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ESSAYS

AND

TREATISES.

VOL. I.

ESSAYS

AND

TREATISES

ON MORAL, POLITICAL, AND VARIOUS
PHILOSOPHICAL SUBJECTS.

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FROM THE GERMAN BY THE TRANSLATOR OF
THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PRINTED FOR THE TRANSLATOR;
AND SOLD BY WILLIAM RICHARDSON UNDER THE
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— Accurate and just reasoning is the only catholic remedy, fitted for all persons and all dispositions; and is alone able to subvert that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which, being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom.

DAVID HUME.



P R E F A C E

B Y T H E T R A N S L A T O R.

Whatever he may have, the Author certainly has no occasion of the reader's indulgence; for in these Essays and Treatises the argumentation is highly consequential, and their subjects are both edifying and sublime. They contain the seeds of a philosophy which, though not long sown, have already shotten up in all the Universities of Germany, and choked the noxious weeds of former systems. It is not the first time we have imported wholesome seeds from that country. Witness, those of the Reformation.

The merits and intrinsic value of this work, however, will not be obvious to the herd of vulgar readers, that is, those who read for pastime only.* Let them not deceive them-

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selves,

* These Essays having been printed in a remote part of Germany, where no better paper could possibly be got, and where even this is looked upon as an extravagance (a proof that the sciences in that country, happily, have made more progress, than has luxury), no further apology will be necessary on this head to the class of readers for whom they were designed, namely, not the frivolous, but the wise and thinking; if however, this homely garb notwithstanding,

selves, for them these Essays were not intended. Nor were they written, or even translated, with a view to gain, or to favour any party. But, whoever has a mind to penetrate into the deep recesses of morals and of politics, and to investigate the fundamental principles of DUTY and of RIGHT, than which nothing can be more interesting, or more important to mankind, will not be disappointed, we trust, by our labours.

The first edition of one of these treatises (Eternal Peace) was translated, in 1796, from a very erroneous french version, wherein the Author's philosophical periods are frittered away to little hopping french ones, and his terms entirely misunderstood, of course the whole disfigured; for which reason the translator thought it of consequence to endeavour after a more correct translation of this most excellent work. The public will judge between these performances, and, he is confident, will not accuse him of plagiarism.

It is impossible, says Kant in his PROLEGOMENA, when knowledge in process of time
advances

withstanding, these Essays shall have the fortune to meet with a favourable reception (and that they will the translator has reason to presage), the next time they make their appearance in public, their dress shall be more suitable to their dignity. Towards the beginning of next year he hopes to be able to present the public with the second volume, which will likewise contain weighty philosophic matter. THE METAPHYSIC OF MORALS (dividing into Metaphysical Elements of Law and of Ethics) has been long ready for the press, but, as it is a work on which even KANT himself found it necessary to reflect upwards of 40 years, before he published it, and which may justly be said to be the masterpiece of human reason, the translator, in order to have an opportunity of revising it, wishes to keep it in his desk a few months longer.

advances farther, to hinder certain expressions, which became classical but in the infancy of science, from being afterwards found insufficient, or even unsuitable, and it is equally impossible to hinder a certain new and more apposite use of those expressions from being, now and then, in danger of being confounded with the old use. Faithfully to transfuse the sense of the Author with as much perspicuity as the subject is susceptible of, and at the same time to preserve the character of his style as far as is consistent with the idiom of the English language, were the translator's sole aim; but he was under the unavoidable necessity of introducing several alien scientific terms, which he hopes, however, will be deemed, by major critics,* not unworthy of naturalization, especially as great attention has been bestowed on analogy, and as there are but few, if any, of those terms, whose meaning may not be easily discovered without the help of the context, and as the others will be found explained, either in going on, or in the translator's preface to **THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY**; he hopes likewise, that in this he shall not have incurred the reproach of a licentious affectation of novelty.

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Meanwhile,

* All the nugatory remarks, as well of those that are doomed to creep along the inferiour walks of literature, as of those who have not taken sufficient pains to study this philosophy, the translator is resolved to pass over in silence, and to attend to the criticisms and observations of none but competent judges. Verbal disputes and cavilling at expressions, how momentous soever they may seem to minor critics, are far beneath his notice. He aspires to move in a higher sphere.

Meanwhile, a few expositions, taken from Kant's other writings, may be neither out of place here, nor uninteresting to the learned, they are as follows:

In critical philosophy the distinction between practical, and what belongs to the praxis, must be well attended to. We consider something (says this great man) **THEORETICALLY**, when we have in view that merely, which pertains to a thing, but **PRACTICALLY**, when we reflect on what *ought* to pertain to it through liberty; whereas **PRAxis** is, Application to cases occurring in experience.

