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IMMANUEL KANT

Critique of Practical Reason

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good may be the whole *object* of a pure practical reason, that is, of a pure will, it is not on that account to be taken as its *determining ground*, and the moral law alone must be viewed as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion the object. This reminder is important in so delicate a case as the determination of moral principles, where even the slightest misinterpretation corrupts dispositions. For, it will have been seen from the Analytic that if one assumes any object under the name of a good as a determining ground of the will prior to the moral law and then derives from it the supreme practical principle, this would always produce heteronomy and supplant the moral principle.

5:110 It is, however, evident that if the moral law is already included as supreme condition in the concept of the highest good, the highest good is then not merely *object*: the concept of it and the representation of its existence as possible by our practical reason are at the same time the *determining ground* of the pure will because in that case the moral law, already included and thought in this concept, and no other object, in fact determines the will in accordance with the principle of autonomy. This order of concepts of the determination of the will must not be lost sight of, since otherwise we misunderstand ourselves and believe that we are contradicting ourselves even where everything stands together in the most perfect harmony.

Chapter II

On the dialectic of pure reason in determining the concept of the highest good

The concept of the *highest* already contains an ambiguity² that, if not attended to, can occasion needless disputes. The highest can mean either the supreme (*supremum*) or the complete (*consummatum*). The first is that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, not subordinate to any other (*originarium*); the second is that whole which is not part of a still greater whole of the same kind (*perfectissimum*). That *virtue* (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable and hence of all our pursuit of happiness and that it is therefore the *supreme good* has been proved in the Analytic. But it is not yet, on that account, the whole and complete good as the object of the faculty of desire of rational finite beings; for this, *happiness* is also required, and that not merely in the partial eyes of a person who makes himself an end but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards a person in the world generally as an end in itself. For, to need happiness, to be also

worthy of it, and yet not to participate in it cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being that would at the same time have all power, even if we think of such a being only for the sake of the experiment. Now, inasmuch as virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person, and happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the *highest good* of a possible world, the latter means the whole, the complete good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good, since it has no further condition above it, whereas happiness is something that, though always pleasant to the possessor of it, is not of itself absolutely and in all respects good but always presupposes morally lawful conduct as its condition.

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Two determinations *necessarily* combined in one concept must be connected as ground and consequent, and so connected that this *unity* is considered either as *analytic* (logical connection) or as *synthetic* (real connection), the former in accordance with the law of identity, the latter in accordance with the law of causality. The connection of virtue with happiness can therefore be understood in one of two ways: either the endeavor to be virtuous and the rational pursuit of happiness are not two different actions but quite identical, in which case no maxim need be made the ground of the former other than that which serves for the latter; or else that connection is found in virtue's producing happiness as something different from the consciousness of virtue, as a cause produces an effect.

Of the ancient Greek schools there were, strictly speaking, only two, which in determining the concept of the highest good followed one and the same method insofar as they did not let virtue and happiness hold as two different elements of the highest good and consequently sought the unity of the principle in accordance with the rule of identity; but they differed, in turn, in their choice of which of the two was to be the fundamental concept. The Epicurean said: to be conscious of one's maxim leading to happiness is virtue; the Stoic said: to be conscious of one's virtue is happiness. For the first, *prudence* was equivalent to morality; for the second, who chose a higher designation for virtue, *morality* alone was true wisdom.

One must regret that the acuteness of these men (whom one must, nevertheless, admire for having in such early times already tried all conceivable paths of philosophic conquest) was unfortunately applied in searching out identity between extremely heterogeneous concepts, that of happiness and that of virtue. But it was in keeping with the dialectical spirit of their times, which sometimes misleads subtle minds even now, to suppress essential and irreconcilable differences in principle by trying to change them into disputes about words and so to devise a specious unity of concept under merely different names; and this usually occurs in cases where the unification of heterogeneous grounds lies so deep or so high, or

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² *Zweideutigkeit*

would require so complete a transformation of the doctrines assumed in the rest of the philosophic system, that they are afraid to penetrate deeply into the real difference and prefer to treat it as a diversity merely in formulae.

While both schools tried to search out the sameness of the practical principles of virtue and happiness, they were not agreed as to how they would force this identity but separated infinitely from each other inasmuch as one put its principle on the aesthetic side^a and the other on the logical side, the former in consciousness of sensible need, the other in the independence of practical reason from all sensible determining grounds. According to the Epicurean the concept of virtue was already present in the maxim of promoting one's own happiness; according to the Stoic, on the other hand, the feeling of happiness was already contained in consciousness of one's virtue. What is contained in another concept, however, is indeed identical with a part of the concept containing it but not identical with the whole, and two wholes can, moreover, be specifically different from each other although they consist of the same material,^b if, namely, the two parts are combined into a whole in quite different ways. The Stoic maintained that virtue is the *whole highest good*, and happiness only the consciousness of this possession as belonging to the state of the subject. The Epicurean maintained that happiness is the *whole highest good*, and virtue only the form of the maxim for seeking to obtain it, namely, the rational use of means to it.

Now, it is clear from the Analytic that the maxims of virtue and those of one's own happiness are quite heterogeneous with respect to their supreme practical principle; and, even though they belong to one highest good, so as to make it possible, yet they are so far from coinciding that they greatly restrict and infringe upon each other in the same subject. Thus the question, *how is the highest good practically possible?* still remains an unsolved problem despite all the *attempts at coalition* that have hitherto been made. The Analytic has, however, shown what it is that makes the problem difficult to solve, namely that happiness and morality are two specifically quite *different elements* of the highest good and that, accordingly, their combination cannot be cognized *analytically* (as if someone who seeks his own happiness should find, by mere resolution^c of his concepts, that in so acting he is virtuous, or as if someone who follows virtue should in the consciousness of such conduct find that he is already happy *ipso facto*); it must instead be a *synthesis* of concepts. But because this combination is cognized as *a priori* – thus as practically necessary and not as derived from experience –

^a *ästhetischen* . . . Seite, i.e., on the side of feeling. See *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:399–403, 471).

