of reason so far as this serves us not only as a guide line, but also as an incentive; hence it matters not whether I start with it as a rational faith, or with the principle of the good course of life. In contrast, the faith in the selfsame archetype in its (phenomenal) appearance (faith in the God-Man) as an

empirical (historical) faith, is not interchangeable with the principle of the good course life (which must be wholly rational) and it would be quite a different matter to wish to start with such faiths and to deduce the good course of life from it ..... yet in the appearance of the God-Man it is not that in Him which strikes the senses and can be known through experience, but rather the archetype lying in our reason ..... Here then are not two principles which in themselves so differ that to begin with the one or the other would be to enter upon opposing paths, but only one and the same practical idea from which we take our start, this idea representing the archetype now as found in God and proceeding from Him ..... "28

The distinction between noumenal and phenomenal again plays a prominent part, and of course lies at the foundation of the distinction which Kant is drawing. The vital step in Kant's argument, and it is this which lies at the heart of his universalism, is in the affirmation, that in the appearance of the God-Man, what is striking about Him is not his empirical aspect, namely his existence and actions which may be known by the senses. Rather it is that in Him which strikes the archetype lying in human reason which recognises and identifies Him. This is what gives rise to redemption and atonement. This is what Kant means by saving faith - faith which reason recognises the embodiment of an archetype in human form.

Clement J. Webb succinctly summarises Kant's solution of the antinomy in this way: "..... our difficulty will vanish if for an historical belief in Christ and the

atonement wrought by Him we substitute a rational belief in the Son of God as the archetype of a humanity well pleasing to God, for this kind of belief in the Son of God is not distinguishable from a life directed to the attainment of that ideal".<sup>29</sup>

Kant's position is that practical faith in the Son of God is in fact, faith in practical reason to direct us on a good course of life. However, having followed Kant in his two tortuous statements of the doctrine, the question must now be faced - does this square with any tradition of Christian thought?

There is in fact here not one, but a cluster of inter-related problems which require to be disentangled. First there is the question of Kant's doctrine of the Son of God as a moral archetype, and the manner in which this can be the centre of a universalist position. Secondly, there is the discussion of both atonement and redemption, (the antinomy of saving faith) and the related question of whether or not Kant's view of atonement could be called Christian in any usage of the term. Finally, there is the problem implicit in all this of Kant's view of the historical Jesus, the value and significance of His earthly life. He places such emphasis upon the idea of the moral archetype that the historical manifestation of that archetype ceases to be of importance, or so it would appear. His views on the status to be afforded to

<sup>29</sup> Kant sees the antinomy expressed historically in the struggles of cult followers, and believers in morality. For example, in the struggle between the Old Testament prophetic religion and the priestly cult, he sees the antinomy. The historical resolution he sees as in the future, when the pure religion of reason will replace all churchly faiths.

or withheld from the historical person are important.

Taking these problems in order, there is first the need to give a general assessment to Kant's position that the Son of God is the embodiment of the idea of moral perfection which lies within all. This position has certain distinct advantages. In the first place, it shifts the meaning of the term Son of God into a terminology and into a framework of thought which makes it capable of both universal understanding and acceptance. Secondly, Kant argues that the notion of a moral archetype in our reason is what the concept of a Son of God appeals to, and by this he means that reason in its practical employment can recognise this Son of God, and that faith in Him is therefore rational and justifiable. The third merit of Kant's line of interpretation is that it relates the significance of the Son of God to the moral agent who perceives Him as such. The moral agent sees the concept of a Son of God before him, and this awakens him to become conscious of the moral ideal within his own reason. The faith in the Son of God becomes then the individual's faith in himself to attain to the moral ideal which he knows he is capable of fulfilling. It is at this stage that the problem of atoning for the past emerges. However, leaving this problem for the moment, and concentrating solely upon the significance Kant attaches to the Son of God idea, the universalist possibilities of the idea are its most valuable feature. Christianity may then be stripped of its particularities, and expressed in terms which all men can both recognise and understand. Kant would maintain that the moral ideal is a universal symbol. Since it concerns reason in its

practical employment, this universal symbol appeals to human reason, and therefore to all men. This is how Kant universalises the significance of the Son of God.

The difficulty in this position lies, I think, not in this aspect of its exposition, but in that part which concerns atonement, and the problem of how the present decision to live morally is related to the individual's past.

Kant's account of the atonement as stated earlier, which attempts to see it in an ethical context may be contrasted to the early Eastern Fathers of the Church, whose account of the atonement attempted to lift it into the wider terms of Greek thought. While the theory of a transaction between God and the devil was the common form in which the idea was expounded, it would not be improper to say that the thinkers of the Eastern Church saw the weakness and the limitations of such an idea, and in their own theories expounded it according to different principles. For example, Irenaeus combined a moral and a mystical line of thought about the atonement and redemption which if read carefully, is capable of a much broader interpretation than at first sight seems possible. For example: "Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting God to men by means of the Spirit, and on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at his coming, immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God".<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Irenaeus Adv. Haer. v 1, 1

In this passage, it is to be noted that the life of Christ is looked upon in its entirety, and the whole life is the means whereby believers are saved. Therefore, no particular aspect of the human existence of Christ is given special significance. For example, special importance is not attached to His death for the purposes of atonement or faith. Therefore, the possibilities of relating Kant's idea and that of Irenaeus are increased because both regard the Son of God manifestation in its totality.

In addition, the mystical vein in Irenaeus which unites man with God and God with man, while appearing to conflict with Kant's views on religious experience, may well be interpreted in ethical terms. God overcomes the devil, or in Kant's terminology, the evil principle, and man, in God defeats the evil principle also. Man does not stand outside God's action in Christ, but man is in fact intimately and directly and specifically involved in the action. Other of the early fathers substantiate this type of view and interpretation of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

The wide inclusiveness of patristic thought seems compatible with Kant's ethical all-inclusiveness, and this is all that the argument can demonstrate. By the same token as the patristic theology can be called Christian, in spite of counter claims, Kant's evaluation of the Son of God is entitled to be recognised also as a style of Christian faith.

Now we may turn to Kant's views on the historic manifestation of the Church's faith - i.e. the historical events of the life and death of Jesus, and the doctrines

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix IV:

therewith connected. His basic attitude may be summarised in these words: "..... the presence of this archetype in the human soul is in itself sufficiently incomprehensible without our adding to its supernatural origin the assumption that it is hypostasised in a particular person".<sup>32</sup>

Kant is saying that the moral archetype in human reason is really enough without hypostasising the ideal in the form of a historically existing person. However, he does discuss certain historical problems, such as the Virgin Birth. The idea of a virgin birth, the idea of someone born free from the innate propensity to evil is "an idea of reason, accommodating itself to an instinct which is hard to explain yet which cannot be disowned, and is moral too. For we regard natural generation since it cannot occur without sensual pleasure on both sides and since it also seems to relate us to the common animal species far too closely for the dignity of humanity, as something of which we should be ashamed (and it is certainly this idea which gave rise to the notion that the monastic state is holy) and which therefore signifies for us something unmoral, irreconcilable with perfection in man, and yet ingrafted in man's nature and so inherited also by his descendants as an evil predisposition. Well suited to this confused view (on the one side merely sensuous, yet upon the other moral, and therefore intellectual) is this idea of a birth, dependent upon no sexual intercourse (a virgin birth) of a child encumbered with no moral blemish ....."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> R p. 57.

<sup>33</sup> R p. 74-75.

Kant objects to this doctrine because first of the dubious view of sex which it implies. He objects to it also because it is not morally helpful. Rather impatient of all the argument which surrounds it, he asks: "..... of what use is all this theory pro and contra when it suffices for practical purposes to place before us as a pattern this idea taken as a symbol of mankind raising itself above temptation to evil (and withstanding it victoriously)?"<sup>34</sup>

The other comment which must be made on this doctrine is that Kant refers to it when he is in the course of discussing the narrative within which Scripture expounds der Kampf, and therefore, the moral struggle is used to evaluate the concept.

As with the Virgin Birth,<sup>35</sup> so with some other of the historical events of Jesus' existence. On the subject of the Resurrection and Ascension, he says that while the public record of the life of Jesus ended with his unmerited, and yet meritorious death, the "more secret records, added as a sequel, of His Resurrection and Ascension, which took place before the eyes only of his intimates, cannot be used in the interest of religion within the limits of reason alone, without doing violence to their historical evaluation. (If one takes these events merely as ideas of reason, they would signify the commencement of another life and entrance into the seat of salvation

<sup>34</sup> R p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> Kant's evaluation of the Virgin Birth and the other events in Jesus' life should be taken together. While with regard to certain aspects of his discussion, he could be accused of Docetism the over-all perspective should not be forgotten - namely the moral struggle.

i.e. into the society of the all good). This is so not merely because this added sequel is an historical narrative (for the story which precedes it is that also) but because taken literally it involves a concept i.e. of the materiality of all worldly beings, which is indeed very well suited to man's mode of sensuous representation but which is most burdensome to reason in its faith regarding the future".<sup>36</sup>

All the implications of this rather difficult passage may not be easy to list, but the general standpoint seems clear. He asserts that the Gospel writers were claiming that the Resurrection and Ascension, (which Kant regards as private sequels to the public events of Jesus' life) were events on a par with the other events recorded similarly. Then he goes on to say that if these matters are taken literally, they become really, in effect, the accommodation of our views to a materialism which misses the point that rational beings are essentially spiritual. It could be argued that Kant, in his emphasis upon the moral evaluation of these doctrines was trying to see in them something deeper than the mere historical consideration of them can afford. The Virgin Birth is a shallow and a mythological expression of the significance of the Incarnation. The rejection of the materialist aspects of these doctrines which Kant claims clouds people's minds to the fact that rational beings are spiritual beings, is a rejection of the historical problems created by these ideas in favour of a moral interpretation of them which can enlighten man in his moral struggle.

<sup>36</sup> R p. 119-120 footnote.

Several contemporary theologians<sup>37</sup> and Biblical scholars have, like Kant, emphasised the significance of these events as against their actual historicity. Rudolph Bultmann points out the significance of the Resurrection as something more important than the manner of its occurrence. However, it is doubtful if he would join Kant in going so far as to ask whether or not the historical manifestations were really necessary, since we have the archetype in our minds.

Kant's position is in this respect rather extreme, and it is not surprising that in this way, he did incur the wrath of the Berlin Commission and Frederick William himself. However, a distinction should be drawn between how he speaks in his philosophical account of the moral conflict, and how he speaks of the historical account. Scripture speaks of a narrative, and Kant by philosophically evaluating that narrative is attempting to justify the ideas which are expressed in that form. He offers a philosophical exposition of the Christian doctrine of the Son of God. Man recognises the Son of God because he has an archetype in his mind of such an ideal. He has this to aid him in the moral struggle. Moral necessity is the key to Kant's defence and exposition of theological concepts. If no moral necessity exists,

<sup>37</sup> Bultmann History of the Synoptic Tradition (Blackwell 1963), "Paul knows nothing about the empty tomb, which does not imply that the story was no longer current in his day, but most probably that it was a subordinate theme with no significance for the official Kerygma". p. 290.

Günther Bornkamm Jesus of Nazareth (Hodder & Stoughton 1963) "..... it follows that we are to understand the Easter stories too as testimonies of faith and not as records and chronicles, and that it is the message of easter we must seek in the Easter stories". p. 183.

how can revelation justify what reason sees as needless?

However, Kant sees justification for such concrete concepts and hypostatisations, in the limitations of the human intellectual capacity: "It is indeed a limitation of human reason, and one which is inseparable from it, that we can conceive of no considerable moral worth in the actions of a personal being without representing that person or his manifestation in a human guise".<sup>38</sup>

He illustrates this idea by reference to the famous statement of Divine Love contained in John 3:16. This he calls a schematism of analogy, by means of which we may ascend from the sensible to the supersensible, but only for the purposes of making a concept intelligible if we cannot otherwise think it. To transform this schematism into a schematism of objective determination, by means of which we would infer that what we have schematised possesses the properties of the analogy by means of which we think it, and thus extend our knowledge, is mere anthropomorphism, and has "from the moral point of view (in religion) most disastrous consequences".<sup>39</sup>

As applied to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, Kant makes the observation that ".... if this very faith (in a divine tri-unity) were to be regarded not merely as a representation of a practical idea but as a faith which is to describe what God is in Himself, it would be a mystery transcending all human concepts and hence a mystery of revelation, unsuited to man's powers of comprehension ..... Faith in it, regarded as an extension of the theoretical knowledge of the divine nature would be merely the acknowledgement of a symbol

<sup>38</sup> R p. 58-59 footnote.

<sup>39</sup> R p. 59.

of ecclesiastical faith which is quite comprehensible to men, or which, if they think they can understand it, would be anthropomorphic .....<sup>40</sup> Kant, however, is naturally willing to attempt to see some moral utility in the idea of a Trinity, and by careful consideration, he detects a trinity of experience within the moral life itself. Man is called through the moral law to life characterised by obedience to the law. The strength of the demand of the moral law in him gives him hope that he can satisfy the will to goodness within him. All through his experience, reason continually judges him and urges him to fulfil what he knows is his obligation. Therefore, moral experience gives him first a demand, then a hope, and finally a judgement. Kant speaks of this experience in other terms: "The highest goal of moral perfection of moral creatures - a goal to which man can never completely attain - is love of the law.

The equivalent in religion of this idea would be an article of faith "God is love": in Him we can revere the loving God (whose love is that of moral approbation of men so far as they measure up to His Holy Law) - the Father".<sup>41</sup> Then Kant adds that the archetype of humanity, his "all inclusive idea" may be regarded as the Son, and finally "so far as He makes this approbation dependent upon men's agreement with the condition of that approving love and so reveals love as based upon wisdom, we can revere the Holy Ghost".<sup>42</sup>

This thought is made into a systematic moral

<sup>40</sup> R p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> R p. 136.