In the whole of all possible experience lie all our cognitions, and in the universal reference to these consists **TRANSCENDENTAL TRUTH**, which precedes all empirical truth, and renders it possible. The merely **LOGICAL** criterion of **TRUTH** is, The consension of a cognition with the universal and formal laws of the understanding and of reason. **MATERIAL** (objective) **TRUTH** consists in the harmony or agreement of a cognition with its object. But of the truth of cognition, as to the matter, no universal criterion can be required, because it in itself is contradictory.

FANATICISM must always be distinguished from **ENTHUSIASM**. The fanatic believes to feel an immediate and extraordinary intercourse with a higher nature; but the enthusiast is he, whose mind is heated by any one principle beyond the proper degree, whether it be by the maxims either of patriotic virtue, of friendship, or of religion, without the imagination's being occupied about any thing of a
super-

supernatural intercourse. Again, enthusiasm may be said to be, The idea of the good with affection,*

WONDER is, Affection in the representation of what is new, which surpasses expectation; ADMIRATION, A wondering, which does not cease with the loss of what is new.

The words analysis and synthesis have commonly two different meanings. The SYNTHESIS is either *qualitative*, a progression in the series of the *subordinate* from the condition to the conditional, or it is *quantitative*, a progression in the series of the *co-ordinate* from the given part through its collateral parts to the whole. Thus is circumstanced the ANALYSIS likewise which, in the former case, signifies a regression from the conditional to the condition, and in the latter, a regression from the *whole to its possible parts*, or to the mediate, that is, the parts of the parts, and by consequence is no partition, but a subdivision of a given composite.

HUMOUR, in the good sense, signifies the talent, to be able, to transpose one's self arbitrarily into a certain state of mind, in which all things are judged quite otherwise, than they commonly are (conversely), and yet in such a turn of mind agreeably to certain principles of reason.

* See this word explained in the translator's Preface (p. xxxvi) to THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY BY E. KANT. Sold by W. Richardson under the Royal Exchange London.

The votaries of empirical philosophy have of late endeavoured to stigmatize metaphysics, nay, to reprobate their very name, yet, if the learned author of the doctrine of the indeclinables, who, from a rash judgment,* appears to be one of those votaries, would condescend to quit his favourite field of experience but for a while, and to desist from his attempts to catch the philosophic eel by the tail, he might easily convince himself, especially as he seems to be of the few who think for themselves, that metaphysic is not only not nonsense (though in fact it could never pretend to the name of a science till Kant entered the lists), but the utmost completion of all culture of human reason, and that perhaps more by withholding from errors, than by enlarging knowledge. Every body knows, that metaphysics derived their name but from their having been taught by the ancient Greeks after physics; we will not however descend to dispute about (what is of little consequence) a word; whoever is not satisfied with the denomination, let him term them as he pleases. In the interim take our exposition of the thing:

The legislation of human reason [philosophy] has two objects, nature and liberty, and therefore contains the law of nature, as well as the moral law, at first in two particular systems,

* 'The very term *Metaphysic* being nonsense; and all the systems of it, and controversies concerning it, that are or have been' (happily he has not prejudged and said, or will be) 'in the world, being founded on the grossest ignorance of words and of the nature of speech.'

See ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ. page 450.

systems, but at last in one single philosophical system. The philosophy of nature refers to all that *exists*; that of morals, only to what *ought* to exist.

But all philosophy is either cognition from pure reason, or cognition of reason from empirical principles. The former is named *pure philosophy*, the latter *empirical*.

The philosophy of pure reason now is either pre-exercitation, which investigates the faculty reason relatively to all pure cognition *à priori*, and is entitled *Critic*, or the system of pure reason [science], the whole (true as well as specious) philosophical cognition from pure reason in a systematical coherence, and is distinguished by the appellation **METAPHYSIC**; though this name may be given to the whole pure philosophy comprising the critic, in order to comprehend as well the investigation of all that can ever be cognised *à priori*, as the exhibition of that which constitutes a system of pure philosophical cognition of this species, but which is distinguished from all empirical, as also from the mathematical, use of reason.

Metaphysic is divided into that of the speculative and of the practical use of pure reason, and consequently is metaphysic, either of nature, or of morals. That contains all pure principles of reason from mere conceptions (therefore with exclusion of the mathematics) of the theoretical cognition of all things; this the principles, which determine *à priori* and render necessary the actions. Now morality is the sole legality of actions,
which

which can be deduced from principles fully *à priori*. Hence metaphysic is properly the pure moral, which is bottomed upon no anthropology (no empirical condition). The metaphysic of speculative reason is what is usually styled in the narrower sense metaphysic; so far however as pure moral philosophy appertains to the particular stock of human philosophical cognition from pure reason, we shall continue to give it that discriminative appellation. The idea of such a science, though hitherto not purified from heterogeneous matter, is as old as speculative human reason; and What reason is it that does not speculate, in either a scholastic, or a popular manner?*