^b *Stoffe*

^c *Auflösung*

and because the possibility of the highest good therefore does not rest on any empirical principles, it follows that the *deduction* of this concept must be *transcendental*. It is *a priori* (morally) necessary *to produce the highest good through the freedom of the will*: the condition of its possibility must therefore rest solely on *a priori* grounds of cognition.

I.

THE ANTINOMY OF PRACTICAL REASON

In the highest good which is practical for us, that is, to be made real through our will, virtue and happiness are thought as necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by pure practical reason without the other also belonging to it. Now, this combination is (like every other) either *analytic* or *synthetic*. Since, as has already been shown, the given combination cannot be analytic, it must be thought synthetically and, indeed, as the connection of cause and effect, because it concerns a practical good, that is, one that is possible through action. Consequently, either 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 because (as was proved in the Analytic) maxims that put the determining ground of the will in the desire for one's happiness are not moral at all and can be the ground of no virtue. But the second is *also impossible* because any practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will, does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will but upon knowledge of the laws of nature and the physical ability to use them for one's purposes; consequently, no necessary connection of happiness with virtue in the world, adequate to the highest good, can be expected from the most meticulous observance of moral laws. Now, since the promotion of the highest good, which contains this connection in its concept, is an *a priori* necessary object of our will and inseparably bound up with the moral law, the impossibility of the first must also prove the falsity of the second. If, therefore, the highest good is impossible in accordance with practical rules, then the moral law, which commands us to promote it, must be fantastic and directed to empty imaginary ends and must therefore in itself be false.

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II.

CRITICAL RESOLUTION^d OF THE ANTINOMY OF PRACTICAL REASON

In the antinomy of pure speculative reason there is a similar conflict between natural necessity and freedom in the causality of events in the world. It was resolved by showing that there is no true conflict if the

^d *Aufhebung*

events and even the world in which they occur are regarded (and they should also be so regarded) merely as appearances; for, one and the same acting being as *appearance* (even to his own inner sense) has a causality in the world of sense that always conforms to the mechanism of nature, but with respect to the same event, insofar as the acting person regards himself at the same time as *noumenon* (as pure intelligence, in his existence that cannot be temporally determined), he can contain a determining ground of that causality in accordance with laws of nature which is itself free from all laws of nature.

It is just the same with the foregoing antinomy of pure practical reason. The first of the two propositions, that the endeavor after happiness produces a ground for a virtuous disposition, is *absolutely false*; but the second, that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness, is false *not absolutely* but only insofar as this disposition is regarded as the form of causality in the sensible world, and consequently false only if I assume existence in the sensible world to be the only kind of existence of a rational being; it is thus only *conditionally false*. But since I am not only warranted in thinking of my existence also as a noumenon in a world of the understanding but even have in the moral law a purely intellectual determining ground of my causality (in the sensible world), it is not impossible that morality of disposition should have a connection, and indeed a necessary connection,⁶ as cause with happiness as effect in the sensible world, if not immediately yet mediately (by means of an intelligible author of nature), a connection which, in a nature that is merely an object of the senses, can never occur except contingently and cannot suffice for the highest good.

Thus, despite this seeming conflict of a practical reason with itself, the highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will and is a true object of that will; for it is practically possible, and the maxims of such a will, which refer to it as regards their matter, have objective reality, which at first was threatened by that antinomy in the combination of morality with happiness in accordance with a universal law, but only from a misinterpretation, because the relation between appearances was held to be a relation of things in themselves to those appearances.

When we find ourselves compelled to go so far, namely to the connection with an intelligible world, to seek the possibility of the highest good which reason points out to all rational beings as the goal of all their moral wishes, it must seem strange that philosophers both of ancient and modern times could nevertheless have found happiness in precise proportion to virtue already in *this life* (in the sensible world), or persuaded themselves that they were conscious of it. For, Epicurus as well as the Stoics extolled above all the happiness that arises from consciousness of living

⁶ einen . . . Zusammenhang . . . habe

virtuously; and the former was not so base in his practical precepts as one might infer from the principles of his theory, which he used for explanation and not for action, or as they were interpreted by many who were misled by his use of the expression "pleasure"⁷ for "contentment";⁸ on the contrary, he reckoned the most disinterested practice of the good among the ways of enjoying the most intimate delight⁹ and included in his scheme of pleasure¹⁰ (by which he meant a constantly cheerful heart)¹¹ such moderation and control of the inclinations as the strictest moral philosopher might require; his chief divergence from the Stoics consisted only in his placing the motive in this pleasure, which they quite rightly refused to do. For, on the one hand, the virtuous Epicurus – like many morally well-disposed men of this day who nevertheless do not reflect deeply enough on their principles – fell into the error of presupposing the virtuous *disposition* in the persons for whom he wanted first of all to provide the incentive to virtue (and in fact an upright man cannot be happy if he is not first conscious of his uprightness; for, with such a disposition, the censure that his own cast of mind would force him to bring against himself in case of a transgression, and his moral self-condemnation would deprive him of all enjoyment of the agreeableness that his state might otherwise contain). But the question is, how is such a disposition and cast of mind in estimating the worth of one's existence possible in the first place, since prior to this no feeling at all for moral worth as such would be found in the subject? If a human being is virtuous he will certainly not enjoy life unless he is conscious of his uprightness in every action, however fortune may favor him in the physical state of life; but in order to make him virtuous in the first place, and so before he esteems the moral worth of his existence so highly, can one commend to him the peace of mind that would arise from consciousness of an uprightness for which he as yet has no sense?

But on the other hand, there is always present here the ground of an error of subreption (*vitium subreptionis*) and, as it were, of an optical illusion in the self-consciousness of what one *does* as distinguished from what one *feels* – an illusion that even the most practiced cannot altogether avoid. The moral disposition is necessarily connected with consciousness of the determination of the will *directly by the law*. Now, consciousness of a determination of the faculty of desire is always the ground of a satisfaction¹² in the action produced by it; but this pleasure, this satisfaction with oneself, is not the determining ground of the action: instead, the determi-

⁷ Wollust

⁸ Zufriedenheit. See *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:393 note v) and *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:375).