<sup>42</sup> R p. 136.

evaluation in these terms: "..... the universal true religious belief conformable to this requirement of practical reason is belief in God (1) as the omnipotent Creator of Heaven and Earth i.e. morally as holy legislator (2) as Preserver of the human race, its benevolent Ruler and moral Guardian (3) as Administrator of His own holy laws i.e. as righteous Judge".<sup>43</sup> This brings together the legislative, executive, and juridical functions of the moral Governor of the Universe, and of course, it is a Trinitarian scheme. This particular statement underlines Kant's view that theological concepts require moral evaluation in order to set them in a meaningful and useful context. He offers an exposition of the Trinity which is given in ethical terms, and therefore capable of universal expression. This is the characteristic feature of his statement of the Trinity, and it is capable of universal understanding and acceptance.

To summarise, Kant offers in the course of his argument, a general framework, namely der Kampf - man's moral struggle, within which he finds the key to interpreting Christian theological concepts. The Son of God idea, with its historical problems, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, are expounded in this way. This he does for two reasons. First, to show that they are rational, grounded in practical reason itself. Secondly, because of this, to show they may be recognised universally by all men without any churchly faiths to embody them. While perhaps there may be some difficulties

<sup>43</sup> R p. 239.

within Kant's formulation of these ideas,<sup>44</sup> and some interesting side problems which would bear investigation, it is my contention here that these two points lie behind his thought.

Having examined Kant's account of the idea of a Son of God, and having argued that it can have as much claim to the description Christian as the concept of Son of God offered by some of the Eastern Fathers, Kant's account of the Church may now be discussed.

This idea he also expounded according to morality. The need for a church, or a Kingdom of God is determined by the manner in which man has to struggle for freedom from the control of evil: "The combat which every morally well-disposed man must sustain in this life, under the

<sup>44</sup> One of the most interesting implications of Kant's exposition of the Trinity is that he speaks of the first person as the moral demand. It could be asked 'In Kant's thought, is God equal to the moral demand? Are God and the categorical imperative one and the same thing?' Is the categorical imperative man's only genuine experience and encounter with the God of religion? This problem has been interestingly developed by Professor W.G. MacLagan Theological Frontier of Ethics (Macmillan 1961) having argued that the moral law is neither independent of God, nor yet dependent upon God, he says "What I do affirm is simply this, insofar as the consciousness of the moral demand is considered in and by itself, 'God' can mean nothing different from 'moral law', and that the theological term renames without elucidation. We understand that the new name means through understanding the meaning of the non-theological expression; that is to say, the moral earlier suggested an index to what we mean by 'God'. This I repeat is very different from saying that our thought about God throws light upon our moral experience". He qualifies this statement carefully: "My position here is quite consistent with holding that in another sense moral experience is illuminated by religion. If, as I believe, there is a legitimate overplus of meaning attaching to the term 'God' additional to what is signified by 'moral law' or 'moral demand' ....." (p 81-81) Professor MacLagan's 'neo-Kantianism' here is helpful in clarifying the position of Kant himself, if only by contrast.

leadership of the good principle, against the attacks of the evil principle can procure him, no matter how much he exerts himself no greater advantage than freedom from the sovereignty of evil".<sup>45</sup> Man may indeed be free from the control of the evil principle, but he is constantly in danger that evil will assault him and dominate him again. Therefore, he must ever remain "armed for the fray".<sup>46</sup>

But where do these evil attacks originate? Kant's answer is simply that being among people is the point of attack. He argues that "Envy, the lust for power, greed and the malignant inclinations bound up with these besiege his (man's) nature contented within itself as soon as he is among men".<sup>47</sup>

It is not that men are necessarily evil towards one another, but it "suffices that they are at hand, that they surround him and that they are men ....."<sup>48</sup> This is one of Kant's shrewdest observations. Man is attacked socially, and as an individual is not always strong enough to repel the assaults of evil. Therefore, his defence must also be social. Hence he concludes that the need for "A union of men under merely moral laws is self evident: The idea of such a state possesses a thoroughly well grounded objective reality in human reason (in man's duty to join such a state) even though, subjectively, we can never hope that man's good will will lead mankind

46 R p. 85.

47 R p. 85.

48 R p. 85.

to decide to work with humanity towards this goal".<sup>49</sup>

The importance of der Kampf in Kant's mind must be unquestionably obvious, but there does appear to be a discrepancy between the Son of God as the moral archetype and the need for a moral alliance among men. If the moral archetype in the mind is sufficient as a guide, what further need can there be of help for man to know what he ought to do, since ought implies can? The need for an ethical commonwealth implies a greater respect for the powers of evil, and therefore it would appear that Kant's discussion of the Son of God was written with the G doctrine of freedom in mind rather than that of the essay on Radical Evil. However, in so far as these accounts are not mutually exclusive, the need for a church or an ethical union is the inevitable consequence of the recognition of man's freedom as a choice between good and evil, and of the recognition that man is attacked socially rather than as an individual.

In his philosophical account of the conflict and victory of the good over the evil principle in the founding of a kingdom of God on earth, Kant argues from ethical first principles for the need for an ethical union. Man exists initially in the ethical state of nature, in which "each individual prescribes the law for himself, and there is not external law to which he, along with others, recognises himself to be subject ..... each individual is now his own judge, and there exists no

<sup>49</sup> R p. 86. In this passage, Clement J. Webb (op. cit.) p. 129 makes the point that there is a similarity between Kant's conception of an ethical commonwealth and the idea of a National Church as set forth by the Reformation Fathers. Kant argues that it is man's duty to belong to such a commonwealth, and that the idea of a moral alliance among men is natural for practical reason.

powerful public authority to determine with legal power, according to laws, what is each man's duty in every situation that arises ....."<sup>50</sup>

The ethical state of nature exists within a political commonwealth, where the citizens cannot be forced to become members of an ethical union. A man may remain in a political commonwealth, but never be part of an ethical commonwealth.<sup>51</sup> However, Kant argues that the idea of an ethical commonwealth extends to the whole of mankind, and here the implicit universalism of his position begins to show itself: "Hence, even a large number of men united in that purpose can be called not the ethical commonwealth itself, but only a particular society which strives towards harmony with all men ..... in order to form an absolute ethical whole of which every partial society is

<sup>50</sup> R p. 87.

<sup>51</sup> Webb (op. cit. p. 131) interprets this paragraph as offering a clue to Kant's view of the relation he sees to exist between Church & State: "...it betrays the traditional Lutheran attitude in regard to the matter. It is distinguished alike from that of the Roman Catholic Church and that of the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches in its tendency to leave to the State all matters relating to the ordering of outward conduct and to consider the Church as concerned only with the individual conscience". Earlier he wrote: "The distinction of the ethical from the political commonwealth of Church from State is characterised not only by this internal dependence of the former upon the latter, but what we may call (though Kant does not use the word) the Catholicicity of the national Church, which never claims to be the ethical commonwealth, but only a branch thereof". Kant holds the view that for a political commonwealth to compel people to join an ethical alliance is to destroy the ethical goal. This would appear to be a veiled warning to those who would make what is essentially the concern of personal morality, the subject of political legislation. Kant's separation of 'Church' and 'State' is quite complete in the above defined sense.

only a representation or schema".<sup>52</sup>

Kant claims that men have a duty to leave the ethical state of nature, and bind themselves into an ethical alliance to counteract the tendency to corrupt one another. He says that "..... we have a duty which is sui generis, not of man toward men, but of the human race towards itself. For the species of rational beings is objectively, in the idea of reason, destined for a social goal, namely, the promotion of the highest as a social good. But because the highest moral good cannot be achieved merely by the exertions of the single individual towards his own moral perfection, but requires rather a union of such individuals into a whole towards the same goal - into a system of well disposed men in which and through whose unity alone the highest moral good can come to pass".<sup>53</sup> With this duty in mind, it may be seen that the duty "will require the presupposition of another idea, namely that of a higher moral Being through whose universal dispensation the forces of separate individuals, insufficient in themselves are united for a common end".<sup>54</sup>

Having established the need for an ethical commonwealth, Kant argues that this need leads to the necessary postulation of God as the lawgiver. "If the commonwealth is to be ethical, the people as a people cannot itself be regarded as the law-giver. For in such a commonwealth all the laws are expressly designed to promote the morality of actions (which is something inner, and hence cannot be subject to public human laws)....."<sup>55</sup> There

52 R p. 88.

53 R p. 89.

54 R p. 90.

55 R p. 90.

must inevitably be another course of law for this community, a public law giver for the ethical commonwealth with respect to whom all true duties hence also the ethical, must be represented as at the same time his commands .....<sup>56</sup>

The manner in which Kant now speaks in following this line of argument is the same in which he spoke of God as the moral Governor of the Universe. Therefore, he concludes that to speak of an ethical commonwealth is to speak of "a people of God under divine commands i.e. as a people of God and indeed under the laws of virtue".<sup>57</sup> As opposed to this idea, there is the idea of a rabble of the evil principle bent on the propagation of evil. This extreme contrast suggests rather a stronger concept of evil than Kant normally allows. However, the impression may depend merely upon the way in which he expresses the idea. In any event, this is not material to the present argument.

The final step in the argument is that the idea of a people of God, may be realised, because of human weaknesses, only in the form of a church - a human organisation. "The sublime, yet never wholly attainable, idea of an ethical commonwealth dwindles markedly under men's hands. It becomes at best an institution which, at best capable of representing only the pure form of such a commonwealth, is by the conditions of the sensuous human nature, greatly circumscribed in its means for establishing such a whole".<sup>58</sup>

56 R p. 90-91.

57 R p. 91.

58 R p. 91-92.

The idea of founding a moral people comes from God but man must proceed with working this out in his life. Kant uses the distinction between the Church visible and invisible, known to all Lutherans, to express his idea. The idea of the ethical commonwealth under divine moral legislation is the Church invisible. "The visible church" on the same analogy is the actual union of men into a whole which harmonises with that ideal.

The churches thus founded as parts of the visible church naturally have all the characteristics of humanly conceived institutions.<sup>59</sup> "The true (visible) Church is that which exhibits the moral kingdom of God on earth so far as it can be brought to pass by men".<sup>60</sup> The tokens of this church are defined in terms of the four classes of categories in the KRV. These characteristics are worthy of note for this and two further reasons.

They are an exposition of the principles which should underlie all religious institutions - i.e. moral principles. The idea of a church is expounded according to the principles of morality, which is consistent with Kant's

<sup>59</sup> On this particular point, and in the manner in which he expresses it, Kant may be criticised. In speaking of these organisations - they are as a "group, united in a whole, a congregation under authorities, who, (called teachers or shepherd of souls) merely administer the affairs of the invisible supreme head thereof" (R p. 92) The notion of the Church having an invisible head is a distinctively reformed doctrine, and would mean that Kant's idea of the Church would be limited in its application to Protestantism generally. This would not be characteristic of what he called churchly faiths generally, and certainly not of characterisation of religious institutions, and this limits the area in which such a general definition might be seen to apply.

<sup>60</sup> R p. 92.

general position. Also, the universality of Kant's idea of a church comes out strongly in this exposition. The idea of a Church for Kant is a concept capable of universal application. The essence of the idea is that the notion of an ethical commonwealth is the basis of a universal understanding of the need for an organisation such as the Christian Church.

The characteristics of the Church may now be considered.<sup>61</sup> First, in quantity, this church is universal, in that while divided on perhaps unimportant issues, the church is one with regard to fundamental intention. In its quality, it is pure, since only moral factors may be motivating forces. It is purified of all superstition and fanaticism. In its relation, it is under the principle of freedom, in respect of both the internal relation of members to each other and in the relation of the church to political power. Finally, the modality of the church is its unchangeableness of constitution. Details of administration may alter and vary, but the apriori principles never change.

"An ethical commonwealth then in the form of a church i.e. as a mere representative of a city of God has as regards its basic principles, nothing resembling a political constitution .....It could best be likened to that of a household, under a common though invisible moral Father, whose Holy Son knowing His will, yet standing in blood relation with all members of the household takes his place in making His will better known to them; these accordingly honour the Father in him and enter with one another into a voluntary, universal

and enduring union of hearts".<sup>62</sup>

In this closing passage to the section, Kant connects his idea of the church with his earlier discussion of the moral archetype as the Son of God. The general importance of the deduction of the justification of the need for a Church is that it paves the way for the apposite introduction of the concept of pure religious faith, or pure moral faith. Only this kind of faith can be the basis of the universal church for which Kant has been arguing. In this way he connects the pure moral faith of reason with his idea of a universalist view of the Christian church.

"Pure religious faith alone can found a universal Church; for only such rational faith can be believed in and shared by everyone, whereas an historical faith, grounded solely on facts, can extend its influence no further than tidings of it can react ....."<sup>63</sup> This passage has already been quoted in full in connection with the contrast between churchly faiths and pure religious faith, the pure moral faith of reason. The argument has already been outlined for Kant's view that churchly faiths have as their interpreter pure religious faith, which means that religious institutions may continually be judged in the light of the moral law. "Pure religious faith is concerned only with what constitutes the essence of reverence for God, namely obedience ensuing from the moral disposition to all duties as His commands. A Church on the other hand, as the union of many men with such dispositions into a moral commonwealth requires a public covenant, a certain ecclesiastical form dependent

<sup>62</sup> R p. 93.

<sup>63</sup> R p. 94.

upon the conditions of experience".<sup>64</sup>

Kant is thus explaining the existence of churches as visible institutions on two grounds. First, as human attempts to realise the idea of a kingdom of God. And secondly, as derived from the mistaken idea that God desires some kind of statutory recognition in a church organisation. He puts these combined grounds this way: "In men's striving towards an ethical commonwealth, ecclesiastical faith naturally precedes pure religious faith; temples (buildings consecrated to the public worship of God) were before churches (meeting places for the instruction and quickening of the moral disposition... .. Since then it remains true once and for all that a statutory ecclesiastical faith naturally precedes pure religious faith as its vehicle and as the means of the public union of men for its promotion, one must grant that the public preservation of pure religious faith unchanged, its propagation in the same form everywhere, and even a respect for the revelation assumed therein, can hardly be provided for adequately through tradition, but only through Scripture ....."<sup>65</sup>

The objective of this discussion in Kant is to make clear the nature of his universalism and this is clear when he faces the question "How does God wish to be honoured?"<sup>66</sup> If this question "is to be answered in a

<sup>64</sup> R p. 96.