To conclude: There is a definition, which, for aught we know, has hitherto baffled the efforts of all philosophers, namely, that of laughter. In whatever excites a hearty shaking laugh there must be something nonsensical (in which the understanding, in itself, can find no complacency). LAUGHTER (says Kant) *is an affection from the sudden turning into nothing of a sanguine expectation.* Even this turning, which is certainly not pleasing to the understanding, pleases nevertheless for a moment very much, indirectly. The cause must therefore consist in the influence of the representation on the body and its reaction on the mind; and indeed not on condition that the representation be objectively an object of pleasure

* This subject is fully handled in *Kant's Critic of pure Reason*, a work which ought to be the *breviary* of all philosophers.

pleasure (for how can a disappointed expectation afford pleasure?), but barely because it, as a mere play of representations, produces an equilibrium of the vital powers in the body. When, for instance, it is related, that an Indian, who saw at the table of an Englishman in Surate a bottle of ale opened, and all the ale, turned into froth, running out, expressed his great wonder by a number of exclamations, and, on the Englishman's inquiring, What is there in this that occasions so much wonder and outcry? answered, I'm not surpris'd, that it runs out, but only how you cou'd 've got it all into the bottle; we laugh at this heartily, and it yields us great pleasure; not because we find ourselves wiser than this ignorant person, or otherwise in something which the understanding suggested to us in this; but our expectation was great and vanished suddenly. Or when the heir of a deceased rich relation wishes to conduct his funeral with great solemnity, but complains, that he cannot succeed in this; for (continues he), the more money I give my mourners, to seem sorrowful, the more gay and sprightly do they appear; this occasions laughter, because the expectation is suddenly turned into nothing. It must be well observed, that it must not be transformed into the positive opposite of an expected object — for that is always something, and may frequently occasion sorrow — but turned into nothing. For, when one raises our expectation greatly by the narration of an occurrence, and we immediately at the conclusion discover its falsehood, it
occasions

occasions a displacency in us; as, for example, that of people, whose hair grew quite gray in one night, through grief. Whereas, when, by way of retaliating such a story, another wag relates very circumstantially the vexation of a certain merchant who, returning from India to England with all his fortune, in goods, was obliged, in a storm, to throw every thing over board, and was so much concerned for his loss, that, in the very same night, by a miraculous violation of the established laws of nature, his *periwig* grew gray; we naturally laugh, and it affords us pleasure, because we reflect on falsely seizing an object otherwise indifferent to us, or rather tossing to and fro for a while the idea we pursued, like a ball, thinking to catch it merely and hold it fast. It is not the refutation of a liar here or of a blockhead, which yields pleasure; for the latter story, told with proper seriousness, would of itself set a whole company in a roar; whereas the former would commonly not merit attention.

It is remarkable, that in all such cases the jest must always comprise in itself something, which can deceive for a moment; therefore, when the appearance vanishes, the mind looks back, in order to essay it once more, and thus, by tension and laxation following one another quickly, is made to spring backwards and forwards and is put into a fluctuancy which, since the leap from what in a manner wound up the strings happened suddenly (not by a gradual remission), must occasion a movement of the mind and an internal bodily motion,

motion, which continues involuntarily, and produces not only a lassitude but a serenity at the same time (the effects of an exercise tending to health) harmonizing with it.

For, when it is supposed, that with all our thoughts some one motion or other is at the same time harmoniously combined in the organs of the body; it will be pretty well comprehended, how to that sudden metathesis of mind, now in the one, then in the other station, in order to contemplate its object, a reciprocal tension and relaxation of the elastic parts of our viscera, which communicate themselves to the diaphragm, can correspond (such as that which ticklish persons feel): whereby the lungs eject the air at periods following one another quickly, and thus occasion a motion useful to health, which motion only, and not what passes in the mind, is the proper cause of the pleasure in a thought, that at bottom represents nothing. Heaven, says Voltaire, hath given us two things to counterbalance the many troubles and difficulties of life, to wit, *hope* and *sleep*. He might have added *laughter* to the number; if the means to excite it in reasonable persons were but as ready at hand, and wit, or the originality of humour, which is thereto requisite, were not just as rare, as is abundant the talent for fiction, *head-breaking*, like mystical speculators or fancymongers, *neck-breaking*, like geniuses, or *heart-breaking*, like sentimental romance-writers, (or, if you please, like sentimental moralists).

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ERRATA.