⁹ mit zu den Genußarten der innigste Freude

¹⁰ Vergnügens

¹¹ Compare *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:485)

¹² Wohlgefallens

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nation of the will directly by reason alone is the ground of the feeling of pleasure, and this remains a pure practical, not aesthetic, determination of the faculty of desire. Now, since this determination has exactly the same inward effect, that of an impulse to activity, as a feeling of the agreeableness expected from the desired action would have produced, we easily look upon what we ourselves do as something that we merely passively feel and take the moral incentive for a sensible impulse, just as always happens in so-called illusion of the senses (in this case, inner sense). It is something very sublime in human nature to be determined to actions directly by a pure rational law, and even the illusion that takes the subjective side of this intellectual determinability of the will as something aesthetic and the effect of a special sensible feeling (for an intellectual feeling would be a contradiction) is sublime. It is also of great importance to take notice of this property of our personality and to cultivate as much as possible the effect of reason on this feeling. But one must also be on guard against demeaning and deforming the real and genuine incentive, the law itself – as it were, by means of a false foil – by such spurious praise of the moral determining ground as incentive as would base it on feelings of particular joys (which are nevertheless only results). Respect, and not the gratification or enjoyment of happiness, is thus something for which there can be no feeling *antecedent* to reason and underlying it (for this would always be aesthetic and pathological): respect as consciousness of direct necessitation of the will by the law is hardly an analogue of the feeling of pleasure, although in relation to the faculty of desire it does the same thing but from different sources; only by this way of representing things, however, can one attain what one seeks, namely that actions be done not merely in conformity with duty (as a result of pleasant feelings) but from duty, which must be the true end of all moral cultivation.

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Have we not, however, a word that does not denote enjoyment, as the word happiness does, but that nevertheless indicates a satisfaction with one's existence, an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany consciousness of virtue? Yes! This word is *contentment with oneself*,¹ which in its strict meaning always designates only a negative satisfaction with one's existence, in which one is conscious of needing nothing. Freedom, and the consciousness of freedom as an ability to follow the moral law with an unyielding disposition, is *independence from the inclinations*, at least as motives determining (even if not as *affecting*) our desire, and so far as I am conscious of this freedom in following my moral maxims, it is the sole source of an unchangeable contentment, necessarily combined with it and resting on no special feeling, and this can be called intellectual contentment. Aesthetic contentment (improperly so called), which rests on satisfaction of the inclinations, however refined they may be made out to

¹ *Selbstzufriedenheit*

be, can never be adequate to what is thought about contentment. For the inclinations change, grow with the indulgence one allows them, and always leave behind a still greater void than one had thought to fill. Hence they are always *burdensome* to a rational being, and though he cannot lay them aside, they wrest from him the wish to be rid of them. Even an inclination to what conforms with duty (e.g., to beneficence) can indeed greatly facilitate the effectiveness of *moral* maxims but cannot produce any. For in these everything must be directed to the representation of the law as determining ground if the action is to contain not merely *legality* but also *morality*. Inclination is blind and servile, whether it is kindly or not; and when morality is in question, reason must not play the part of mere guardian to inclination but, disregarding it altogether, must attend solely to its own interest as pure practical reason. Even this feeling of compassion and tender sympathy,² if it precedes consideration of what is duty and becomes the determining ground, is itself burdensome to right-thinking persons, brings their considered maxims into confusion, and produces the wish to be freed from them and subject to lawgiving reason alone.

From this we can understand how consciousness of this ability of a pure practical reason (virtue)³ can in fact produce consciousness of mastery over one's inclinations, hence of independence from them and so too from the discontent that always accompanies them, and thus can produce a negative satisfaction with one's state, that is, *contentment*, which in its source is contentment with one's person. Freedom itself becomes in this way (namely indirectly) capable of an enjoyment, which cannot be called happiness because it does not depend upon the positive concurrence of a feeling; nor is it, strictly speaking, *beatitude*, since it does not include complete independence from inclinations and needs; but it nevertheless resembles the latter, at least insofar as one's determination of one's will can be held free from their influence and so, at least in its origin, it is analogous to the self-sufficiency that can be ascribed only to the supreme being.

From this resolution of the antinomy of practical pure reason it follows that in practical principles a natural and necessary connection between the consciousness of morality and the expectation of a happiness proportionate to it as its result can at least be thought as possible (though certainly not, on this account, cognized and understood);⁴ that, on the other hand, principles of the pursuit of happiness cannot possibly produce morality;

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² *der Mitleids und der weichherzigen Teilnahme*. See *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:456–7).

³ *wie das Bewußtsein dieses Vermögens . . . durch Tat (die Tugend)*; perhaps "how consciousness of this ability of a pure practical reason through a deed (virtue)." According to *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:394), virtue is a *Vermögen*. Although it would be inaccurate to call virtue a deed (see 6:224), this sentence allows that construal. Compare AK 5:3 note b, and 5:98, note b.

⁴ *einsehen*

that, accordingly, the *supreme* good (as the first condition of the highest good) is morality, whereas happiness constitutes its second element but in such a way that it is only the morally conditioned yet necessary result of the former. Only with this subordination is the *highest good* the whole object of pure practical reason, which must necessarily represent it as possible since it commands us to contribute everything possible to its production. But since the possibility of such a connection of the conditioned with its condition belongs wholly to the supersensible relation of things and cannot be given in accordance with the laws of the sensible world, although the practical results of this idea – namely actions that aim at realizing the highest good – belong to the sensible world, we shall try to set forth the grounds of that possibility, first with respect to what is *immediately* within our power and then, secondly, in that which is not in our power but which reason presents to us, as the supplement to our inability, for the possibility of the highest good (which is necessary in accordance with practical principles).

III.