<sup>65</sup> R p. 97. Kant here appears to be making a concession to the Lutheran Church's view that faith based upon Scripture is a better disseminator of the pure religious faith than a Church faith based upon arguments derived from historical traditions, such as those used by the Church of Rome.

<sup>66</sup> R p. 95.

way universally valid for each man, regarded merely as man, there can be no doubt that the legislation of His will ought to be solely moral; for statutory legislation (which presupposes a revelation) can be regarded merely as contingent and as something which has never applied or can apply to every man, hence as not binding upon all men universally".<sup>67</sup> The various historic churchly faiths, such as "Jewish, Mohammedan, Christian, Catholic, Lutheran"<sup>68</sup> are quite distinct from the one true religion. "We can say further that even in the various churches, severed from one another by reason of the diversity of their modes of belief, one and the same true religion can yet be found".<sup>69</sup>

However, as has been said, Kant recognises that human reason requires a church in which to express this pure religious faith. Nonetheless, this is not to be regarded as a permanent state of affairs, and Kant looks forward to a time when pure religious faith will be able to dispense with all churchly faiths as vehicles of its dissemination. The result will be a single faith of which Kant says: "amid all diversity of ecclesiastical faiths (or creeds) it is discoverable in each of these in which, moving towards the goal of pure religious faith, it is practical".<sup>70</sup> This, of course, is the pure religion of reason.

<sup>67</sup> R p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> R p. 98 The Kantian distinction between Christian, Catholic and Lutheran is interesting if one considers what it implies!

<sup>69</sup> R p. 98 This contention is the most significant single statement of Kant's universalism.

<sup>70</sup> R p. 106.

The passage in which Kant describes his hope and expectation of the day when the pure religion of reason will take over as one single universal faith, from the churchly faiths is the high water mark of his universalist optimism. The passage is difficult to grasp at one reading, and it is the concluding passage in his philosophical account of the victory of the Good over the Evil principle. Because of its importance, it merits both quotation in full, and careful consideration.

"Hence a necessary consequence of the physical and at the same time, the moral predisposition in us, the latter being the basis and the interpreter of all religion, is that in the end, RELIGION WILL GRADUALLY BE FREED FROM ALL EMPIRICAL DETERMINING GROUNDS AND FROM ALL STATUTES WHICH REST ON HISTORY AND WHICH THROUGH THE AGENCY OF ECCLESIASTICAL FAITH PROVISIONALLY UNITE MEN FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GOOD; AND THUS AT LAST THE PURE RELIGION OF REASON WILL RULE OVER ALL, "so that God may be all in all". (Kant's note - cf. 1 Cor. 15:8) The integuments within which the embryo first developed into a human being must be laid aside when he is to come into the light of day. The leading string of holy tradition with its appendages of statutes and observances which in its time did good service, becomes bit by bit dispensable, yea finally, when man enters upon his adolescence it becomes a fetter. While he (the human race) "was a child he understood as a child" (Kant's note - cf. 1 Cor. 13:11) and manages to combine a certain amount of erudition and even a philosophy ministering to the church, with the propositions which were bestowed on him without his co-operation: "but when he becomes a man,

he puts away childish things". The humiliating distinction between laity and clergy disappears, and equality arises from true freedom, yet without anarchy, because though each obeys the (non-statutory) law which he prescribes to himself, he must at the same time regard this law as the will of a World Ruler revealed to him through reason, a will which by invisible means UNITES ALL UNDER ONE COMMON GOVERNMENT INTO ONE STATE - A STATE PREVIOUSLY AND INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED AND PREPARED FOR BY THE VISIBLE CHURCH. All this is not to be expected from an external revolution, because such an upheaval produces its effect tempestuously and violently, an effect quite dependent on circumstances. Moreover, whatever mistake has once been made in the establishment of a new constitution, is regretfully retained throughout hundreds of years since it can no longer be changed or at least only through a new (and at any time dangerous) revolution. The basis for the transition to that new order of affairs must lie in the principle that the pure religion of reason is a continually occurring divine (though not empirical) revelation for all men. Once this basis has been grasped with mature reflection it is carried into effect so far as this is destined to be a human task, through gradually advancing reform. As for revolutions which hasten this progress, they rest in the hands of Providence and cannot be ushered in according to plan without damage to freedom.

We have good reason to say, however, that "the Kingdom of God is come unto us" once the principle of the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth has become general and has also gained somewhere a public foothold, even though the actual

establishment of this state is still infinitely removed from us."<sup>71</sup>

Before comment on this passage and its significance, a general comment about Kant's classification of most religions as churchly faiths. While it is difficult not to be sympathetic with him, the very generality of his survey and classification, read in the light of more modern discussion of philosophy and phenomenology of religion, is rather difficult to accept. Bearing in mind the vastly differing conceptual backgrounds from which the world's religions have sprung, and the centuries of different cultures which lie behind them, comparison let alone classification is extremely difficult. Some would even say that it is almost impossible.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, so far as world religions are concerned, Kant's views must be treated with caution.

Their importance and validity, as I see it, lies in the context of the great variety of manifestations of the Christian religion. If the heart of the true religion, true Christianity is the moral law, the basis of universal religion, then this may be used to assess the many expressions of Christian faith which exist. It can be used to criticise and censure many of the denominations and traditions which have developed, by showing that it is merely cultic differences and therefore fetishist

<sup>71</sup> R p. 112-113.

<sup>72</sup> W. Brede Kristensen The Meaning of Religion (tr. John B. Carman, the Hague 1960 p. 1-13) Kristensen objects to the term "Comparitive Religion" because it implied classifying into types. He pioneered phenomenology of religion, in which the emphasis is upon the values of the believers, and those attached by them to what they do and say.

peripheries which separate them. These factors have no moral relevance, and therefore may be dispensed with at no loss. For Kant, the Church's function as an ethical commonwealth is more important than its mystical function as the Body of Christ, with all its institutional theory and practice. Again while it is difficult not to feel sympathetic with Kant, in that it is theological wrangles over the form of Christ's Body that give rise to denominational splits over the Sacraments, Orders and dogmas, his position is not totally acceptable. The Church as the Body of Christ is a more positive conception than that of it as an ethical commonwealth, unless the ethical commonwealth implies a duty to act always as Christ would have acted. But certainly, the Church in its conduct must always be morally scrupulous, and must never condone on 'religious grounds' what should be condemned on moral grounds.

Therefore, while there is a little doubt about the ability of Kant's universalism to extend to all religions without some modification or qualification, there is no doubt as to its ability to apply to the Christian Church with little qualification.

The really vital passage is that in which Kant speaks of the churchly faiths, which have borne pure religious faith along with them, as eventually disappearing. This takes place when religion becomes freed of all empirical determining grounds and the pure religion of reason is able to sustain itself on rational/moral grounds.

Clarifying Kant's view is important because this passage is open to misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

The most obvious may be disposed of most easily. It could be argued that Kant was suggesting a reductionist view of religion, which may be characterised in this way: "morality is what makes man different from the beasts. Religion is at present a useful way in which to represent morality to man, but the time is coming when he will be able to dispense with the pretence, and when religion, as an outward prop to morality may be dispensed with altogether. Once man sees the significance of morality, religion becomes redundant. Religion, when critically examined reduces itself to mere morality and nothing else".

This view would make Kant appear a humanist agnostic, if not an atheist. This interpretation may be safely rejected for three reasons. First, Kant is neither atheist nor agnostic, as has been demonstrated, and therefore, whatever he may say about the disappearance of institutional religion, he is not rejecting the reality of God. Secondly, early on in R, he establishes the position that morality leads ineluctably to religion in order to explain the fact of morality as an aspect of human experience. Thirdly, in the actual passage itself, Kant declares that the purpose of the disappearance of religion is so that "God may be all in all". Therefore, whatever be his precise meaning, he is not reducing religion to morality. He is saying something quite different and distinct.

The other most arguable, but I think misguided interpretation of Kant's position as stated in the passage under discussion might be called an evolutionist position. This view may be generally stated in this way: "Mankind's history is the history of the evolution of a species. In

his primitive history, man explained things he could not understand by reference to supernatural powers. Hence religion began as organised superstition. Alongside this there was the need for men to organise themselves into societies, for which rules were made to regulate conduct. Religion and morality thus grew out of primitive needs, and were closely allied. To give morality sanction, it was defended as originating in these higher powers, and therefore religion became the outward garb of morality. In time, when man has evolved sufficiently, he will find that all his difficult questions are explained by physical science, and that he sees the need for regulated conduct without reference to the supernatural. Therefore, the need for religion will vanish with man's evolution".

Modern versions of this general thesis may be found in the writings of, for example, James George Frazer.

It is most unlikely that Kant would have accepted the implications for ethics contained in the view of Frazer,<sup>73</sup> considered as an example of the evolutionist position. Kant would have maintained the autonomy of morality, and would have rejected the view that morality can be considered as having evolved from religion. For Kant, morality could never be interpreted in any naturalistic language. The Categorical Imperative is part of the structure of human personality, and this does not come by environmental influence, such as education. It is part of the essence of rational humanity. It is not

<sup>73</sup> James George Frazer (1854-1941) The Golden Bough. Frazer argues that man's mental development is traceable through three stages - magic, religion, and science. In the final state, man becomes self-reliant.

related to religion as something which emerges from religion. Rather, it is unconditioned moral experience which gives rise to the need for faith. Therefore, the idea that morality evolved from religion is quite opposite to the position which Kant adopts. Pure religious faith arises out of moral experience, and not vice versa.

Clement J. Webb uses the term evolution<sup>74</sup> when speaking of this passage, but it is an inappropriate term which carries difficult and dangerous (from the Kantian point of view) overtones, the nature of which has been defined. Evolution implies the process of something developing out of something else. As has been stated, in Kant's view, religious faith developed out of moral experience, and not vice versa.

Therefore, how may Kant's view be described? It is neither reductionist or evolutionist, but it does see a new phase or era of mankind's life coming into being.

"The integuments within which the embryo first developed into a human being must be laid aside when he is to come into the light of day".<sup>75</sup> This metaphor suggests that the new era will emerge like the birth of new life. The choice of this metaphor is apparently deliberate. It is related to St. Paul's words about 'mankind growing up',<sup>76</sup> and suggests some change in mankind itself.

A day will come when the pure religion of reason will be embraced by all men, and when the approximations

<sup>74</sup> Webb (op. cit.) p. 141.

<sup>75</sup> R p. 112.

<sup>76</sup> 1 Cor. 13:11.

to truth contained in the churchly faiths will vanish with the adulthood of man. Of what is Kant thinking? Perhaps he was reflecting on the way in which the Renaissance grew out of the Middle Ages, and of how the Aufklärung had sprung from within the womb of European culture itself. Perhaps he even saw the Aufklärung as setting in motion the mechanism by which the transition he saw would come about. This could be substantiated from the paragraph in R where he says that the process is working itself out now and that "a public foothold" for his views has already been gained.<sup>77</sup>

In connection with Kant's universalism, this passage is certainly very important. Leaving aside the question of when this change comes about, and the question of how man with his innate radical evil can effect such a change from within, the significance of the passage is unmistakable. Kant sees certain things quite clearly. First, he sees that churchly faiths, while conveying the true religion to men in the present, will eventually become redundant when men see the nature of rational faith for themselves. Secondly, he sees morality as the one common factor in all human experience which can transcend barriers of language and race, and therefore as THE unifying factor for mankind. He sees thirdly, the faith which morality necessarily implies eventually superseding these approximations or vehicles of real faith. Adding to these convictions the optimism of the Aufklärung itself, Kant inevitably sees the day of the Kingdom of God on earth - the day when the pure moral faith of reason will be the universal faith of all men. This will come about, not by a revolution, but by a gradual

transition, as mankind reaches true adulthood.

If this passage is to be properly understood, it must be seen in a proper context. It belongs to Kant's philosophy of history. However, Kant did not work out a philosophy of history in the same manner in which he worked out the other aspects of the critical philosophy.

By all accounts, he was deeply interested in everything that went on around him,<sup>78</sup> and he certainly was not ignorant of either the great movements of history as history existed for him,<sup>79</sup> nor was he unaware of what was happening even in other parts of the world.<sup>80</sup> However, he made no claim to be a historian. His interest in history was philosophical. This meant that there had to be a connection with reason of a quite definite form. What Kant meant by history is well defined by Lewis White Beck: "Philosophy for Kant is a priori knowledge from concepts; history is empirical, not a priori, knowledge of human events. Moral philosophy requires us to assume that man is a non-temporal *homo noumenon*, possessing real freedom; science deals with man only as a temporal *homo phaenomenon*, behaving under laws of nature. But human actions, including moral actions take place on the stage of nature, and history is the recounting of the movement of man from the state of being a mere part of

<sup>78</sup> His various correspondence with the Emperor on the subject of his writings, and his references to the situation indicate his understanding of contemporary politics. Also some of his shorter writings on "Schwärmerei" or "Enlightenment" imply a clear grasp of the contemporary thought.

<sup>79</sup> Kant was an early admirer of the French Revolution cf. "An Old Question raised again: Is the Human race constantly progressing" H p. 144.

<sup>80</sup> Kant refers to China and Japan P p. 105.

the mechanism of nature to the state of being the creator and citizen of the world of culture, where he can eventually come to know and perform his duties and realise his moral ends.

The philosophy of history then, like the philosophy of art and the philosophy of biology as expounded in the Critique of Judgement, must be a conceptual link between Kant's two worlds of nature and morality".<sup>81</sup>

Beck recognised that Kant never worked out his position in this regard in detail. That is to say, he never drafted even the outline of a complete philosophy of history. However, the notion of a rational connection between the critical philosophy and the discussion of history is implicit. The terminology he uses should be read against the background of the KRV and KPV. For example, in the work he entitles "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View", the term Idea has special significance. What he is looking for is an Idea of Pure Reason. This means of course a concept necessary for the explanation and ordering of our theoretical knowledge or for our practical or moral guidance. What therefore Kant is looking for in history is an Idea, or a concept or set of concepts which are necessary for the understanding in order that historical experience may be rationally grasped, so that men may better realise the ideal which is within history.