P.	L.
5	32, 33, 34 for <i>dont</i> , read <i>don't</i> .
6	5 read <i>answer</i> . 14 read <i>whole</i> .
8	9 for <i>is</i> , read <i>must be</i> . 12 for <i>this</i> read <i>it</i> . 19 read <i>dares</i> .
9	17 for <i>con-</i> , read <i>con</i> . 25 for <i>Wheter</i> read <i>Whether</i> .
10	7 for <i>continue with the old</i> , read <i>adhere to the old oeconomy</i> .
13	16 for <i>prevents</i> read <i>presents</i> . 32 for <i>it pro, table for itself to treat</i> , read <i>its advantage in treating</i> .
21	32 read <i>genuineness</i> .
22	15 read <i>propaideitic</i> . 19 for <i>For this reason</i> , read <i>Just</i> .
29	10 for <i>eyen</i> , read <i>even</i> . 23 dele <i>comma</i> .
57	4 for <i>id a</i> , read <i>idea</i> .
40	8 for <i>dstermine</i> , read <i>determine</i> .
64	28 for <i>because</i> , read <i>that</i> .
81	24 after <i>me</i> ; insert an *
158	19 for <i>necessary</i> , read <i>contingent</i> .
140	6 for <i>negatives</i> , read <i>negative ones</i> .
169 Note	for <i>cooperation</i> , read <i>co-operation</i> .
171	14, '16 always read <i>so far</i> .
172	at the bottom for <i>which</i> , read <i>This</i> .
192 2d Note	1 for <i>ihe</i> , read <i>the</i> .
208	17 dele <i>in order</i> .
246	2 for <i>beneath</i> , read <i>no less beneath</i> , for <i>as</i> read <i>than</i> .
256 Note	9 after <i>another</i> , dele <i>comma</i> .
271 Note	18 for <i>Thibeth</i> , read <i>Thibet</i> .
284 Note	8 read <i>Those books can therefore</i> .
286	2 for <i>negociations</i> , read <i>negotiations</i> .
628	5 for <i>Emil</i> read <i>Emile</i> .
352	25 dele <i>comma</i> .
382	50 for <i>s mething</i> , read <i>something</i> .
432	7 insert a <i>comma</i> after <i>circumstantiality</i> .

AN

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,
WHAT IS ENLIGHTENING?

VOL. I.

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ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENING?

Enlightening is, *Man's quitting the nonage occasioned by himself.* Nonage or minority is the inability of making use of one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This nonage is *occasioned by one's self*, when the cause of it is not from want of understanding, but of resolution and courage to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. *Sapere aude!* Have courage to make use of thy own understanding! is therefore the *dictum* of enlightening.

Laziness and cowardice are the causes, why so great a part of mankind, after nature has long freed them from the guidance of others (*naturaliter majorennnes*), willingly remain minors as long as they live; and why it is so easy for others, to set themselves up as their guardians. It is convenient to be a minor. If I have a book, which has understanding for me, a curate, who has conscience for me, a physician, who judges of diet for me, etc. I need not give myself any trouble. I have no occasion to think, if I can but pay; others

will save me the trouble of that irksome business. Those guardians, who have graciously undertaken the superintendence of mankind, take sufficient care, that by far the greater part of them (and all the fair) shall hold the step to majority, besides the trouble attending it, very dangerous. After these superintendents have first made them as stupid as their domestic animals, and carefully prevented those peaceable creatures from daring to venture a single step beyond the go-cart, in which they are inclosed; they point out to them the danger that threatens them, if they should try to go alone. Indeed this danger is not so very great, for, at the expence of a few falls, they would learn to walk at last; but an example of this sort renders timid, and commonly discourages from all further attempts. It is therefore difficult for every single man to extricate himself from the nonage, which is almost become natural to him. Nay, it is even become agreeable to him, and he is for the present actually incapable of using his own understanding, because he never was allowed to make the trial. Ordinances and formules, the mechanical instruments of a rational use, or rather misuse, of his gifts of nature, are the fetters of an everlasting minority. Whoever shook them off, would take but an uncertain leap over the smallest ditch even, because he is not accustomed to such a free motion. Hence there are but few, who have succeeded to emancipate themselves from nonage by their own labour, and yet to walk firmly.

But

But it is sooner possible for a nation to enlighten itself; nay, when it has the liberty, it is almost infallible. For a few who think for themselves will always be found, even among the installed guardians of the multitude, who, after they themselves have thrown off the yoke of nonage, will spread about them the spirit of a rational estimation of the proper value and of the vocation of every man to think for himself. It is singular in this, that the public, which was formerly brought under this yoke by them, afterwards compels them themselves to remain under it, when this public is thereto stirred up by some of its guardians, who are themselves totally incapable of enlightening; so pernicious is it to fill with prejudices; as they are revenged at last on those themselves who, or whose predecessors, were their authors. Hence a nation can attain enlightening but slowly. A deliverance from personal despotism, and interested and tyrannical oppression, may perhaps be obtained by a revolution, but never a true reform of the cast of mind; new prejudices will serve, just as well as the old, for leading-strings to the thoughtless multitude.