ON THE PRIMACY OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON
IN ITS CONNECTION WITH SPECULATIVE
REASON

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By primacy among two or more things connected by reason I understand the prerogative of one to be the first determining ground of the connection with all the rest. In a narrower practical sense it signifies the prerogative of the interest of one insofar as the interest of the others is subordinated to it (and it cannot be inferior to any other). To every faculty of the mind one can attribute an *interest*, that is, a principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted. Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all the powers of the mind but itself determines its own. The interest of its speculative use consists in the *cognition* of the object up to the highest a priori principles; that of its practical use consists in the determination of the *will* with respect to the final and complete end. That which is required for the possibility of any use of reason as such, namely, that its principles and affirmations must not contradict one another, constitutes no part of its interest but is instead the condition of having reason at all; only its extension, not mere consistency with itself, is reckoned as its interest.

If practical reason may not assume and think as given anything further than what *speculative* reason of itself could offer it from its insight, the latter has primacy. Supposing, however, that practical reason has of itself original a priori principles with which certain theoretical positions are inseparably connected, while these are withdrawn from any possible insight of speculative reason (although they must not contradict it): then the

question is, which interest is supreme (not, which must give way, for one does not necessarily conflict with the other)? Whether speculative reason, which knows nothing about all that which practical reason offers for its acceptance, must accept these propositions and, although they are transcendent for it, try to unite them, as a foreign possession handed over to it, with its own concepts, or whether it is justified in obstinately following its own separate interest and, in accordance with the canon of Epicurus, rejecting as empty subtle reasoning everything that cannot accredit its objective reality by manifest examples to be shown in experience, however much it might be interwoven with the interest of the practical (pure) use of reason and in itself not contradict the theoretical, merely because it actually infringes upon the interest of speculative reason to the extent that it removes the bounds which the latter has set itself and hands it over to every nonsense or delusion of imagination?

In fact, to the extent that practical reason is taken as dependent upon pathological conditions, that is, as merely regulating the inclinations by the sensible principle of happiness, this demand could not be made on speculative reason. Mohammed's paradise or the fusion with the Deity of the theosophists and mystics would obtrude their monstrosities on reason according to the taste^p of each, and one might as well have no reason at all as surrender it in such a way to all sorts of dreams. But if pure reason of itself can be and really is practical, as the consciousness of the moral law proves it to be, it is still only one and the same reason which, whether from a theoretical or a practical perspective, judges according to a priori principles; and then it is clear that, even if from the first perspective its capacity does not extend to establishing certain propositions affirmatively, although they do not contradict it, *as soon as these same propositions belong inseparably to the practical interest* of pure reason it must accept them – indeed as something offered to it from another source, which has not grown on its own land but yet is sufficiently authenticated – and try to compare and connect them with everything that it has within its power as speculative reason, being mindful, however, that these are not its insights but are yet extensions of its use from another, namely a practical perspective; and this is not in the least opposed to its interest, which consists in the restriction of speculative mischief.

Thus, in the union of pure speculative with pure practical reason in one cognition,^q the latter has primacy, assuming that this union is not *contingent* and discretionary but based a priori on reason itself and therefore *necessary*. For, without this subordination a conflict of reason with itself would arise, since if they were merely juxtaposed (coordinate), the first would of itself close its boundaries strictly and admit nothing from

^p Sinn^q Verbindung . . . zu einem Erkenntnis

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the latter into its domain, while the latter would extend its boundaries over everything and, when its need required, would try to include the former within them. But one cannot require pure practical reason to be subordinate to speculative reason and so reverse the order, since all interest is ultimately practical and even that of speculative reason is only conditional and is complete in practical use alone.

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IV.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AS A
POSTULATE OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

The production of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. But in such a will the *complete conformity*⁷ of dispositions with the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. This conformity must therefore be just as possible as its object is, since it is contained in the same command to promote the object. Complete conformity of the will with the moral law is, however, *holiness*, a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment⁸ of his existence. Since it is nevertheless required as practically necessary, it can only be found in an *endless progress*⁹ toward that complete conformity, and in accordance with principles of pure practical reason it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will.

This endless progress is, however, possible only on the presupposition of the *existence* and personality of the same rational being continuing *endlessly* (which is called the immortality of the soul). Hence the highest good is practically possible only on the presupposition of the immortality of the soul, so that this, as inseparably connected with the moral law, is a *postulate* of pure practical reason (by which I understand a *theoretical* proposition, though one not demonstrable as such, insofar as it is attached inseparably to an a priori unconditionally valid *practical law*).

The proposition about the moral vocation of our nature, that only in an endless progress can we attain complete conformity with the moral law, is of the greatest usefulness, not merely in regard to the present supplement to the incapacity of speculative reason but also with respect to religion. In default of it, one either quite degrades the moral law from its *holiness* by making it out to be *lenient* (indulgent) and thus conformed to our convenience, or else strains one's calling as well as one's expectation to an unattainable vocation, namely to a hoped-for full acquisition of holiness of

⁷ or "fitness," *Angemessenheit*

⁸ *Zeitpunkte*

⁹ Or "a progress to infinity," *ins Unendliche gehend*

will, and so gets lost in enthusiastic *theosophical* dreams that quite contradict self-knowledge;¹⁰ in both cases, constant *effort* to observe precisely and fully a strict and inflexible command of reason, which is yet not ideal but true, is only hindered. For a rational but finite being only endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible. *The eternal being*,¹¹ to whom the temporal condition is nothing, sees in what is to us an endless series the whole of conformity with the moral law, and the holiness that his command inflexibly requires in order to be commensurable with his justice in the share he determines for each in the highest good is to be found whole in a single intellectual intuition of the existence of rational beings. All that a creature can have with respect to hope for this share is consciousness of his tried disposition, so that, from the progress he has already made from the worse to the morally better and from the immutable resolution he has thereby come to know, he may hope for a further uninterrupted continuance of this progress, however long his existence may last, even beyond this life;¹² and thus he cannot hope, either here or in any foreseeable future moment of his existence, to be fully adequate to God's will (without indulgence or dispensation, which do not harmonize with justice); he can hope to be so only in the endlessness of his duration (which God alone can survey).