The first two theses of that same essay indicate precisely this point: "First thesis: All natural capacities of a creature are destined to evolve completely to their natural end ..... Second Thesis: In man (as the

<sup>81</sup> H p. 11 ff.

only rational creature on earth) those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual."<sup>82</sup>

Taken together these statements and the amplification which Kant offers of them imply that he sees within history some quite specific purpose or end, which is to be realised by man in community. He sees mankind's greatest single problem as the need to achieve a universal civic society which administers law equally for all men.<sup>83</sup> This of course raises the problem of world peace between different communities, and Kant's later essay, P, is an attempt to work out the basis for such an international agreement. The eighth thesis of the essay states quite explicitly all that has been argued for thus far: "The history of mankind can be seen, in the large, as the realisation of Nature's secret plan to bring forth a perfectly constituted state as the only condition in which the capacities of mankind can be fully developed, and also bring forth that external relation among states which is perfectly adequate to this end".<sup>84</sup> Kant himself sees that philosophy must undertake to expound the end which nature has designated as the goal of history. He feels himself that better understanding of this can only help men to achieve such a goal.

It should be a little clearer now that Kant's notion of a time when all churchly faiths disappear and the pure moral faith of reason is established is related to a definite conviction about the purposiveness of human

<sup>82</sup> H p. 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> H p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> H p. 21.

history, and that he is not merely speculating aimlessly about a Utopian era. He is neither speaking about reducing religion to morality, nor about evolution in the sense already defined. He is speaking about a teleology within history, which is necessary for human understanding, in order to view properly man's origin and destiny within history. The importance of churches in bringing about this ideal Kant recognises, because they are temporary vehicles of pure moral faith. In time, of course, man may dispense with them.

The specific role of Christianity is discussed in a short work entitled "The End of All Things" which appeared in 1794, after R, but which is a useful supplement.

Kant discussed the apocalyptic conception of the End of the World and the Biblical conception of a Last Judgement. His views here, which are basically that theoretical reason cannot discuss such ideas, are fundamentally those which are contained in R. He sees both moral value and certain moral danger in the notion of a Last Judgement. This idea he had also expounded in R.

However, for the immediate discussion, the most relevant aspect of this short essay is the clear contrast Kant draws between the contemporary ecclesiastical clericalism in Germany and the pure moral faith of reason - his own moral interpretation of Christianity. This is of course the distinction between pure religious faith, and the churchly faiths which are dominated by clerics. Kant sees true Christianity as a way to avert an unnatural end to the world, and as a means of achieving the end for which it was created. He says that "Christianity aims to promote love for the observance

of its duty in general and elicits it too, because the founder of this religion speaks not in the character of a dictator who impresses people by a will that demands obedience, but speaks rather in the character of a humanitarian who brings to the heart of his fellow-men their own well-understood<sup>85</sup> wills, according to which they would act spontaneously of themselves, if they proved themselves fitting".<sup>86</sup>

This passage draws the contrast between fides elicitā, the freely assented faith spoken of in R,<sup>87</sup> and fides imperata, a commanded faith.

In the closing passage to the essay, he unfolds in a summary form, his view of what Christianity can do if permitted to do so, and how it may be distorted: "Should Christianity once reach the point where it ceases to be worthy of love (which might well happen if it were armed with dictatorial authority instead of its gentle spirit) then a natural antipathy and insubordination toward it would be bound to become the predominant mode of men's thinking, since no neutrality prevails in matters of morality (still less a coalition of conflicting principles). And the Antichrist who is considered to be the harbinger of Doomsday would then take up his reign presumably founded on fear and selfishness,".<sup>88</sup>

It should be quite clear that Kant was referring to the dangers implicit in such a body as the Commission set up to examine all religious writings proposed for publication. In R he speaks critically of clericalism in connection with the religious illusion. This has

<sup>85</sup> wohlverstanden

<sup>86</sup> H p. 82-83.

<sup>87</sup> R p. 152.

<sup>88</sup> H p. 84.

already been discussed. However, his closing sentence is highly significant: "Then, however, Christianity though indeed intended to be the universal world religion would not be favoured by the workings of fate to become so, and the (perverse) end of all things (in a moral point of view) would come to pass".<sup>89</sup>

From this, I think two conclusions may be safely drawn. First, Kant sees morality and the faith it calls forth as a determining factor in the history of mankind. He sees it as the framework for conduct and understanding of life which Nature or God has designed as the means of achieving the ideal end. Secondly, that a time will come, (the end in a moral sense) when Christianity, the bearer of that moral faith has achieved universal world recognition. These two conclusions offer a more adequate interpretation of the passage from R originally under discussion.

However, it should be remembered that Christianity is only the bearer of pure moral faith, and this is the aspect of it which in Kant's view will enable it to become the universal world religion. This he claims, it was intended to be. If it is a fides imperata, then it leads to moral perversion. History testifies to this, and so too do the intolerant attitudes of all authoritarian forms of Christianity. However, where men's minds are freely illuminated by the moral insights of rational faith as first conveyed to them through the media of Christianity, then a universal faith for all is possible, and by the universal respect for the law, the Ideal of History may be achieved.

These considerations take the argument to the peak of Kant's Christian Universalism. This provides the full context of thought within which to view not only the original passage from R (p 112-3) under discussion, but indeed all of R. Kant's philosophical theology leads him to the need for a philosophy of history. This philosophy of history is the Idea of a universal history, which being an Idea of Reason, is also a matter of faith. It is only within such a universal history that the full significance of Christianity may be expressed.

Kant's conception of Christianity founded upon his ethical theism is the conception of a Christian universalism which can be fully defined only through the Idea of a universal history.

Whether or not Kant succeeded in either adequately expounding his full conclusion, or in substantiating the foundations upon which it stands, must be a separate matter. At least he may be commended for his vision in recognising the challenge to create a universal history founded upon his own understanding of faith.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE RELEVANCE OF KANT'S VIEW OF FAITH

Having defined, criticised where relevant, and defended where necessary the Kantian view of faith, and having clarified the Glaubensplatz which was Kant's considered conclusion to the Critical Philosophy, it remains now to evaluate his position, and make some general observations upon the way in which he influenced later thinkers, and upon whether or not his views have any relevance for the present.

Three features of Kant's whole programme make his view of faith both valuable and important. First, there is the fact that he attempted to offer a rational defence for religious faith. Successful or not, he at least made the attempt. Secondly, he completely secularised ethics. However, by separating religion and ethics, he did not use this to the disadvantage of religious faith. He rather used the autonomy of ethics as a position from which to derive the necessity of faith. And thirdly, he attempted to lift Christianity out of a narrow form of expression, and present it in a form in which was all-inclusive and potentially universally meaningful, if not actually universally acceptable.

Taking these points in turn, there is first his concern to present a rational view of faith. While many thinkers would be unhappy with the idea of reducing faith to a species of reason, albeit moral reason, the fact that Kant did this should not be taken to imply that he meant to demean faith. Rather he appeared to wish to elevate faith, and distinguish it from blind faith which led to Schwärmerei.

Kant saw the dangers which resulted from a wedge being driven between reason and faith: "The further

story of the continued agitation for a Faith moving more and more away from Reason is known. The examination of candidates for clerical offices was entrusted to a Faith Commission with a pietistic flavour which drove hosts of conscientious candidates away from theology to the overcrowded Law Faculty".<sup>1</sup>

Kant believed that people were being driven from religion in general, and that potential clergymen were being driven to study law as an alternative to theology because of the divorce within theological thought of faith from reason. The fact that this concerned him surely proves that he was not unsympathetic to religion. This should also set in proper perspective Hamann's comment<sup>2</sup> about the theological students who scoffed at religion.

Kant in his writings was attempting to make religious faith reasonable to men. He was attempting to say that it was not irrational for man to have a religious faith - faith, however, understood in a particular way.

In a letter to Frederick William, he declared his concerns while defending himself against the charges made: of his writings he says that "..... they were only written as scholarly discussions for specialists in theology and philosophy in order to determine how religion

1 "Der Streit" GR p. 330.

2 Hamann to Herder (letter dated 18th August, 1785) tr. R. Gregor Smith Hamann p. 264: "Yesterday I visited our court preacher Schulz, who gave me the papers concerning a phenomenon which has caused quite a stir. It concerns a band of scoffers of religion, consisting of fifty students of theology. They call themselves Kantians ....." (Religion should perhaps be understood as that of churchly faiths as distinct from the pure religion of reason).

may be inculcated most clearly and forcefully into the hearts of men ..... 3. I am not guilty of depreciating Christianity in that book, since it contains no assessment of any actual revealed religion. It is intended merely as an examination of rational religion".<sup>3</sup>

Kant defends faith because, in his view, it arises naturally out of moral experience. The postulates of pure practical reason give rise to the need for rational faith, and therefore there was no blind leap involved from reason to faith in Kant's thought. Reason in its practical employment created the need for rational faith. This is Kant's central argument.

In an excellent discussion of Kant's moral argument for God's existence, contained in the KIV (which is part of the overall train of thought which leads up to the necessity for 'moral faith') Professor W.H. Walsh makes some interesting and relevant observations. He begins by asking this question: "What is the attraction of this (Kant's) way of looking at religion, and what is its value?"<sup>4</sup>

His answer is that it fundamentally treats religion as something rational. Therefore he claimed, Kant was attempting to be helpful to the uncommitted or discerning mind. Walsh thinks of the person who has sympathy for religious faith, but who has intellectual reservations. He believes that in Kant's thought, he is presented with the idea that faith is essentially a rational state of mind and attitude, and therefore faith is compatible with reason: I quote his own excellent words in full: "The

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Frederick William (October 12th 1794) 2 p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. 49 1963 pp 285-286.

attraction lies in the possibility it offers, a possibility which has a particular appeal to contemporary philosophers, of combining a tough-minded, scientific approach to claims to knowledge, with a repudiation of the extremer kinds of materialism. It is not easy for people brought up on a diet of Locke, Berkley and Hume to escape the insistent question, 'From what impression was that idea derived?'; the embarrassment of answering this question when the idea concerned is that of God need not be described. But to go on from there to the conclusion that religious beliefs are of merely sociological interest is too violent a step for many of us. Ready as we are to acknowledge the tremendous advances which have been made in natural knowledge we are nonetheless reluctant to accept the doctrine of the omniscience of science, the view that the scientist has the final answer to every question. A dispassionate survey of the evidence suggests that there are practices which can claim rational warrant in their own right, and among these it is suggested, are at any rate, some of the practices of religion".<sup>5</sup>

Having stated the dilemma of the uncommitted thinker, the man of reason, Walsh indicates where Kant's position may be helpful: "The attraction of the Kantian type of theory is that it provides a philosophical basis for this way of thinking. It keeps the world safe for the scientist without showing the door to the moralist and the religious man. And though the religious man is not always grateful for this kind of support - he complains that a Kant or a Braithwaite fails altogether to take account of the

<sup>5</sup> Walsh op. cit.

cognitive claims which religion involves, or again he complains that they are insensitive to the importance of corporate religious organisations and traditions - it may well be that it is the best independent support he can get. Assuming that he does not want to put his trust in blind faith, and in so doing, part company from those who would find such a step irrational and indeed repulsive, there is probably no better philosophical position he can call to his aid".<sup>6</sup>

Kant, according to Walsh, has philosophically argued for the compatibility of maintaining the best insights of physical science along with moral and religious beliefs.

Kant's rational approach to religion deserves respect on these grounds.

A rider may be added, that acceptance of the entire Kantian system is not necessary in order to benefit from its existence. Kant started from the moral law, and from there philosophically developed his understanding of faith. It is not implied in accepting the validity of the exercise itself, that one must also accept in detail the manner in which the exercise is conducted. Therefore, some may part company with Kant on one aspect, and others on another aspect. This does not affect the Kantian purpose of presenting religious faith in a rational light, nor does it affect the many valuable insights which that programme contains. For example, the distinction between the agent and observer standpoint, in the defence of freedom in G is extremely valuable, and has been used independently. The argument that morality

<sup>6</sup> Walsh op. cit.

leads to religion, or the distinction between pure religious faith and churchly faiths: or again the very conception of a pure moral faith of reason itself - all are very valuable and significant insights. Others could be cited, and many have been already discussed at length where this has been relevant.

Kant's rational faith may be peremptorily dismissed by no one - neither by the philosopher, or else he refutes reason itself, nor by the religious man, or else he fears the searching light of reasoned thought.

The second important feature of Kant's view of faith besides its rationality is that it entailed first the secularisation of ethics and secondly, the development of religious faith as a necessary consequence of autonomous moral experience. Kant was attempting to discover an independent ground for the establishment of religious faith from totally non-theological factors. This is a valuable contribution to the philosophy of religion. Lewis White Beck says of Kant's definition of religion that it "acknowledges a dimension of moral law that was taken from it by the Copernican Revolution in ethics. Sittengesetz and Moralgesetz were relatively new words in German philosophy when Kant wrote; and prior to Kant they meant a law for morality drawn from the will of God, as a supplement to natural and positive law. Kant secularised the conception of moral law, against the theonomic doctrines of both the Wolffians (e.g. Baumgarten) and the critics of Wolff (especially Crusius) and thereby erected what has been called 'the first non-theological

philosophical ethics since Thomasius,<sup>8,7</sup>.

Kant refuted the idea that morality was a sub-department of theology, and lifted it entirely out of theological control. The distinction between the idea of a natural law of God, or morality as the expression of Divine law, and morality as the self-subsistent categorical imperative which has authority of itself was made complete by Kant. The former notion of 'natural law' as commanded by God, such as may be found in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church therefore came to be in the same difficulty as the books in the library of Alexandria which either contradicted the Koran or expounded it. To the devout, neither was necessary. Kant argued that if church laws, even with alleged Divine sanctions, contradicted the moral law, then they were wrong. If they coincided with the moral law, then it was their morality which entitled them to claim human obedience, and not their ecclesiastical status.