To this enlightening however nothing is required but LIBERTY; and indeed the most harmless of all that may be named liberty, to wit, that, to make a *public use* of one's reason in every point. But I hear exclaimed from all sides: *dont reason!* The officer says: dont reason, but exercise! The financier: dont reason, but pay! The clergyman: dont reason, but believe! (Only one master in the world

world says: *reason*, as much as you please, and on what you please, *but obey!*) Here is everywhere restriction of liberty. But what restriction is a hinderance to enlightening? what not, but even favourable to it? — My answer is this: the *public* use of one's reason must always be free, and that only can bring about enlightening among men; but the *private use* of it may often be very strictly limited, without much hindering the progress of enlightening. By the public use of one's own reason however I understand that, which every one *as a man of letters* makes of it in the eyes of the whole reading world. I name the private use that, which he may make of his reason in a certain *civil post*, or office, intrusted to him. There is necessary to many businesses, which run in with the interest of the commonwealth; a certain mechanism, by means of which some members of the commonwealth must conduct themselves passively merely, in order, by an artificial unison directed by the government to public ends, to be withholden at least from the destruction of these ends. Here indeed it is not allowed to reason; but one must obey. But so far as this part of the machine considers itself at the same time as a member of the whole commonwealth, nay, even of the cosmopolitical society, consequently in the character of a man of letters, who addresses himself by writings to the public in the proper sense; he may by all means reason, without doing any injury thereby to the business, to which he is appointed, partly as a passive member. It would
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be very hurtful, if an officer, to whom his superiour gives an order, should in actual service reason loudly on the conformity-to-end; or expediency of this order; he must obey. But he, as a man of letters, cannot in justice be hindered from making his observations on the faults of the military service, and from submitting these to the judgment of the public. The citizen cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed on him; even a forward censure of such taxes, when they are to be paid by him, may be punished as a scandal (which might occasion universal opposition). The very same person, notwithstanding that, does not act contrary to the duty of a citizen, when he, as a man of letters, publishes his thoughts on the unfitness or even the injustice of such imposts. In like manner is a clergyman bound, to deliver himself to his congregation in all points according to the symbol of the church, which he serves; for he was ordained on this condition. But as a man of letters he has full liberty, nay, it is his call, to communicate to the public all his carefully proved and well-meant thoughts on what is faulty in that symbol, and to make his proposals for the better regulation of the affairs of religion and of the church. There is nothing in this, which can be burdensome to the conscience. For, what he teaches pursuant to his office, as agent of the church, he represents as something, in respect of which he has not a free power to teach according to his own sentiments, but he is ordered to propound that according to precept and in the name of another. He may

say: our church inculcates this, or that doctrine; these are the arguments it makes use of. He then draws all practical profit to his congregation from ordinances, to which he himself would not subscribe, perhaps with full conviction, to whose propounding however he can bind himself, because it is not quite impossible that truth may lie therein concealed, but at all events nothing is found in them inconsistent at least with the internal religion. For, did he believe to find in them any thing repugnant to this, he could not administer his office with a safe conscience; he must resign it. The use, therefore, which an established teacher or pastor makes of his reason before his hearers, is a *private use* merely; as this is never but a domestic congregation, though ever so great; and in regard to which he, as a *priest*, is not free, and dare not be so, because he executes the commission of another. Whereas, as a man of letters, who speaks by writings to the proper public, namely, the world, consequently the ecclesiastic, in the *public-use* of his reason, enjoys an unlimited liberty, to use his own reason and to speak in his own person. For it is an absurdity, which tends to the perpetuating of absurdities, that the guardians of the people (in spiritual things) shall themselves be again in a state of nonage.

But should not a society of clergymen, for instance, a church-assembly, or a reverend class (as the Dutch clergy name themselves) be intitled to bind one another by oath to a certain unalterable symbol, in order to exercise

cise an incessant supreme guardianship over every one of their members and by their means over the people, and even to eternize this? I maintain that that is totally impossible. Such a contract, entered into for the purpose of withholding for ever all farther enlightening from the human species, is absolutely void; and should it be confirmed by the chief power even, by diets of the empire, and by the most solemn treaties of peace. An age cannot league itself, and by oath too, to put the following age into a state, wherein it must be impossible for it to enlarge its knowledge (especially a knowledge so very important), to purge away errors, and in general to make progress in enlightening. That were a crime against human nature, whose original destination consists directly in this progression; and posterity is therefore completely entitled to reject those resolutions, as at once incompetently and presumptuously formed. The test of all that can be finally determined, with regard to a nation, lies in the question, Whether a nation itself could institute such a law? This would, as it were, in the expectation of a better, be possible for a determinate short time, with a view to introduce a better order; if at the same time all the citizens, principally the clergy, had the liberty, in the character of men of letters, to make their observations publicly, that is, by writings, on that which is faulty of the present œconomy, but the established order might still continue, till the insight into the nature of these things attained such a degree, that they (the citizens)