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V.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AS A POSTULATE
OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

In the preceding analysis the moral law led to a practical task that is set by pure reason alone and without the aid of any sensible incentives, namely that of the necessary completeness of the first and principal part of the

¹⁰ Conviction of the immutability of one's disposition in progress toward the good seems, nevertheless, to be in itself impossible for a creature. Because of this the Christian religious doctrine has it come only from the same spirit that works sanctification, i.e., this firm resolution and with it consciousness of steadfastness in moral progress. But even in a natural way, someone who is aware of having persisted through a long portion of his life up to its end in progress to the better, and this from genuine moral motives, may very well have the comforting hope, though not certitude, that even in an existence continuing beyond this life he will persevere in these principles; and although he is never justified here in his own eyes, and can never hope to be justified even given the future increase of natural perfection to which he looks forward – but with it of his duties as well – nevertheless in this progress which, though it has to do with a goal endlessly postponed, yet holds for God as possession, he can have a prospect of a future of *beatitude*; for this is the expression that reason employs to designate complete *well-being* independent of all contingent causes in the world, which, like *holiness*, is an idea that can be contained only in an endless progress and its totality, and hence is never fully attained by a creature.

¹¹ *Selbsterkenntnis*

¹² Or "The Infinite Being," *Der Unendliche*

highest good, **morality**; and, since this can be fully accomplished only in an eternity, it led to the postulate of *immortality*. The same law must also lead to the possibility of the second element of the highest good, namely **happiness** proportioned to that morality, and must do so as disinterestedly as before, solely from impartial reason; in other words, it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect, that is, it must postulate the *existence of God* as belonging necessarily to the possibility of the highest good (which object of our will is necessarily connected with the moral lawgiving of pure reason). We shall present this connection in a convincing manner.

Happiness is the state of a rational being in the world in the whole of whose existence *everything goes according to his wish and will*, and rests, therefore, on the harmony of nature with his whole end as well as with the essential determining ground of his will. Now, the moral law as a law of freedom commands through determining grounds that are to be quite independent of nature and of its harmony with our faculty of desire (as incentives); the acting rational being in the world is, however, not also the cause of the world and of nature itself. Consequently, there is not the least ground in the moral law for a necessary connection⁵ between the morality and the proportionate happiness of a being belonging to the world as part of it and hence dependent upon it, who for that reason cannot by his will be a cause of this nature and, as far as his happiness is concerned, cannot by his own powers make it harmonize thoroughly with his practical principles. Nevertheless, in the practical task of pure reason, that is, in the necessary pursuit of the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we *ought* to strive to promote the highest good (which must therefore be possible). Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature, which contains the ground of this connection, namely of the exact correspondence of happiness with morality, is also *postulated*. However, this supreme cause is to contain the ground of the correspondence of nature not merely with a law of the will of rational beings but with the representation of this *law*, so far as they make it the *supreme determining ground of the will*, and consequently not merely with morals in their form but also with their morality as their determining ground, that is, with their moral disposition. Therefore, the highest good in the world is possible only insofar as a supreme cause of nature having a causality in keeping with the moral disposition is assumed. Now, a being capable of actions in accordance with the representation of laws is an *intelligence* (a rational being), and the causality of such a being in accordance with this representation of laws is his *will*. Therefore the supreme cause of nature, insofar as it must be presupposed for the highest good, is a being that is the cause of nature by *understanding* and *will* (hence its

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⁵ Zusammenhang

author), that is, **God**. Consequently, the postulate of the possibility of the *highest derived good* (the best world) is likewise the postulate of the reality of a *highest original good*, namely of the existence of God. Now, it was a duty for us to promote the highest good; hence there is in us not merely the warrant but also the necessity, as a need connected with duty, to presuppose the possibility of this highest good, which, since it is possible only under the condition of the existence of God, connects the presupposition of the existence of God inseparably with duty; that is, it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.

It is well to note here that this moral necessity is *subjective*, that is, a need, and not *objective*, that is, itself a duty; for, there can be no duty to assume the existence of anything (since this concerns only the theoretical use of reason). Moreover, it is not to be understood by this that it is necessary to assume the existence of God *as a ground of all obligation in general* (for this rests, as has been sufficiently shown, solely on the autonomy of reason itself). What belongs to duty here is only the striving to produce and promote the highest good in the world, the possibility of which can therefore be postulated, while our reason finds this thinkable only on the presupposition of a supreme intelligence; to assume the existence of this supreme intelligence is thus connected with the consciousness of our duty, although this assumption itself belongs to theoretical reason; with respect to theoretical reason alone, as a ground of explanation, it can be called a *hypothesis*; but in relation to the intelligibility of an object given us by the moral law (the highest good), and consequently of a need for practical purposes, it can be called *belief*⁶ and, indeed, a pure *rational belief* since pure reason alone (in its theoretical as well as in its practical use) is the source from which it springs.

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From this *deduction* it now becomes comprehensible why the *Greek* schools could never solve their problem of the practical possibility of the highest good: it was because they made the rule of the use which the human will makes of its freedom the sole and sufficient ground of this possibility, without, as it seemed to them, needing the existence of God for it. They were indeed correct in establishing the principle of morals by itself, independently of this postulate and solely from the relation of reason to the will, so that they made it the *supreme* practical condition of the highest good; but this principle was not on this account the *whole* condition of its possibility. The Epicureans had indeed assumed an altogether false principle of morals as supreme, namely that of happiness, and had substituted for a law a maxim of each choosing as he pleased according to his inclination;⁷ they proceeded, however, *consistently* enough in this by demeaning their highest good in the same way, namely in proportion to

⁶ Or "faith," *Glaube*

⁷ der beliebigen Wahl nach jedes seiner Neigung

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the meanness of their principle, and expecting no greater happiness than can be acquired by human prudence (including temperance and moderation of the inclinations), which,* as we know, has to be paltry enough and turn out very differently according to circumstances, not to mention the exceptions which their maxims had to constantly admit and which made them unfit for laws. The Stoics, on the contrary, had chosen their supreme practical principle quite correctly, namely virtue, as the condition of the highest good; but inasmuch as they represented the degree of virtue required by its pure law as fully attainable in this life, they not only strained the moral capacity of the *human being*, under the name of a *sage*, far beyond all the limits of his nature and assumed something that contradicts all cognition of the human being, but also and above all they would not let the second *component* of the highest good, namely happiness, hold as a special object of the human faculty of desire but made their *sage*, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his person, quite independent of nature (with respect to his own contentment), exposing him indeed to the ills of life but not subjecting him to them (at the same time representing him as also free from evil); and thus they really left out the second element of the highest good, namely one's own happiness, placing it solely in acting and in contentment with one's personal worth and so including it in consciousness of one's moral cast of mind – though in this they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature.