However, from this position, Kant developed the arguments in the KIV and R which from the standpoint of practical reason establish the need for the pure moral faith of reason. Kant's secularisation of morality, so to speak, becomes the basis for his moral theology. Kant's faith should be distinguished from classical deism

7 Lewis White Beck 'A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason' . (Phoenix 1966) p. 280.

8 Beck's reference and quotation is from Gesetz und Sittengesetz by Herbert Spiegelberg. The book gives an account of the development of the concept of moral law as distinct from the notion of natural or divine law. It underlines therefore, Kant's originality in concepts and terminology, and assists in clarifying his general position.

in that deism was erected upon the foundations of a natural theology which Kant himself rejects in the KRV. His foundation is that of ethical theism which he defined and developed in R.

As Professor Walsh said in the passage quoted earlier, Kant offers the best independent philosophical justification of the need for religious faith that has been hitherto made. However, Walsh also has remarked that not all men of religious faith have unequivocally welcomed Kant's contribution to the debate. Many have reservations because Kant does not take account to their satisfaction of all the facets of what they require as essential parts of such belief. I have already tried to argue that Kant's views in R can be called Christian in that they are as legitimate an attempt to express the truths for which Christianity exists as any that have been made in the history of Christian thought. Kant was attempting to follow that line of Christian tradition which has always felt that Christianity's essential truth is capable of wider significance of expression than Christian theology or the Church is capable of affording it. Kant has attempted to do this, and this, of course, is the third great feature of his thought.

Liesewetter, one of Kant's contemporary disciples wrote to him in the following terms to express his recognition of Christian truth within Kant's system: "I am convinced ..... that the fundamental principle of your moral system is perfectly harmonious with the Christian religion, perhaps even that if Christ had heard and understood you he would have said 'Indeed, that is

what I intended to say in speaking of the love of God'."<sup>9</sup>

It has already been demonstrated that Kant's categorical imperative is not inconsistent with Jesus' teaching in the "Sermon on the Mount", and that the authority for Jesus' pronouncements may well be derived from their moral authority, rather than from His personal right to speak. If this is not ruled out by the manner in which Jesus' spoke, then Jesus could be assumed to have accepted the authority of the moral law. Therefore, a view of universalism should be detectable in His thought. The New Testament record of Jesus sayings confirms this possibility.

In the description of the final judgement scene, Christ puts on his right, those who have lived righteously, and who have shown love - the highest expression of the moral law.<sup>10</sup> In the narrative of the Good Samaritan, credit goes to the representative of a religion which has been rejected, because he follows His sense of duty while the followers of the true faith (so called) fail in their sense of duty.<sup>11</sup> Again, when the woman of Samaria speaks with Jesus at the well, he rejects the attachment of the idea of worship to any geographical location, and demands universal worship of God in "Spirit and in Truth".<sup>12</sup> Finally, Jesus' own words about being complete, or perfect, are an indication of the breadth of His own vision.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Kant March 3rd, 1790 BA (Edn. 1913) XI 37.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 25:31 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 10; 29-37.

<sup>12</sup> John 4:16-24.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 5:48.

To that group of suggestive sayings and situations may be added the most famous of all, when He declares to His disciples ".... there are other sheep of mine, not belonging to this fold ....."<sup>14</sup>

Whether or not Jesus in fact uttered all these sayings Himself, or whether the tradition of the Church has influenced the transmission or even creation of these texts, the New Testament recognises a universal principle of Divine self-revelation. In the course of interpreting this through the historical form of Jesus, the New Testament writers, in their different ways and terminologies, tried to free Jesus from any particularities which would make Him the property of any single religious group. Jesus own sayings are quite at one with this idea, and so also is Kant's attempt to express Christianity through morality. Kant's thought in fact goes further, because insofar as Christianity is the only moral religion, then for Kant morality is the key to Christian universalism. Christianity is moral in that it commands man to achieve holiness irrespective of reward and it bases knowledge of the law's demand upon man himself, and not upon any historical dogmas.

Even a stalwart opponent of heresy, like St. Augustine was able to say that the true faith had always been in existence, but only was able to be called Christianity after the historical event called Jesus of Nazareth. This certainly is Kant's position, and it appears to be well supported.

Is Kant's Christian universalism valuable or relevant to the present time? His universalism taken as the

<sup>14</sup> John 10:16.

conclusion of his whole position has several defects and weaknesses.

First, on account of the inevitable historical location of Kant, he was severely limited in the range of materials upon which he could draw in order to construct ideas, or test his own ideas of a Christian universalism. As already stated, I have no doubt that his insights are invaluable in the self-criticism of the church, and perhaps in the 20th Century ecumenical dialogue. If Kant's moral criteria were considered more seriously, there is here the basis for a universal conception of the Christian Church, and therefore for the creation of a uniform set of symbols for the basic common values of Western society as a whole. In other words, Kant's value as a prophet within Western civilisation, where his presuppositions may be understood, is beyond doubt. Whether or not his claims to have discovered a formula for all faiths, (and by this he meant 'Christian, Mohammedan, Jewish' and so on,) may be defended, is open to some doubt.

The ability of Kant's universalism to extend beyond Christianity itself, while a valiant attempt may not be viable. For example, he never mentions Buddhism in R, and this, therefore, excludes from his considerations the beliefs of several hundred million people. In addition, modern scholarship has revealed the subtlety and intricacy of the great varieties of thought within even Buddhism itself. This, taken along with the fact that almost every world religion springs from a different cultural setting, whose thought forms are almost incapable of comparison, makes Kant's notion look like a fantasy.

However, to be fair to him, careful attention should

be paid to what he did suggest. He was not suggesting a programme of comparisons. He was arguing from his point that the central core of Christianity was its ethically grounded faith. While this faith could stand by itself on rational grounds it was most adequately expressed for human reason in the form of the Christian Church. It was for such an ethical heart, which was essentially Christian, that Kant was looking in these other faiths. His aim was to find an ideal which could bind all humanity into one, and this purpose is certainly close to the heart of the New Testament universalism. There, we find Christ used as a symbol, for God's reconciliation of all humanity and the whole universe to Himself. Paul's universalism was centred upon Christ as a historically existent person. Kant's universalism is based upon the moral ideal, (which of course is the archetype in the mind equivalent to the idea of a Son of God).

So far as the problem of finding a common ideal for all men in the moral law is concerned, Kant may be in considerable difficulty. However, one aspect of his programme is of value. He sees the universally true religion extending through the processes of history in the form of the ethical commonwealth.

Quite significantly, the three greatest passages in the New Testament which stress the 'universalist' aspect of Christianity deal with the meaning of universality as an aspect of the church's life.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it is within the concept of the Christian community that at least one important feature of the New Testament's universalism is to be found. This can be simply related to Kant's idea of an ethical commonwealth. Kant, so to speak,

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:21-26; Romans 5:12-19; Colossians 1:15-23.

removed the first century mythology of the Church as the 'Body of Christ', and spoke of it as an ethical commonwealth of men under the good principle, binding themselves together to defend themselves against the assault of the evil principle. In a manner parallel to the way in which the New Testament argued that since Christ's saving work had cosmic dimensions, and that therefore the Church must have a cosmic role to fulfil, Kant argued that since the moral archetype was present in human reason, the ethical commonwealth should find, in time, universal acceptance by all men. In these two regards, namely universalism as an aid to interpreting the church's role, and to assessing the different forms of Christianity, Kant's views have contemporary value.

On the influence of Kant's ideas upon philosophy, books endless in number have been and will continue to be written, as the subtle facets of Kant's thought disclose themselves to sensitive scholars. Of his influence in theology, comparatively little has been written. One of the most succinct and positive statements of Kant's influence on theology was offered to the American Philosophical Association in 1904 by G.W. Knox: "The influence of Kant in theology has been in three principle lines. First, certain theologians accepted the arguments of the 'Critique of Pure Reason' and the conclusion that God is therefore unknowable. Nonetheless they attempt a theology by exalting faith in revelation through the Church and the Holy Scriptures, thus maintaining that that which is unknowable by reason may be accepted by faith. The second movement followed lines laid down by Schleiermacher on the one side and Hegel on the other. Accepting the position of Kant as destructive

of the old conception of God, they attempt to find Him immanent in the world of feeling and reason. Under the influence of Hegel, theology was reconstructed, the central point being given to the doctrine of the Trinity, though this was stated in forms scarcely in accordance with the traditions of the Church. The theology, however, suffered the fate of the philosophy and now has few representatives.<sup>16</sup> The third movement may be called neo-Kantian and is often designated by the name Ritschl. Ritschl, however, obtained his epistemology through Lotze, though in his later period, he made a renewed study of Kant, not perhaps altogether to the advantage of the system. This school holds theology to be a practical science, its relationship to metaphysics being the relationship which all sciences must hold to it, and its material being given in the facts of the religious experience of mankind".<sup>17</sup>

The three lines of influence which Knox detects are worth considering in a little more detail. The first group of theologians he mentions is still represented, perhaps because they hold a position which is always congenial to some. They accept the noumenal and therefore unknowable nature of God, but instead of looking more fully into the Kantian position, they find refuge from what they see as an inevitable agnosticism in a doctrine of revelation and a view of faith to which Kant himself would under no circumstances have subscribed. They make the same mistake of exegesis as Vaihinger,

<sup>16</sup> This statement would require to be qualified in light of the revived interest in Hegel from many quarters.

<sup>17</sup> Journal of Philosophy 1905 p 45-46.

only they take refuge in a positivism based on revelation, whereas Vaihinger settled for a positivism based on science. Finding that natural theology, as a discipline conceived of on traditional lines was impossible on the basis of the RV, these theologians developed a new style of positivism based on revelation. This positivism developed into an extreme form which not only saw natural theology as impossible, but even condemned the very idea as an exercise in human pride. Karl Barth's rejection of all natural theology falls into this class. Scripture becomes the source of human understanding of what is unknowable. Barth is the 20th Century's most full and complete exposition of this position, but there were certainly others before him.

Professor Emil Brunner has developed some lines of thought on the relationship between Kierkegaard and Kant which suggest that in one or two respects only, Kierkegaard drew implicitly upon Kant.<sup>18</sup> He connects Kierkegaard's development of thought with the Kantian recognition of the limits of reason. Kierkegaard's view of God, and Kant's noumenal world are paralleled by Brunner, and from there he moves to the realm of practical reason, and to the problem of the weight reason carries in ethical argument and then on to radical evil. While perhaps the comparison between them must be strictly limited and controlled, so that it extends no further

<sup>18</sup> Emil Brunner "Das Grundproblem der Philosophie bei Kant und Kierkegaard" (Zwischen den Zeiten 1924) p. 31-47. Brunner developed the idea of a similarity between Kant and Kierkegaard much farther than most scholars would probably accept. The article quoted contains his argument. While there are similarities even in the ethical thought of both, there are fundamental differences which cannot be overlooked.

than the recognition of a similarity between Kierkegaard's view of God, and Kant's noumenal order, such a limited comparison is valuable in its own right. However, comparison between the two concepts of faith which arose in each case is fruitless, because Kierkegaard also takes refuge in a positivism of revelation, with this same group of theologians who recognised the significance of Kant's argument.

More recently, it has been suggested that Kant's view of the unknowability of God has had an influence on the development of the "Death of God" theologies which have emerged. James Collins, in an article on this theme, claims to detect three Kantian roots in this debate. His arguments, I find to be unconvincing.<sup>19</sup>

It is interesting to contrast the analogous development within philosophy and theology of the Kantian doctrine of the limits of reason. The theologians revelled because the cause of theology had been justified, and a new place for faith discovered - albeit, not the place for which Kant had made room. The philosophers were not so enthusiastic, since Kant had dug the grave of traditional metaphysics. The logical completion of the philosophical development was a positivism based on science, the one established discipline. Philosophy was reduced to merely analysing concepts and clarifying the meaning of words. The theologians developed a positivism based on revelation in contrast to the philosophers' positivism based on science.<sup>20</sup> This has led to a spirit of rivalry between

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix V.

<sup>20</sup> Leaders in this school are Rudolph Carnap, Karl Popper and A. J. Ayer.

the disciplines concerned, which could hardly be a more un-Kantian consequence of the development of Kantian thought.

The second line which Knox identifies as developing from Kant, is as he says, marked by Schleiermacher on the one side and Hegel on the other. So far as Schleiermacher is concerned the opposition between Kant and Hamann should be sufficient to indicate the vast difference which exists between the standpoints of Schleiermacher and Kant. Schleiermacher made his starting point for theology what happened within the believing soul, and this opened the flood gates of irrationality. Regarding Hegel, it is not too difficult to see how the connection is made in thought between Kant and Hegel, just as it was between Kant and Hamann, but similarly, it is quite misguided.

Hegel, in his claim that human thought was able to know reality, implied the ultimate identity of thought and being. He quite simply elided the phenomenal and noumenal worlds of Kant, and therefore claimed that knowledge of reality was possible. Therefore, religion in Hegel's view was defined as the Divine Spirit's knowledge of itself through the mediation of the finite spirit.<sup>21</sup> It is not until man views God as Subject or Spirit that he becomes knowable. God is 'the unity of infinite and finite; and our sole concern is to find out how the finite is incorporated with the infinite'.<sup>22</sup>

Little more of Hegel need be quoted to illustrate

21 Hegel Philosophy of Religion (Aegahn, Paul, Trech, & Trubner 1895 tr. Speirs) Vol. I p. 206.

22 Hegel Philosophy of Religion Vol. II p. 126.

that however majestic his thought, or breathtaking the dimensions in which he thinks, in order to achieve such a possibility, he rejected the most important distinction of the Critical Philosophy. However, theology did proceed on these lines, and Hegel became the progenitor of the idealist school of philosophy with its corresponding theological partner.

The third movement after Kant which Knox speaks of he calls neo-Kantian, and identifies with Albrecht Ritschl.<sup>23</sup> Ritschl began as a Hegelian, but in time rejected the speculative rationalism of Hegel with its claim that the true basis for theology is found in speculative theoretical metaphysics. He also simultaneously rejected all forms of subjectivism, and with it, the contingent phenomenon of mysticism. Ritschl's position has been characterised as a theology of moral values, which at least sounds Kantian. Two quotations from his works might best illustrate his ideas: "The distinction of worth or value is of no importance whatever for the metaphysical theory of the universe, whereas the religious view of things rests on the fact that man distinguishes himself in worth from the phenomena around him".<sup>24</sup> "In every religion what is sought with the help of the superhuman spiritual power revered by man is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds

<sup>23</sup> Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1859) Born in Berlin, studied at Bonn and Halle, Heidelberg and Tübingen. At Tübingen he wrote a criticism of the Baur hypothesis. He was Professor of Dogmatics at Göttingen from 1859 onwards and had a chair from 1864 until his death.