by uniting their voices (though not of all) could make a proposal to the throne, to take under its protection those congregations, which had united themselves in an altered œconomy of religion according to their conceptions of a better introspection, without however molesting those, who rather chuse to continue with the old. But to unite one's self in a permanent constitution of religion, to be questioned by nobody publicly, even but during the life-time of one man, and thereby, as it were, annihilate a period in the progrefsion of humanity to amendment, to render it fruitless and by that means even detrimental to posterity, is absolutely not allowed. A man may indeed, as to his own person, defer, and even then but for a time, the enlightening in that, which is incumbent on him to know; but to renounce it, let it be for his own person, but still more for posterity, is to violate and to trample on the sacred rights of humanity. But what a nation cannot finally determine with regard to themselves; still less can the monarch determine that finally with regard to the nation; for his legislative dignity rests upon his uniting in his own will the common will of the nation. If he but takes care, that all true or opiniative improvement be consistent with the civil order; as for the rest, he may let his subjects themselves do what they find necessary to be done for the sake of the welfare of their own souls; that does not concern him, but it concerns him to take care that the one shall not violently prevent the other from labouring with all his strength at
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the determination and furtherance of that welfare. He derogates from his own majesty, when he interferes with the writings, by which his subjects endeavour to perfectionate their insights, and thinks them worthy of the inspection of his government, as well as when he does this from his own profound introspection, where he exposes himself to the exprobration, *Cesar non est supra grammaticos*, as also, and still more, when he humbles his supreme power so far, as to support the ecclesiastic despotism of a few tyrants in his state against his other subjects.

If it is now enquired, do we live at present in an *enlightened* age? The answer is, No, but by all means in an age of *enlightening*. There is still a great deal wanting to men, as things are at present, on the whole, to be in a state, or to be but able to be put in a state, to make a safe and a good use of their own understanding in affairs of religion without the guidance of another. But we have distinct proofs, that the field is now opened for them to labour in freely, and the hinderances of universal enlightening, or of quitting the nonage occasioned by themselves, become by degrees fewer. In this respect the present age is the age of enlightening, or FREDERICK'S century.

A prince, who does not think it unworthy of himself to say, that he holds it *duty*, not to prescribe any thing to men in matters of religion, but to allow them full liberty therein, who declines, even the lofty *name of being tolerating*, is himself enlightened, and
merits

merits to be esteemed as such by the grateful world and by posterity, a prince, who first freed the human species from nonage, at least on the part of government, and gave them liberty, in all that is an affair of conscience, to use their own reason. Under him could respectable clergymen, in the character of men of letters, without prejudice to the duty of their office, freely expose to the world to be proved their judgments and insights, here and there deviating from the received symbol; and still more every other person, who is limited by no duty of office. This spirit of liberty diffuses itself outwardly also, even where it has to struggle with external impediments of a government misunderstanding itself. For it gives an example to that government, that it needs not, on account of liberty, be under the smallest solicitude for the tranquillity, and union of the commonwealth. Men naturally extricate themselves insensibly from the state of rudeness and barbarity, when invention is not purposely plied to keep them in it.

The stress of the principal point of enlightening, that of men's quitting the nonage occasioned by themselves, I have laid upon *matters of religion* chiefly; because, with regard to arts and sciences, our rulers have no interest in playing the guardian over their subjects; besides, that state of nonage is not only the most pernicious, but the most dishonourable of any. But the way of thinking of a head of the state, who favours enlightening penetrates farther and perspects, That
even

even in regard of his *legislation* there is no danger in allowing his subjects to make a *public* use of their reason, and to lay before the world their thoughts on a better constitution, and even a free and honest criticism of the present; we have an eminent example of this, in which no monarch ever surpassed him, whom we honour.

But only he, who, enlightened himself, is not only not afraid of his shadow, but has at hand a well-disciplined numerous army as a security for the public tranquillity, can say, what a free state dares not risk: *reason as much as you please, and on what you please, but obey!* Thus a strange unexpected course of human affairs prevents itself here; so that, when it is contemplated in the gross, almost every thing is paradoxical in it. A greater degree of civil liberty seems advantageous to the liberty of the *spirit of the nation*, and yet places insuperable barriers to it; whereas a degree less of that gives this full scope to extend itself to the utmost of its faculty. When nature has then unfolded under this rough rind the germe, of which she takes the most tender care, namely, the propensity * and the call to *thinking freely*; this gradually reacts on the minds of the people (whereby they become by degrees more capable of the *liberty of acting*), and finally, even on the principles of the government, which finds it profitable for itself to treat

* See the proper signification of this word in the translator's preface (page XXXV.) to *The Principles of Critical Philosophy* by *L. Kant*.

man,

man, who is now more than a mere *machine*, conformably to his dignity. *

* In Buesching's weekly *Intelligencer* of the 15th. Sept. I read to day (the 50th. inst.) the notice of the Berlin monthly publication of this month (Sept. 1784), wherein Mr. Moses Mendelssohn's answer to this very question is mentioned. It has not yet reached me; else it would have prevented the present, which may now remain for the purpose of experimenting, how far chance can effectuate a consonancy of sentiments.

T H E

G R O U N D W O R K

O F T H E

METAPHYSICS of MORALS.

— Happy, if we can unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound inquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty! And still more happy, if, reasoning in this easy manner, we can undermine the foundations of an abstruse philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served, only as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error!

D. HUME.

P R E F A C E.