The doctrine of Christianity,* even if it is not regarded as a religious

*It is commonly held that the Christian precept of morals has no advantage with respect to its purity over the moral concepts of the Stoics; but the difference between them is nonetheless very obvious. The Stoic system made consciousness of strength of soul the pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn; and although its disciples spoke of duties and even determined them quite well, yet they put the incentive and proper determining ground of the will in an elevation of one's cast of mind above the lower incentives of the senses, which have power only through weakness of soul. With them therefore, virtue was a certain heroism of the *sage*, who, raising himself above the animal nature of the human being, is sufficient to himself, and through the discourses on duties to others is himself raised above them and is not subject to any temptation to transgress the moral law. All this, however, they could not have done if they had represented this law in all its purity and strictness, as the precept of the Gospel does. If I understand by an *idea* a perfection to which nothing adequate can be given in experience, the moral ideas are not, on that account, something transcendent, that is, something of which we cannot even determine the concept sufficiently or of which it is uncertain whether there is any object corresponding to it at all, as is the case with the ideas of speculative reason; instead, the moral ideas, as archetypes of practical perfection, serve as the indispensable rule of moral conduct and also as the *standard of comparison*. Now, if I consider *Christian morals* on their philosophic side, then, compared with the ideas of the Greek schools they would appear as follows: the ideas of the *Cynics*, the *Epicureans*, the *Stoics*, and the *Christians* are *natural simplicity*, *prudence*, *wisdom*, and *holiness*. With respect to the path for attaining them, what distinguished the Greek schools from one another was that the *Cynics* found *common human understanding* sufficient, the others the path of *science* alone; but

* It is not clear whether *die* refers to "happiness" or to "prudence."

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doctrine, gives on this point a concept of the highest good (of the kingdom of God) which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason. The moral law is holy (inflexible) and demands holiness of morals, although all the moral perfection that a human being can attain is still only virtue, that is, a disposition conformed with law *from respect* for law, and thus consciousness of a continuing propensity to transgression or at least impurity, that is, an admixture of many spurious (not moral) motives to observe the law, hence a self-esteem combined with humility; and so, with respect to the holiness that the Christian law demands, nothing remains for a creature but endless progress, though for that very reason he is justified in hoping for his endless duration. The *worth* of a disposition *completely* conformed with the moral law is infinite, since all possible happiness in the judgment of a wise and all-powerful distributor of it has no restriction other than rational beings' lack of conformity with their duty. But the moral law of itself still does not *promise* any happiness, since this is not necessarily connected with observance of the law according to our concepts of a natural order as such. The Christian doctrine of morals now supplements this lack (of the second indispensable component of the highest good) by representing the world in which rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law as a *kingdom of God*, in which nature and morals come into a harmony, foreign to each of them of itself, through a holy author who makes the derived highest good possible. *Holiness* of morals is prescribed to them as a rule even in this life, while the well-being proportioned to it, namely *beatitude*, is represented as attainable only in an eternity; for, the *former* must always be the archetype of their conduct in every state, and progress toward it is already possible and necessary in this life, whereas the *latter*, under the name of happiness, cannot be attained at all in this world (so far as our own capacity is concerned) and is therefore made solely an object of hope. Nevertheless, the Christian principle of *morals* itself is not theological (and so heteronomy); it is instead autonomy of pure practical reason by itself, since it does not make cognition of God and his will the basis of these laws but only of the attainment of the highest good subject to the condition of observing these laws, and since it places even the proper *incentive* to observing them not in the results wished for but in the representation of duty alone, faithful observance of which alone constitutes worthiness to acquire the latter.

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In this way the moral law leads through the concept of the highest good,

both found the mere *use of natural powers* sufficient for it. Christian morals, because it frames its precept so purely and inflexibly (as must be done), deprives the human being of confidence that he can be fully adequate to it, at least in this life, but again sets it up by enabling us to hope that if we act as well as is within our *power*, then what is not within our power will come to our aid from another source, whether or not we know in what way. Aristotle and Plato differed only with respect to the *origin* of our moral concepts.

as the object and final end of pure practical reason, *to religion, that is, to the recognition^a of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions – that is, chosen and in themselves contingent ordinances of another's will* – but as essential laws of every free will in itself, which must nevertheless be regarded as commands of the supreme being because only from a will that is morally perfect (holy and beneficent^b) and at the same time all-powerful, and so through harmony with this will, can we hope to attain the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavors. Here again, then, everything remains disinterested and grounded only on duty, and there is no need to base it on incentives of fear and hope, which if they became principles would destroy the whole moral worth of actions. The moral law commands me to make the highest possible good in a world the final object of all my conduct. But I cannot hope to produce this except by the harmony of my will with that of a holy and beneficent author of the world; and although in the concept of the highest good, as that of a whole in which the greatest happiness is represented as connected in the most exact proportion with the greatest degree of moral perfection (possible in creatures), *my own happiness* is included, this is nevertheless not the determining ground of the will that is directed to promote the highest good; it is instead the moral law (which, on the contrary, limits by strict conditions my unbounded craving for happiness).