<sup>24</sup> Theologie und Metaphysik. p. 9 & 34.

himself as both a part of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature".<sup>25</sup>

His theology is dominated by ethical rather than metaphysical categories. For example, his religious estimate of Christ as God perfectly revealed arises from the ethical estimate of Christ's moral perfection. This is distinctively Kantian. The aim of the Christian religion is the realisation of the Kingdom of God; which is both the highest religious good and the moral ideal for men. This again is clearly Kantian. In the second passage quoted above, the distinction between man as part of the causal process and man as a moral agent is drawn. This too is Kantian.

There is little doubt that Ritschl and his theological insights come nearest to a Kantian family line in theology. Others followed in the succession of Ritschl,<sup>26</sup> but the entire school might be criticised for the same fault as the theological positivists were guilty of committing. It left the existence of man dichotomised into a world of scientific reality and an almost ghostly world of moral values. The two worlds, while having some features in common in their structure, have no commerce with each other.

This was the basic motive behind the revival of Kant which took place amongst philosophers during the latter part of the 19th Century. Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) saw the philosophy of Kant as material for a philosophical position which would reconcile physical science with the

<sup>25</sup> Justification and Reconciliation p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm Herrmann (1846-1922), Theodor Haering (1848-1928) and the famous liberal theologian Adolf Harnack (1850-1931) are the best examples of Ritschlian neo-Kantianism in theology.

necessary demands of morality and life itself. As he wrote: "Philosophy can live only as the science of values which are universally valid ..... Philosophy has its own field and its own problem in those values of universal validity which are the organising principle for all the functions of culture and civilisation and for all the particular values of life. But it will describe and explain these values only that it may give an account of their validity; it treats them not as facts but as norms".<sup>27</sup> But even in these words, Windleband clearly found fact and value two distinct realms.

Therefore, in both its theological and philosophical forms, neo-Kantianism as represented by the thinkers cited failed to achieve the Kantian compatibility between the world of scientific fact and the realm of moral values, between reason and faith.

From this emerges one of Kant's greatest attributes as a philosopher. He attempted not a synthesis of faith and reason but a system in which the relative roles of faith and reason were distinguished and contrasted. Faith of course, ultimately became a species of reason, which could be used to argue the point that he never really solved the problem. However, this is unfair, because Kant demonstrated the compatibility of reason and faith, within his own premises. In this, he has no subsequent historical equal. This is why I have criticised the so-called neo-Kantian theologians who followed Ritschl and the neo-Kantian philosophers who followed Windleband, because each group failed to achieve this essential feature of Kant's thought.

Two obvious comments may now be made on Knox's view of the lines of influence which he sees as emanating from Kant. First, of the movements he mentions, none have originated from Kant. They may have arisen because of Kant, but none could be called Kantian. Each group failed to see either the totality of the Kantian position, or the ultimate goal which Kant was trying to reach: the reconciliation of the insights of physical science with the need for a religious faith, based on moral experience which could find universal acceptance.

The second comment arises from the first. There is apparently no type of theology which has drawn directly upon or been influenced by Kant's basic position that faith has moral origins. That is to say, no school or moral theology has arisen in consequence of Kant's contribution in this direction. Neither is there obviously any theological movement which has been inspired by Kant's attempt at a Christian universalism. Therefore, it might be argued that Kant's most important contribution to theology has never been recognised, or if it was, it does not lie within any of the schools of theology which have claimed to have originated from his position in some way.

The question remains to be answered: "who are the descendants of Kant in the contemporary theological scene; or did he die without an heir?" The solution to this problem, I would suggest, lies in considering the views of those thinkers, who while they may not owe a direct and obvious debt to Kant, were grappling on Kantian lines with the same set of questions with which Kant was pre-occupied. I would like to make specific reference to men

who although representing vastly differing standpoints, have these factors in common. Whether or not they were directly influenced by Kant's writings is not really important. In and through them, Kant's problems remain alive, and the insights which he formulated, they in turn have developed.

First, among those who have fastened on to the idea that ethical theism is a defensible position, and perhaps the best independent defence for religion that may be offered, is A. A. Taylor the philosopher. Also there is F. H. Tennant, who is the principal theological advocate of this position.

Secondly, in Martin Buber's philosophy of 'I and Thou', there is a restatement of certain themes in Kantian ethics. Buber draws the necessary theological implications which flow from them in a way which attempts to heal the division between science and religion. He tries to achieve this by working out a "Copernican Revolution", not for epistemology or ethics, but for human existence itself. By no stretch of the imagination could Buber be called a Kantian. However, his concern to close the gulf between the language of science and the language of religion is a Kantian concern.

Thirdly, in the philosophical faith of Karl Jaspers, I would suggest that there is an extension of Kant's pure moral faith of reason. A crude comparison or parallel is not possible. There are vast differences between Jaspers' position and Kant's. However, in so far as some form of faith is necessary in order to have a full understanding of life, and in so far as in both cases, the faith arises out of philosophical considerations, there are common

factors. Jaspers like Kant is looking for a faith which has universal significance which will unite men towards the realisation of their historical destiny, whatever it may be.

Finally, in the thought of contemporary German theologian, Wolfhart Rannenberg, there is the recognition of the inescapability for hermeneutics of the challenge to attempt a universal history, starting from biblical history. This seems to me the most contemporary expression of the problem of universality with which Kant was grappling.

In none of these instances am I implying any kind of assimilation. I am not suggesting that Kant was merely an ethical theist, or that all ethical theists are neo-Kantians. Nor again am I suggesting that Huber is a Kantian or that Kant was an 'existentialist' in the sense in which Huber may be described by that term. I am merely suggesting that insofar as these men have faced the same problems which Kant faced, Kant's work is continued in them.

In his short book 'Does God exist?'<sup>28</sup> A.E. Taylor attempts to show that moral experience, in order to be complete points beyond itself to the realm of religion. Taylor is well aware of the onslaught of scientifically grounded scepticism upon religious belief in general, and similarly in his larger work "The Faith of a Moralist", he insists that the world must be considered as one. That is to say that fact and value cannot be separated. Were this separation possible, it would then be impossible for any thinker to argue from ethics to the nature of

<sup>28</sup> 'Does God exist' (Fontana 1961), A.E. Taylor (1869-1945),  
Faith of a Moralist (MacMillan 1930)

reality.

The general position which Taylor adopts has certain distinctively Kantian features. By considering the facts of experience, and by serious recognition of the claims and judgements of the moral life, Taylor suggests that it implies a natural theology of God, grace and immortality. He explicitly acknowledges his debt to Kant in these words: "The 'speculative' reason which discovers law in the sequences of nature and the practical 'reason which prescribes law for the regulation' of our own volitions are, as Kant properly insisted, alike functions of one and the same intelligence. This is, expressed in its simplest form, the great hypothesis upon which all that we have been saying depends. The justification of our assumption that the principles of the moral law reveal the end for which nature exists is bound up with the view that the law is the expression of practical reason".<sup>29</sup> Taylor recognises that morality makes claims which are rational and justifiable, and that to deny this is almost to deny reason itself. This is indeed close to Kant. He says: "The old fashioned agnostic's refusal to allow any theological or metaphysical inferences to be drawn from moral principles can only be justified by the plea that these principles are no exigencies of universal reason, but mere instincts, or sentiments, specific to the particular animal man and so not truly authoritative".<sup>30</sup> This view, he effectively refutes.

The recognition of moral law possessing authority is of course a Kantian insight which has been recognised by moralists other than Kant, and a concept upon which

29 Does God Exist? p. 129.

30 Ibid. p. 129-130.

much has been built.<sup>31</sup> Consideration of moral experience is what leads Taylor to his particular style of ethical theism.

"It seems to me, then that really serious consideration of the moral life of man leads to something more than mere acceptance of Theism ....."<sup>32</sup> He says that consideration of the moral life leads to "belief in a Providence concerned with the destiny of every individual person and to the conviction that behind the visible scene of the world's history lies an unseen secret drama of the dealings of God with the individual soul ....."<sup>33</sup>

The Kantian spirit of the whole argument should be apparent. In the larger work, The Faith of a Moralist, his concern is with the nature of the good at which the moral life aims. For example, is it a good which may be realised within the lifetime of man, or is it one which he may only hope to obtain after death? He follows a line of argument which bears certain resemblances to the RV arguments for good and immortality. To be aware of the fact that life is finite is to have begun to see beyond its limitations, and of course, within a lifetime, the moral ideal is unattainable, and therefore also is the good at which the moral life aims. Therefore the moral

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bishop Butler Sermons (ed. G. Bell and Sons edit. by W.A. Matthews, SERMON II p. 57 and 53: Butler makes the point that conscience has authority, whereas desire or inclination has mere power or strength to entice. The authority of conscience is certainly akin to Kant's Categorical Imperative, and to the position Taylor adopts. Butler says: "There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man .... which without being consulted .... magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him, the doer (of the action) ...." p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Taylor Does God Exist? p. 109.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor Does God Exist? p. 110.

life points to an eternal good which is similar to Kant's *summum bonum*. The moral life itself, also implies a faith in these things: "To perform even the simplest and most familiar act of duty in the dutiful spirit means to recognise it as the thing which is supremely worthwhile and would remain supremely worth while were my whole existence at stake; of no act can it be demonstrated that it has this character of the supremely worthwhile ..... The moral life, followed with a single mind, constantly calls us to put to the hazard not only wealth or comfort, but the soul itself. If we escape its perils, we escape in the strength of a faith which "appearances" cannot daunt".<sup>34</sup>

This is the faith of the moralist which leads to the necessary affirmation of God and immortality.

Taylor's main departure from Kant lies in that he goes far beyond the limits which Kant set upon rational religion. Taylor accepts two concepts which Kant would have rejected. First he accepts grace as the necessary complement to man's moral effort. On Kant's own premises this may be logical. However, Kant himself refused to accept such an escape. The other concept which Taylor accepts is that of the possibility of a historical revelation as a complement to the work of natural theology itself. Taylor felt that while the primary concern of the philosopher is abstract and universal the concept of revelation was not unreasonable, if grace exists to enable man to attain the moral ideal. Morality for Taylor, in a slightly different way from Kant (and in its implications at least) still leads ineluctably to religion. However, Taylor's view of religion is not quite as

restricted as Kant's.

"Morality itself, when taken in earnest, thus leads direct to the same problems about 'grace' and 'nature', 'faith' and 'works', with which we are familiar in the history of Christianity, the religion which stands supreme above others in its 'inwardness' and takes the thought of regeneration of the self from its centre with unqualified seriousness".<sup>35</sup>

With the spirit and intent of this, Kant would have been in agreement, bearing in mind the two reservations mentioned.

F.R. Tennant (1866-1957) is a theological exponent of ethical theism, made into a positive basis for Christian theology. Like Kant, Tennant took seriously the problem of evil, and found also, like Kant, that the Christian doctrine of original sin was quite incompatible with his ethical insights. He argued that sin must be understood as "moral imperfection for which the agent is, in God's sight, accountable".<sup>36</sup> Tennant also was well acquainted with contemporary science, and felt that science and theology should not necessarily be in conflict.

In his work The Concept of Sin, he deals with the problem of evil, and in the larger Philosophical Theology he works out the general significance of his position.

<sup>35</sup> A.A. Taylor Faith of a Moralist p. 224.

<sup>36</sup> F.R. Tennant, The Concept of Sin p. 245. Reinhold Niebuhr in his Gifford Lectures rejected Tennant's views quite out of hand as modern Pelagianism (Nature & Destiny of Man Vol. I p. 262), his precise words being that Tennant's writings were "The most elaborate of modern Pelagian treatises". Oman's earlier remarks, already quoted, indicate Kant's affinity with Pelagius rather than Augustine, and the kinship of position between Kant and Tennant is thus stressed with regard to both their doctrines of evil, and their ethical theism.

His ethical theism is the basis of his Christian theology. In this respect he is close to Kant, because he sees morality as the pathway from ordinary experience to God. Three factors lie at the basis of his position. They are distinct, and yet must be understood in relation to each other - God, the Soul and the world. The pattern sounds familiarly Kantian, and moreover the manner in which he proceeds to elaborate his arguments.

To summarise briefly the aspects of Tennant which resemble Kant, first is the fact that the facts of experience must provide the raw materials for any beliefs which can claim respect. Experience begins with the self and the world in which it is situated. Human experience and the life of the self Tennant uses as a ground for argument for a soul. Here he differs from Kant. However, he fastens on to the idea of a teleological approach to the world which makes more sense than a purely causal interpretation of nature. It certainly offers a more full explanation of the world. Tennant is interested in the argument from design, stated in this teleological form. However, the real argument hinges upon his notion of moral experience as the factor which must be taken into account in offering any account of the world in which man lives. The moral argument, more or less as Kant advanced it is used to suggest that since man has moral experience, this is part of the purposes of the Creator who put man into the world. This is a thorough going ethical theism which holds that the realisation of the individual through moral values is the purpose of life.

From then, Tennant uses his ethical theism to criticise and reconstruct theology in the same way in

which Kant used the pure moral faith of reason to criticise churchly faiths. While acknowledging differences, I think there is sufficient similarity to justify comparison.

Passing now to Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue, Professor H.S. Paton says that "it contains at least two principles without which religion can hardly hope to stand at the present stage of civilisation.

The first principle is that religion and science are not two rival theories professing to explain the world in different ways. If they were, there is no doubt that one would have to be abandoned, and we cannot abandon science. But it is possible that they may represent two different points of view from which the world may be regarded, or - perhaps this is a better way of putting it - two different attitudes which may be taken to the world and in virtue of which the world itself may appear two-fold to us".<sup>37</sup>

Paton sees difficulties in how this should be worked out because he fears that it may lead into a doctrine of double truth. With this reservation stated, he proceeds to his second commendation of Buber's position.