The ancient Greek philosophy is divided into three sciences, namely, *physics*, *ethics*, and *logic*. This division is perfectly suitable to the nature of the subject, and cannot be improved, except, perhaps, by superadding but the principle of it, partly in order to ascertain its completeness, and partly to be able to determine accurately the necessary subdivisions.

All cognition of reason is either *material*, and contemplates some one object or another; or *formal*, and is conversant about the form of the understanding merely, and of reason itself, and the universal rules of thinking in general, without distinction of objects. The formal philosophy is denominated *logic*, but the material; which has to do with determinate objects and the laws, to which they are subjected, is again twofold. For these laws are laws of either *nature* or *liberty*. The science of the former is distinguished by the appellation of *physics*, that of the latter is *ethics*; that is named natural philosophy also, this moral.

Logic can have no empirical part, that is, such a part, where the universal and necessary laws of cogitation would rest upon grounds, taken from experience; else it would not be logic, that is, a canon for the understanding, or for reason, which is valid in all thinking, and must be demonstrated. Whereas both natural and moral philosophy have each their empirical part, because that must determine the laws of nature, as an object of experience, but this the laws of the will of man, so far as it is affected by nature, the former as laws, according to which every thing happens, the latter as such, according to which every thing *ought* to happen, but with consideration of the conditions nevertheless, under which it frequently doth not happen.

All philosophy, so far as it rests upon grounds of experience, may be termed *empirical*, but that, which propounds its doctrines from principles *à priori* merely, *pure*, philosophy. The latter, when it is formal barely, is styled *logic*; but when it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding, it takes the name of *metaphysics*.

In the same manner arises the idea of two-fold metaphysics, to wit, *metaphysics of nature* and *those of morals*. Natural philosophy has its empirical, but also a rational part; ethics likewise; though here the empirical part may be denominated *practical anthropology* in particular, but the rational, properly *moral*.

Trades, handicrafts and arts, have all reaped great advantage from the distribution of the work, as one man does not make every thing,
but

but every person, in order to be able to perform a work to the greatest perfection and with more facility, limits himself to a certain one which, according to the manner of elaborating it, distinguishes itself sensibly from others. Where the work is neither distinguished nor distributed in this way, and where every one person exercises all the various branches, the arts are still but in their infancy. It may be an object not altogether unworthy of consideration, to examine whether pure philosophy too doth not require a different person for all its parts, and whether it would not be better for the whole learned profession, if those, who are accustomed to vend the empirical together with the rational, mixed according to all sorts of relations unknown to themselves, conformably to the taste of the public, and who appropriate to themselves the name of *thinkers for themselves*, but to others, who prepare the merely rational part, that of speculators, were warned, not to transact two affairs at once, which are very different in the mode of treatment, and to which perhaps a peculiar talent is requisite, and whose conjunction in one person produces but bunglers; the question is here however, only, Whether the nature of the science doth not require, always carefully to separate the empirical part from the rational, and that the proper (empirical) physics shall be preceded by the metaphysics of nature, but the practical anthropology, by the metaphysics of morals, which must be carefully purified from all that is empirical, in order to know, how much pure reason can accomplish in both

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cases,

cases, and from what sources it draws this its instruction *à priori*; the latter may be executed either by all moral philosophers (of whom there are legions,) or but by a few, who feel their abilities adequate to the task.

As moral philosophy is properly my object here, I limit the proposed question to this only, Whether one be not of opinion, that it is of the utmost necessity to elaborate a moral philosophy, which is purified from every thing that is but empirical and belongs to anthropology; for, it is obvious of itself from the common idea of duty and from the moral law, that there must be such a one. Every body must allow, that a law, if it is to be valid morally, that is, as ground of an obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity; that the commandment, Thou shalt not lie, is not valid for men barely, and that other rational beings need not take any notice of it; and thus all the other proper moral laws; that therefore the ground of the obligation here must be sought for, neither in the nature of man, nor in the circumstances in the world, wherein he is placed, but *à priori* merely in conceptions of pure reason, and that every other precept, which is founded upon principles of mere experience, and even in a certain respect an universal precept, so far as it, in the smallest part, perhaps but in a motive, rests upon empirical grounds, may indeed be named a practical rule, but never a moral law.

Therefore not only the moral laws, together with their principles, are, among all practical
cogni-

cognitions, essentially distinguished from all others, wherein there is any thing whatever empirical, but every moral philosophy rests entirely upon its pure part, and, applied to man, borrows not the smallest from the knowledge of him, (anthropology), but gives him, as a rational being, laws *à priori*, which, it is true, still require judgement whetted by experience, in order partly to distinguish in what cases they have their application, and partly to procure to them entrance into the will of man, and energy for the exercise, as he, being affected by so many inclinations, is indeed susceptible of the idea of a practical pure reason, but not so easily capable of rendering it effective *in concreto* in his life.