For this reason, again, morals^c is not properly the doctrine of how we are to *make* ourselves happy but of how we are to become *worthy* of happiness. Only if religion is added to it does there also enter the hope of some day participating in happiness to the degree that we have been intent upon not being unworthy of it.

Someone is *worthy* of possessing a thing or a state when it harmonizes with the highest good that he is in possession of it. It can now be readily seen that all worthiness depends upon moral conduct, since in the concept of the highest good this constitutes the condition of the rest (which belongs to one's state), namely, of one's share of happiness. Now, from this it follows that *morals* in itself must never be treated as a *doctrine of happiness*, that is, as instruction in how to become happy; for morals has to do solely with the rational condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of happiness and not with the means of acquiring it. But when morals (which merely imposes duties and does not provide rules for selfish wishes) has been set forth completely, then – after the moral wish, based on a law, to promote the highest good (to bring the kingdom of God to us) has been awakened, which could not previously have arisen in any selfish soul, and for the sake of this wish the step to religion has been taken – then for the first time can this

^a Erkenntnis

^b gütigen

^c Or "moral philosophy," *die Moral*

ethical doctrine also be called a doctrine of happiness, because it is only with religion that the *hope* of happiness first arises.

From this it can also be seen that if one asks about *God's final end* in creating the world, one must not name the *happiness* of the rational beings in it but *the highest good*, which adds a condition to that wish of such beings, namely the condition of being worthy of happiness, that is, the *morality* of these same rational beings, which condition alone contains the standard in accordance with which they can hope to participate in the former at the hands of a *wise* author. For, since *wisdom* considered theoretically signifies *cognition of the highest good*, and practically *the fitness of the will for the highest good*, one cannot attribute to a highest independent wisdom an end that would be based merely on beneficence.^d For one cannot conceive the effect of this beneficence (with respect to the happiness of rational beings) as befitting the highest original good except under the limiting conditions of harmony with the *holiness* of his will.* Hence those who put the end of creation in the glory^e of God (provided this is not thought anthropomorphically, as inclination to be praised) perhaps hit upon the best expression. For, nothing glorifies God more than what is most estimable in the world, respect for his command, observance of the holy^f duty that his law lays upon us, when there is added to this his magnificent plan of crowning such a beautiful order with corresponding happiness. If the latter (to speak humanly) makes him worthy of love, by the former he is an object of worship (adoration). Human beings themselves can acquire love by beneficence, but by it alone they can never acquire respect, so that the greatest beneficence procures them honor^g only when it is exercised in accordance with worthiness.

It now follows of itself that in the order of ends the human being (and with him every rational being) is an *end in itself*, that is, can never be used merely as a means by anyone (not even by God) without being at the same time himself an end, and that humanity in our person must, accordingly,

*In passing, and to make what is proper to these concepts distinguishable, I add only this remark. Although one ascribes to God various attributes the quality of which is found appropriate to creatures as well except that in him they are raised to the highest degree, e.g., power, knowledge, presence, goodness, and so forth, calling them omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, all-goodness, and so forth, there are still three that are ascribed to God exclusively and yet without the addition of greatness, and all of them are moral: he is the *only holy*, the *only blessed*, the *only wise*, because these concepts already imply the absence of limitation. According to the order of these attributes he is also the *holy lawgiver* (and creator), the *beneficent governor* (and preserver), and the *just judge* – three attributes which include everything by which God is the object of religion and in conformity with which the metaphysical perfections are added of themselves in reason.

^d Güteigkeit

^e Ehre

^f Or "sacred," *heiligen*

^g ihnen . . . Ehre macht, perhaps "does them honor"

5:132 be *holy*^h to ourselves: for he is the *subject of the moral law* and so of that which is holy in itself, on account of which and in agreement with which alone can anything be called holy. For, this moral law is based on the autonomy of his will, as a free will which, in accordance with its universal laws, must necessarily be able at the same time to *agree* to that to which it is to *subject* itself.

VI.

ON THE POSTULATES OF PURE PRACTICAL
REASON IN GENERAL

All of them proceed from the principle of morality, which is not a postulate but a law by which reason determines the will immediately; and this will, just because it is so determined as a pure will, requires these necessary conditions for observance of its precept. These postulates are not theoretical dogmas but *presuppositions* having a necessarily practical referenceⁱ and thus, although they do not indeed extend speculative cognition, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason in *general* (by means of their reference to what is practical) and justify its holding concepts even the possibility of which it could not otherwise presume to affirm.

These postulates are those of *immortality*, of *freedom* considered positively (as the causality of a being insofar as it belongs to the intelligible world), and of the *existence of God*. The *first* flows from the practically necessary condition of a duration befitting the complete fulfillment of the moral law; the *second* from the necessary presupposition of independence from the sensible world and of the capacity to determine one's will by the law of an intelligible world, that is, the law of freedom; the *third* from the necessity of the condition for such an intelligible world to be the highest good, through the presupposition of the highest independent good, that is, of the existence of God.

5:133 Aiming at the highest good, made necessary by respect for the moral law, and the presupposition flowing from this of its objective reality lead through the postulates of practical reason to concepts that speculative reason could indeed present as problems but could never solve. Thus it leads to 1: the problem in the solution of which speculative reason could do nothing but commit *paralogisms* (namely, the problem of immortality) because it lacked the mark of permanence by which to supplement the psychological concept of an ultimate subject, necessarily ascribed to the soul in self-consciousness, so as to make it the real representation of a substance; this mark practical reason furnishes by the postulate of a duration required for conformity with the moral law in the highest good as the

^h Or "sacred," *heilig*

ⁱ in *notwendig praktischer Rücksicht*

whole end of practical reason. 2. It leads to the concept with regard to which speculative reason contained nothing but an *antinomy*, the resolution of which it could base only on a concept that was indeed problematically thinkable but not demonstrable or determinable as to its objective reality, namely the *cosmological* idea of an intelligible world and consciousness of our existence in it; it leads to this by means of the postulate of freedom (the reality of which it lays down through the moral law and with it the law of an intelligible world as well, to which speculative reason could only point but could not determine its concept). 3. As for that which speculative reason had to think but to leave undetermined as mere transcendental *ideal*, the *theological* concept of the original being, it furnishes significance to this (for practical purposes, i.e., as a condition of the possibility of the object of a will determined by that law), as the supreme principle of the highest good in an intelligible world, by means of moral lawgiving accompanied by power^j in it.