"The second principle is the one I have propounded from the first - that religion is for the whole man. Religion cannot be based on a special faculty, an extra sense, a unique feeling, even if these are uneasily attached to rational concepts. Buber makes a real advance by insisting that religion must be an attitude of the whole man, an attitude necessarily accompanied both by feeling and by thought, and one which can be tested and confirmed in actual living".<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> H.S. Paton, The Modern Predicament (George Allen & Unwin 1961, p. 172.

<sup>38</sup> op. cit. p. 172.

Again, Professor Paton has reservations in detail concerning the manner in which Buber works out the implication of his position. However, he is in sympathy in principle with what Buber aims at achieving.

These two points are of particular significance in light of the criticisms I made of the neo-Kantian schools of philosophy and theology. Buber aims at reconciling the world of scientific fact with the realm of values, and of presenting an integrated view of man as a combination of reason and faith.

Having in his earlier years rejected mysticism as inconclusive, sporadic and not communicative about reality, Buber developed his philosophy of dialogue, centred on his doctrine of the person. He distinguishes two attitudes which man may adopt towards the world, and these attitudes are expressed in the two primary words "I-Thou" and "I-it".

"If I face a human being as my Thou, and say the primary word I-Thou to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things".<sup>39</sup>

"The primary word I-thou can be spoken only with the whole being, Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I say Thou".<sup>40</sup>

I-Thou is a word of relation, which means meeting or encounter - between subject and subject. It is in contrast to I-it which belongs to the realm of experience and things, where the relationship is that of subject and

39 I and Thou Martin Buber tr. R.G. Smith (T & T. Clark 1959) p. 8.

40 Buber op. cit. p. 11.

object.

"Take knowledge; being is disclosed to the man who is engaged in knowing, as he looks at what is over against him. He will indeed have to grasp as an object that which he has seen with the force of presence, he will have to compare it with objects, establish it in its order among classes of objects, describe and analyse it objectively. Only as an It can it enter the structure of knowledge".<sup>41</sup>

While the language Buber uses is poetic, and far removed from the language of Kant, the similarity of their aims should be emerging. The third Kantian formulation of the Categorical Imperative summarises this thought in a different way: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end".<sup>42</sup>

There are differences of approach in each with regard to how they individually approach the concept of person. Kant is the more strict in definition, relating the moral law to personality, so that it becomes part of the structure of personality. On the other hand, Buber's thought is that the person is more creative and his attitude is decisive whether or not, for him, another person becomes an It or a Thou. It is here that Buber's concept of dialogue finds no counterpart in Kant's thought, and here the two approaches vastly differ. However, the significance of the distinction between I-Thou and I-it and Kant's third formulation still bear comparison.

Buber's concept of relationship, which is similar

<sup>41</sup> Buber op. cit. p. 51.

<sup>42</sup> G p. 96.

to the realm of practical reason for Kant, leads on to the concept of an eternal Thou.

"The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the Eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou. Through this meditation of the Thou of all beings fulfillment, and non-fulfillment, of relations comes to them; the inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It".<sup>43</sup>

Buber is clearly trying to point to some 'noumenal' reality. "If you explore the life of things and of conditioned being you come to the unfathomable, if you deny the life of things and of conditioned being you stand before nothingness, if you hallow this life you meet the living God".<sup>44</sup>

In the same way that Kant's 'Noumena' is the recognition of the reality of the unconditioned or ultimate, the undefinable transcendent, Buber affirms the existence of the Eternal Thou. The necessity of moral experience drove Kant to his affirmation, while Buber's experience of relationship gives him a sense of something beyond which is of a similar order. The 'meeting point' of Buber's lines of relation, and Kant's Moral Governor of the Universe, have much in common.

Within moral experience, and within the framework of human relationships, there arises before people the necessity to recognise certain things. Upon consideration they see further to the need to speak about some Other

<sup>43</sup> Buber op. cit. p: 75:

reality, which may be styled in many ways. Professor Gregor Smith calls it transcendence, and in the following passage from him, the same insights of Kant and Buber are expressed in his own unique way: ".... when I say that the problem of transcendence is in the midst of human life I am demanding from the humanist and the Christian alike the recognition of something that is not in the first instance a matter of faith, and therefore of response to a given message about Christ, but simply a matter of sight, or everyday experience. I mean, that in every human situation there is a relation; a relation between the tool and the use of the tool; between the object under investigation and the investigator, between yourself and the other person with whom you have to do. Life is characterised by these relations. Above all in the relation between two persons it becomes clear that the relation is only possible because there is a difference. It is the otherness of the other which rises up before you, in conflict or in understanding. This is the basic manifestation of transcendence in human life. This is what faces you in every situation into which you enter without reserve or reduction. This otherness or transcendence is not an extra brought in from some remote sphere of understanding, but it is the central element which makes this situation, that is, the relation, the humanity of life, possible at all. An absolute solitary is not a human being".<sup>45</sup>

While Buber's I-Thou, Gregor Smith's transcendence in human life, and Kant's experience of the Categorical Imperative which leads to belief in the Moral Governor of the Universe cannot be simply equated, they have some-

thing in common. I think it is arguable that each was aware of an attitude of mind towards that which comes to people, compelling them to recognise something beyond themselves. Each characterises this in his own way and in his own terms. It is this similarity of origin rather than the different conclusions which each draws that is relevant. Again it could be added that Professor Gregor Smith's concept of secularism<sup>46</sup> is an attempt to span the gulf between the world of science and the realm of belief and value. However, these points are offered for consideration as illustrations of how important Kant's insights were. Later thinkers,<sup>47</sup> owing perhaps no direct debt to Kant, have fastened on to the problems which took hold of him, and have felt that knowledge of God may be possible from what in the widest possible sense could be called human experience.

A third line of descent which I would like to trace, not from Kant himself, but from the problems with which he was concerned, comes through Karl Jaspers. Jaspers' conception of reason has a breadth which is typical of the broad conception of reason found in Kant. Jaspers recognises the primacy of reason, but a reason which takes full and proper account of the non-rational and

46 R.G. Smith 'Secular Christianity' (Collins 1966)

47 Karl Heim 'Christian Faith and Natural Science' Karl Heim, with Buber's distinction between I-Thou and I-it as a basis, attempts to find a foundation for theology which is outside the reach of science, so that science and theology should not be seen as contestants fighting for supremacy within the one arena. I-Thou is the world of personal existence, whereas I-it is the world of facticity and therefore of scientific fact. cf. Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical reason, and with the fact that what one could not say in the sphere of theoretical reason, might necessarily have to be affirmed in the sphere of practical reason.

even irrational factors in human experience. He broadly recognises and draws distinctions between three areas of being. There is the realm of objects, and an object can include anything that may be objectified. This could include not merely physically existing entities, but also ideas, ideals, institutions, organisations. Secondly, there is the realm of existence itself, and in its characteristic modes of making decisions and living and acting, it cannot be objectified.<sup>48</sup> Finally, there is transcendence itself - God or Being in itself. Man in his existence encounters transcendence when he reaches the perimeter of his existence and when he realises that he is really helpless when confronted, for example, by death. Man then encounters transcendence, but not as an objective fact in the world. Neither, however, is it subjectively believed in or apprehended as a 'revelation'. Jaspers calls the perception and acknowledgement of it a mode of faith - philosophical faith which is a recognition of the dependence of the finite world upon something other and beyond - namely transcendence.

Jaspers philosophical faith has two characteristics which resemble Kant's notion of the pure moral faith of reason. First, it is a common faith which he claims all men are capable of sharing. While the terms of its definition differ extensively from Kant, the concerns from which both spring have a familiarity about them. Jaspers sees his philosophical faith as a source of universal basic knowledge. He says of the idea of universal basic knowledge that 'it is indeed a matter of faith. But this faith has no religious content that would exclude others; it is solely the faith in the

<sup>48</sup> cf. Kant's distinction between Agent & Observer stand-points.

possibility of unlimited mutual understanding. It is the faith that says: "Truth is what unites us".<sup>49</sup> His concern like Kant's is to identify a unifying factor through which men can affirm themselves without aggression and conflict. Kant saw his own pure moral faith of reason as the basis of a Christian universalism. Jasper sees his philosophical faith as a way in which Western civilisation can discover its true roots, which he affirms are in Biblical religion, and so rediscover the meaning of existence. Of interest here is the fact that Jaspers speaks primarily for Western civilisation, although he does claim that his philosophical faith is capable of comprehension by all men.

Secondly, Jaspers' faith is, like Kant's, a mode of rationality. "Philosophical faith is unlike the faithful obedience that accepts the incomprehensible in forms of finite phenomena and submits to them as to the deity itself."<sup>50</sup> He rejects completely any exclusivist concept of revelation as a source of faith. His faith is derived through reasoning and through the experience of transcendence.

However, his main question in 'Philosophical Faith and Revelation' is whether or not philosophical faith and theological faith can meet.<sup>51</sup> His answer is that they must, and that this will come perhaps through a change in the churches who will have to abandon their exclusivist theology, and recognise a universality but also a cultural diversity within revelation.

"For the controversy between theology and philosophy

49 Karl Jaspers Philosophical Faith & Revelation (tr. Ashton Collins 1967) p. 90.

50 Karl Jaspers op. cit. p. 82.

51 Jaspers op. cit. p. 356.

to disappear, the things proclaimed in church would have to shed their character of revealed realities, dogmas, and creeds .....<sup>52</sup> This would mean that the church could truly participate in that philosophical faith which can unite all men in truth. However, he recognises, in a manner similar to Kant that "philosophical faith does not yet emerge as a visible, strong, public phenomenon. It stays hidden away, thus far, in personal communication".<sup>53</sup> For this philosophical faith to survive, and for men to have a hope of being united in truth, they must be openly interested in different histories and cultures, without being unfaithful to the insights of their own. He declares himself that there must be mutual recognition and that we must be more "concerned with the historically different without being untrue to our own historicity".<sup>54</sup>

There is reasonable ground for suggesting that Kant would have been in full agreement with at least Jaspers' sentiments, if not perhaps in every detail of his formulations. The essential point of comparison is that both maintain the rationality of their own style of faith. In each case, it is a rationality which has within it the germ of universality.

These considerations prepare the ground for the discussion, finally, of certain related views held by Wolfhart Pannenberg. Again I would reiterate the caveat that there is no attempt being made to suggest that Pannenberg is a neo-Kantian, nor even that he was in any way, directly influenced by Kant. The ideas from Pannenberg, which I shall discuss, seem to me to be meaningfully related to the issues which Kant's formulation of the

<sup>52</sup> Jaspers op. cit. p. 357.

<sup>53</sup> Jaspers op. cit. p. 357.

<sup>54</sup> Jaspers The Perennial Scope of Philosophy p. 172.

nature of faith was attempting to face. Because of this, I would suggest that the Kantian task was therefore valid for theology, and is accordingly a valid contribution to the history of theology, and the history of man's attempt to verbally articulate the nature of faith. It must also be added that as in the case of the other thinkers whom I have suggested as keeping alive the Kantian insights, there is no attempt to expound the fullness of Pannenberg's thought. The reference is confined to two specific issues. There is first the problem of releasing the significance of Jesus from historical particularity to universal validity. Secondly, there is the challenge to face the task of a universal history: the problem of creating a Christian universalism.

To afford balance to the discussion, I shall first make reference to Pannenberg's criticism of Kant's concept of the Son of God as the moral ideal, or prototype within human reason.<sup>55</sup> Pannenberg sees this idea as falling within that train of Christological thought which attempts to construct Christology out of the soteriological interest in Jesus. He also accuses Schleiermacher, Baltmann and Tillich of the same error. However, his concern is not so far distant from Kant, when in amplification of his criticism he says that "The establishment of the universal significance of Jesus, which is derived from God, cannot be replaced by talking about the fulfilment of humanity through Jesus. Otherwise, both the universality of Jesus and his saving significance "for us" become mere assertions."<sup>56</sup> While maintaining that Kant's solution to

<sup>55</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg Jesus-God and Man (tr. by Lewis W. Wilkins & Duane A. Friese of Grundzüge der Christologie SCM 1968) p. 44-48.

<sup>56</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 49.

the problem does not satisfy him, by implication, he is saying that Kant's problem was one which he himself was concerned to face.

Later in the same work in a section entitled "Universal and Historically conditioned Elements in Jesus' Activity", he criticises Karl Jaspers, for wrongly relativising Jesus to "only one among the 'definitive men', alongside Socrates, Buddha and Confucius",<sup>57</sup> who are important to us because we "only know what we are and do as we see it from the perspective of their shadow".<sup>58</sup>

Jaspers interprets Jesus as "one-sided", to use Pannenberg's own term. By this he means that Jesus is essentially a radical and extreme revelation of human nature, who is therefore a corrective influence upon history. For Jaspers, he is the last of the prophets of the biblical tradition which is the historical foundation of our cultural existence within Western civilisation generally.

Pannenberg then goes on to show how the eschatological message of Jesus remains relevant to the present age, and in showing this, formulates his position in very interesting terms.

He admits that the historical situation of Jesus cannot be reproduced, nor even that of the early church, and that therefore, the idea of following in Jesus' footsteps, so to speak, is doomed to failure. He also declares that a message such as Jesus preached could not arise in our contemporary situation. "Nevertheless, it remains valid for all time by confronting men in every situation with that which is always the ultimate destiny of man, even though it is often hidden by many other things in

<sup>57</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 237.