But is our cognition really extended in this way by pure practical reason, and is what was *transcendent* for speculative reason *immanent* in practical reason? Certainly, but only *for practical purposes*. For we thereby cognize neither the nature of our souls, nor the intelligible world, nor the supreme being as to what they are in themselves, but have merely unified the concepts of them in the *practical* concept of the *highest good* as the object of our will, and have done so altogether a priori through pure reason but only by means of the moral law and, moreover, only in reference to it, with respect to the object it commands. But how freedom is even possible and how this kind of causality has to be represented theoretically and positively is not thereby seen; that there is such a causality is only postulated by the moral law and for the sake of it. It is the same with the remaining ideas, the possibility of which no human understanding will ever fathom although no sophistry will ever convince even the most common human

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VII.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO THINK OF AN
EXTENSION OF PURE REASON FOR PRACTICAL
PURPOSES WITHOUT THEREBY ALSO
EXTENDING ITS COGNITION AS SPECULATIVE?

In order not to be too abstract, we are going to answer this question at once in its application to the present case. In order to extend a pure cognition *practically* there must be a *purpose* given a priori, that is, an end as object (of the will) that, independently of all theoretical principles, is represented as practically necessary by an imperative determining the will

^j *durch gewalthabende moralische Gesetzgebung*

one property, say of the understanding or the will, determining this object of theirs, of which it could not be shown incontestably that if everything anthropomorphic is separated from it nothing would remain to us but the mere word, without our being able to combine with it the least concept by which we could hope for an extension of theoretical cognition. But with respect to the practical there still remains to us, of the properties of understanding and will, the concept of a relation to which the practical law (which precisely determines a priori this relation of the understanding to the will) furnishes objective reality. Once this is done, reality is given to the concept of the object of a morally determined will (that of the highest good) and with it to the conditions of its possibility, the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, but always only with reference to the practice of the moral law (not for any speculative purpose).

After these reminders¹ it is now easy to find the answer to the important question: *whether the concept of God is a concept belonging to physics* (and therefore also to the metaphysics, which only contains the pure a priori principles of the former in their universal meaning) *or to morals*. If, in order to *explain* the arrangements of nature or their changes, one has recourse to God as the author of all things, this is at least no physical explanation and is a complete confession that one has come to an end of one's philosophy; for, one is forced to assume something of which in itself one otherwise has no concept, in order to be able to frame a concept of the possibility of what one sees before one's eyes. But it is impossible through metaphysics to proceed *by sure inferences* from knowledge of this world to the concept of God and to the proof of his existence, for this reason: that in order to say that this world was possible only through a *God* (as we must think this concept) we would have to cognize this world as the most perfect whole possible and, in order to do so, cognize all possible worlds as well (so as to be able to compare them with this one), and would therefore have to be omniscient. Finally,² however, it is absolutely impossible to cognize the existence of this being from mere concepts, because every existential proposition – that is, every proposition that says, of a being of which I frame a concept, that it exists – is a synthetic proposition, that is, one by which I go beyond that concept and say more about it than was thought in the concept, namely, that to this concept *in the understanding* there corresponds an object *outside the understanding*, which it is absolutely impossible to elicit by any inference. Thus there remains for reason only one single procedure by which to arrive at this cognition, namely, as pure reason to start from the supreme principle of its pure practical use (inasmuch as this is always directed simply to the *existence* of something as a result of reason) and determine its object. And then, in its unavoidable

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hypothesis; what could have been easier, what more natural, than the thought that occurs of itself to everyone, to assume a single rational cause of the world having *all perfection* in place of indeterminate degrees of perfection of several causes? But the ills in the world seemed to them to be much too important objections to consider themselves justified in such a hypothesis. Thus they showed understanding and insight precisely in not permitting themselves this hypothesis and instead looked about among natural causes to see if they could not find among them the character³ and capacity required for original beings. But once this acute people had advanced so far in their investigations as to treat philosophically even moral objects, about which other peoples had never done more than prate, they then first found a new need, namely a practical one, which did not fail to give them the determined concept of the original being; and in this speculative reason had the role of a spectator, or at best had the merit of embellishing a concept that had not grown on its own land and of furthering, by a train of confirmations from the study of nature which now came forward for the first time, not indeed its authority (which was already established) but only its display, with a supposed theoretical insight of reason.

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By these reminders the readers of the *Critique* of pure speculative reason will be perfectly convinced how extremely necessary, how salutary for theology and morals that laborious *deduction* of the categories was. For, if they are placed in the pure understanding it is only by this deduction that we can be prevented from taking them, with Plato, to be innate and basing on them extravagant pretensions and theories of the supersensible to which we can see no end, thereby making theology a magic lantern of chimeras; but if they are taken to be acquired, this deduction prevents us from restricting, with Epicurus, all and every use of them, even for practical purposes, merely to objects and determining grounds of the senses. But now that the *Critique* has shown by that deduction, *first* that they are not of empirical origin but have their seat and source a priori in the pure understanding, and *second* that, since they are referred to *objects in general* independently of intuition of these objects, they indeed bring about *theoretical cognition* only in application to *empirical* objects but still, applied to an object given by pure practical reason, also serve for a *determined thought of the supersensible*, yet only to the extent that this is determined merely through such predicates as necessarily belong to the pure *practical purpose* given a priori and to its possibility. Speculative restriction of pure reason and its practical extension first bring it into that *relation of equality* in which reason in general can be used purposively, and this example shows better than any other that the path to *wisdom*, if it is to be assured and not impassible or misleading, must for us human beings unavoidably pass

¹ Or "According to these remarks," *Nach diesen Erinnerungen*

² *Vollends*, perhaps "to cognize completely"

³ *Beschaffenheit*