<sup>58</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 237.

everyday life. It confronts men with the coming Kingdom of God, which is nothing else than the nearness of the Creator for whom man inquires in the openness of his existence".<sup>59</sup>

Pannenberg's interpretation of the meaning of the expression "Kingdom of God", while being quite distinct from Kant's ethical commonwealth, clearly borders on Kant's notion with regard to the significance it has in relation to the individual (or the moral agent). That is to say, in each case, the Kingdom represents either the need to believe in something beyond the immediately present forms of existence, or that which enables the individual to hope that he can overcome the problems which beset him. If this can be substantiated, then perhaps Pannenberg himself is guilty of creating Christology out of soteriological interest, or else, he was mistaken in his assessment of Kant. In his final statement in the section under discussion, he comes very close to the spirit of Kant: "Nevertheless, Jesus, in the uniqueness of his activity which was only possible in that time, and his effectiveness, places every man in every situation through all possible changes of the times, before the ultimate decision in the face of the God who is coming, just as he did at that time in his earthly ministry. This constitutes the universal validity of his activity".<sup>60</sup>

Pannenberg is clearly searching for an expression of the validity of Jesus which transcends all particularity not only of Jesus, but of eras since. He sees it in the perpetual nearness of the Creator for whom man

<sup>59</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 243

<sup>60</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 244.

seeks. Was this not the very experience Kant was describing by means of his experience of the Categorical Imperative - man's experience of that which is unconditioned and unconditional. Pannenberg is searching for an interpretation of Christ which affords Him true universality.

His preoccupation with this problem emerges again in an essay translated under the title: "Hermeneutic and Universal History".<sup>61</sup> In this essay, he exposes the defects in Gadamer's discussion of the hermeneutical problem, and he states his concluding position in these terms: ".... the task of a philosophy or a theology of world history dare not be sacrificed on account of the failure of the Hegelian solution, as it is by Gadamer for the sake of a hermeneutical ontology within the horizon of language ..... we must instead ask how it is possible today to develop a conception of universal history which ..... would preserve the finitude of human experience and thereby the openness of the future as well as the intrinsic claim of the individual".<sup>62</sup>

This insight and this desire clearly is related to Kant's demand for a universal history. Like Kant, Pannenberg sees that Christianity has a unique role to play in the creation of such an idea of history when he declares that "the biblical tradition constitutes the origin of universal historical thought as such".<sup>63</sup> In this respect, Pannenberg is in agreement with Jaspers and Kant. Perhaps also, this basic agreement of intention between them, may be further underlined by bearing in mind the point

<sup>61</sup> Pannenberg Basic Questions in Theology (SCM 1970) p. 96-136.

<sup>62</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 134-135.

<sup>63</sup> Pannenberg op. cit. p. 136.

Jaspers makes about mankind being concerned with the historically different, without being untrue to one's own historicity.

The vast differences between these thinkers have already been recognised and underlined. However, in spite of the differences, there does seem to be a movement of thought along common lines. The common problem in Kant, Jaspers and Pannenberg, which each formulates in his own way, is the problem of the relationship of universality to particularity. It is no new problem. It is the Socratic quest, but in the case of Kant and Pannenberg, it is centred upon the problem of the universality and particularity of Christianity. To profess Christian faith is to relate to a particular tradition. But in doing this, need the believer close himself to the possibility of a philosophy of world history? If the believer's faith is exclusivist, the answer must be in the affirmative. If the believer's faith is willing to be open in its outlook and expression, then the answer may be in the negative.

Stated in the more concrete terms of the relationship of Christianity to the world religions, the only way ahead for mankind is first dialogue, and then the discovery of a symbol which can unite men of good will and high purpose in the common task of realising their ideological goals. The exclusivist theologies can proceed only by conversion and Christianisation. The universalist can offer Jesus' message about the Kingdom of God, whether an expression of transcendence, or in the form of an ethical commonwealth, as a symbol capable of universalising the particularity of each distinct expression of transcendence, God, wisdom or ultimate reality. It is at least arguable that,

in essence, this is what Kant's Christian universalism was seeking to attain.

This closing discussion, while far removed from Kantian terms, is inspired by the Kantian philosophy. Perhaps the fact that Kant can inspire such a distant vision is a form of tribute to what Gottfried Martin described as the "inexhaustible depth of Kantian thought".<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Gottfried Martin Kant's Metaphysic and Theory of Science p. v.

## APPENDIX I

The following passages should illustrate Kant's interest in the phenomena of romanticism:

(a) Letter to Fräulein von Knobloch (1763) GR p. 72.

Swedenborg's famed feat of the description of the fire in Stockholm which he claimed to have seen, and did describe when he was in Göteborg intrigued Kant. At the end of the letter, Kant writes: "What can one say against the credibility of this occurrence? The friend who reported it to me investigated all this himself, both in Stockholm and in Göteborg; he also told me Swedenborg's ideas about the condition of the departed souls and about the manner in which his communion with the spirits took place.

"How I wish that I could have questioned that remarkable man myself! For my friend is not so expert in the methods of asking those questions which can shed most light on the matter. I am waiting longingly for the book which Swedenborg intends to publish in London ....."

Kant even admitted having written to Swedenborg, but confessed that Swedenborg's promised reply had not come. It was not mere bias that made Kant rule romanticism out as a source of knowledge. He clearly made his enquiries.

(b) "Dreams of a Spirit-Seer (1766)

The closing sentence of the fourth section of the first part reads: "This study, I boldly assert, conveys all that is known about the subject. Human pneumatology may be called a doctrine of our unavoidable ignorance concerning a supposed kind of being. And now I put aside the whole doctrine of spirits as settled and finished.

It will not concern me further. I shall be able to apply my small intellectual capacity more profitably to other topics". (GR p. 80)

So much for ghosts! Kant then discusses Swedenborg. He makes the following indictment: (second part, second section) "Swedenborg's great work 'Arcana Mystica' contains eight quarto volumes full of nonsense".

Of the entire debate, Kant has this to say, and thus closes the essay and the subject: "Let us go into our garden and work!" (GR p. 84)

APPENDIX II

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: The Monadology (Edn. Oxford, Clarendon Press 1898 tr. R. Latta) p. 238-9.

"38. Thus the final reason of things must be in a necessary substance, in which the variety of particular changes exists only eminently, as its source; and this substance we call God.

39. Now as this substance is a sufficient reason of all this variety of particulars, which are also connected together throughout; there is only one God, and this God is sufficient".

On these paragraphs from the 'Monadology', Latta makes this comment: "That is to say, all particular things are connected together in one system, which implies one principle, one necessary substance, one God. The argument is not merely from the existence of order in the world to the existence of an intelligence which produces this order, but from the fact that the whole forms one system to the existence of one ultimate sufficient reason of the whole. Otherwise there might be various 'orders' of 'disorders' in conflict with one another, each presupposing its own first principle or 'God'. This is Leibniz' form of the Cosmological proof of the existence of God". Note 62 on p. 239.

The neat and conclusive manner in which Leibniz uses the idea of God in his system is summarised well in C.S. Morris's Introduction to the Everyman edition of Leibniz's Philosophical Writings 1956 p. xi:

"Ordinary souls are the living mirrors of created things, whereas minds are also images of the Divinity Himself,

the Author of Nature, and are capable of knowing the system of the Universe. This makes minds capable of entering into a kind of society with God ..... Just as within the world of nature there is harmony ..... so there is a harmony between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of grace; that is, there is accord between God as Architect of the machine of the universe and God as Monarch of the divine City of minds.

By reason of this harmony, there is no good action without reward, and no evil action without punishment. All things work together for the good of the righteous in a universe which is the image of the infinite perfections of God"

### APPENDIX III

1. G. F. 68 footnote: "A maxim is a subjective principle of action and must be distinguished from an objective principle - namely a practical law. The former contains a practical rule determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or again his inclinations); it is thus a principle on which the subject acts. A law, on the other hand, is an objective principle, valid for every rational being; and it is a principle on which he ought to act - that is, an imperative".
2. Kant's maxims are really disguised forms of reasoning. H.J. Paton (op. cit. p. 89) makes the following comment which helps to clarify the concept of maxim: "From self love I make it my principle to shorten my life if its continuance threatens more evil than it promises pleasure". This is really the major premiss of a syllogism. However, Kant says that only the Moral Law can be the major premiss because it has the quality of universalisability. It could thus be stated to avoid confusion: the moral law is the only maxim which does not lead to any contradiction when taken as the major premiss of a moral syllogism which precedes moral action.
3. John Oman Grace & Personality (Fontana 1957) p. 56 says of maxims: "Acknowledged or unacknowledged, every really personal action is done on what Kant calls a maxim - a valuation not only of a particular way of acting, but of ourselves and of our world in relation to it. The hand is not put forth to steal by force of hunger as the piston rod to work by force of steam, but

the course of action involved in thus satisfying hunger is consciously accepted in such a way that all contrary motives in our whole conscious world are ruled out. Thus for the moment at least, the whole level of our personal world is brought down or up to the level of our action, and its permanent level is thereby affected".

#### APPENDIX IV

1. Hippolytus (Philos. x:34) "For Christ is the universal God who determined to wash men clean from sin, making the old man new ..... whose holy commands, if you obey, becoming a good imitator of the good, you will be honoured by him as being his likeness ....."

Origen ".....He sufficed for the salvation of the whole world. For the rest put away sins by entreaty, He alone by power ..... through whom let the world hold spiritual feast days, not to the satiety of the flesh, but to the profit of the soul, the mind being purified through the offering of spiritual sacrifices ....."  
(Rom. Num. xxiv, 1)

"Even apart from the value for all of His death on behalf of man, He showed men how they ought to die for righteousness sake". (Contra Celsus ii:16)

Gregory of Nyssa, in speaking of Christ's death, said: "..... both freeing man from evil, and healing even him who introduced the evil. For the chastisement of moral disease, however painful it may be, is a healing of its infirmity". (Gr. Cat. 26)

Gregory of Nyssa was a recognised exponent of the transaction theory of the atonement, and yet he still introduces highly ethical note, as does Origen on the theme of the moral example of Christ in going to His death in the manner in which He did.

Gregory of Nazianus was one of the fathers who rejected completely the Ransom theory. He argued that humanity is to be saved through the Humanity of God, and the Incarnation becomes for him of less importance as a historical fact

that as an eternal fact of the Divine being. While this aspect of his thought has other significance for incarnation theory, the Kantian idea of the good principle being eternal is not in opposition to Gregory's idea. Even Gregory's mystical thoughts are amenable to an ethical interpretation: "God became man and died that we might live: we have died with Him to be purified; we are raised from the dead with Him since we have died with Him; we are glorified with Him because we have risen with Him from the grave". (Or. xlv. 28)

The objective of these quotations is not to attempt to suggest or prove that Kant's position was identifiable with that of Eastern theology. It is to demonstrate that some elements of the patristic tradition are not inconsistent with Kant's ethical interpretation of the concept of the Son of God. That is to say that the two sets of ideas are not mutually exclusive. The fact that the Eastern Fathers drew heavily from Greek culture showed that they were not afraid to borrow terms from apparently alien sources in order to express their view of faith. If Kant's views do not conflict with theirs, then his general position of interpreting the concept of the Son of God in ethical terms should be accepted as a valid attempt at a statement of the Christian Faith.

APPENDIX V

KANT AND THE 'GOD-IS-DEAD' THEME

James Collins in an article entitled "A Kantian Critique of the God-is-Dead Theme"<sup>1</sup> professes to detect three Kantian roots of this debate. The approach he takes is called by him Kantian by virtue of the meaning of the term Kantian with which he is operating. The meaning, in his own words "designates an independent treatment of a problem, in the course of which special attention is paid to the leads suggested by Kant for its resolution".<sup>2</sup>

The suggestion that Kant had anything to say specifically about the problem represented by the 'God-is-Dead' theme seems to me unjustifiable. However, insofar as Collins offers positive evidence of a relationship between the careful philosophical analyses of Kant and the rather bizarre and often imprecise discussion of what might be called a 'protest movement' within theology itself, serious consideration of his position is required.

The three roots he detects are designated speculative, moralistic and religious respectively. The speculative root lies in the rejection of speculative proofs for God's existence. Collins concludes this portion of his argument by saying: "Thus for Kant, the uncritical claims made for speculative proofs of God are a major source of God-is-Dead conviction".<sup>3</sup> This particular sentence, which

<sup>1</sup> James Collins: "A Kantian Critique of the God-is-Dead Theme" Monist 1967 p. 536-558 (reprinted in Kant Studies Today ed. by Beck Open Court Press III.1969)

<sup>2</sup> op. cit. (Kant Studies Today pagination) p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> op. cit. p. 428-429.

is the conclusion of the argument I find particularly difficult. For example, what does he mean by "for Kant", and again whose is the conviction spoken of? Is it Kant's, or that of some contemporary theologian? What he appears to say is that the rejection of speculative theology in the KRV has opened up the possibility of the God-is-dead theme. However, as has already been affirmed, such a partial reading of the KRV itself is unjustifiable. Alternative possibilities are discussed in the 'Dialectic'.

The moralistic root he describes in this way. "The death-of-God motif purifies the moral man of the temptation toward moralistic inwardism".<sup>4</sup> Moralism is "confusion of action done out of respect for the moral law as such with a cutting off of human action from its consequences in the world".<sup>4</sup> I confess that I fail completely to see how the God-is-dead theme can offer any assistance to the moral agent who, in Kant's view, first recognises the autonomy of the sphere of ethics, and who then sees the need to refer ultimately to God in order to give this concept a full context of meaning. If Kant's secularisation of ethics is what is meant, this is a fair comment. However, the idea of God being dead I would imagine to be a notion completely alien to Kant. Therefore, it is misleading to connect the Kant's secularisation of ethics with any notion of the death of God.

The third root which Collins detects is religious, and he refers to K as a "prolonged struggle against the efforts of religious assent to break away from the central hub of man's moral life".<sup>4</sup> He claims that "when religious

<sup>4</sup> p. 429-430.

conviction does not make a noticeable difference in the sphere of moral attitude and social use of power, it has a deathly rather than an enlivening influence upon the human person and the community ....."<sup>5</sup> The hypocrisy behind this falsity he claims is a source of the God-is-Dead theme. Surely, however, such hypocrisy would have made people reject, for example, the Church as an institution, but not necessarily the idea of God. Their very rejection implies the existence of some idea or influence operating within them as a criterion of judgement.

With Collins' view of K, I cannot quarrel, but as a final assessment, I think more must be said. The connection he suggests to the roots of the present debate over God's death is not helpful either for Kant studies or for the resolution of the debate which is being conducted in a vastly different set of terms. It is interesting at best and potentially misleading at its worst. However, insofar as such an exercise is possible at all, it illustrates once more the versatility of Kant, and the fact that his influence may be detected in many surprising quarters.

<sup>5</sup> op. cit. p. 430.

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