The metaphysics of morals are then indispensably necessary, not merely from a motive of speculation, with a view of investigating the source of the practical principles lying in our reason *à priori*, but because morals themselves remain subjected to all sorts of corruption, so long as that guide and chief *norma* of their right judgment is wanting. For in that, which is to be morally good, it is not sufficient that it be *conformable* to the moral law, but it must be *for the sake of it* also; on the contrary that conformity is but very contingent and uncertain, because the immoral ground produces now and then legal actions, it is true, but more frequently illegal ones. But the moral law, in its purity and genuineness (which, in the practical field, is of the greatest moment), is nowhere else to be sought for, than in a pure philosophy, therefore this

(metaphysics) must precede, and without it there can be no moral philosophy any where; even that, which mixes those pure principles with the empirical ones, merits not the name of philosophy (for philosophy is precisely distinguished from the common cognition of reason, by propounding in a separate science that, which the latter comprehends but mingled), and much less of moral philosophy, because, by this very mingling, it proves derogatory even to the purity of morals themselves, and acts contrary to its own end.

Let it not however be imagined, that what is here required, is already to be found in the *propodeutic* (pre-exercitation) to the moral philosophy of the celebrated Wolf, to wit, *universal practical philosophy*, so named by him, and that a quite new road is not to be taken here. For this reason, because it is to be an universal practical philosophy, it has no will of any one peculiar sort, for instance, such a one, as without all empirical motives is determined fully by principles *à priori*, and which may be denominated a pure will, but volition in general taken into consideration with all actions and conditions, which belong to it in this universal signification, and in this is it distinguished from the metaphysics of morals, in the same manner as universal logic from transcendental philosophy,* the former of which propounds the actions and rules of thinking *in the general*, but the latter the peculiar actions merely and

* See *transcendental philosophy* in THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY by E. KANT.

and rules of pure thinking, that is, those, whereby objects are cognised *à priori* entirely. For the metaphysics of morals ought to investigate the idea and the principles of a possible pure will, and not the actions and conditions of the human volition in general, which are drawn for the most part from psychology. That moral laws and duties are spoken of (though contrary to every right) in the universal practical philosophy, makes out no objection to my assertions. For the authors of that science remain in this constant to their idea of it; they do not distinguish the motives, which, as such, must be represented *à priori* entirely by reason merely, and are properly moral, from the empirical ones, which the understanding elevates by comparison of the experiences merely to universal conceptions, but contemplate them, without attending to the distinction of their sources, only according to the greater or less sum of them, (they being all considered as homogeneous), and thereby form to themselves their conception of *obligation*, which, is indeed nothing less than moral, but of such a nature nevertheless, as can be required in a philosophy, which passes no judgment whatever on the *origin* of all possible practical conceptions, whether they have place either *à priori* or merely *à posteriori*.

Intending one day or other to present the public with the *Metaphysics of Morals* * I let

* These are published, translated, and will be printed soon.

this Groundwork precede. Indeed there is properly no other foundation for them, than the Critic of pure practical Reason, in the same manner as for metaphysics, the Critic of pure speculative Reason already published in German. But, in the first place, that is not of the utmost necessity, like this, because human reason in the moral use, even with the most common understanding, may be easily brought to the greatest correctness and copiousness, whereas in the theoretical, but pure, use, it is dialectical entirely;— and, secondly, I require of the critic of a pure practical reason, that, when it shall be finished, its unity must at the same time be able to be exhibited in a common principle with the speculative; because at last it can be but the very same reason, which must be distinguished in the application merely. I could not however bring it to such a completeness here, without mixing contemplations of quite another sort, and confusing the reader. For which reason, instead of the title, Critic of pure practical Reason, I have used that of, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.

But, thirdly, as the metaphysics of morals, notwithstanding the forbidding title, are susceptible of a great degree of popularity and suitableness to the common understanding of mankind, I find it expedient, to separate this work, that is preparatory to the foundation of those metaphysics, in order not to have occasion afterwards to add what is subtle, which is therein inevitable, to more comprehensible doctrines.

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The present groundwork, however, is nothing but the seeking out and the fixing of the *highest principle of morality*, which of itself, in its design, constitutes an entire affair, that requires to be separated from all other moral investigations. My assertion, concerning this important main question hitherto not yet resolved by any means in a satisfactory manner, will receive much light by the application of the same principle to the whole system, and, through the sufficiency which it every-where discloses, great confirmation: but I must relinquish this advantage, which at the bottom would be more gratifying to self-love, than of public utility, because the ease in the use and the seeming sufficiency of a principle do not give a perfectly sure proof of its rightness, but rather awake a certain partiality, not to investigate and to ponder it for itself strictly, without any consideration of the consequence.

In this work I have arranged my method, as I believe to be the most suitable, when one chuses to set out from the common cognition to the determination of its chief principle, analytically, and to return from the examination of this principle and from its source to the common cognition, wherein its use is found, synthetically.

THE
GROUNDWORK
OF THE
METAPHYSICS OF MORALS.

SECTION I.

TRANSITION FROM THE COMMON MORAL
COGNITION OF REASON TO THE
PHILOSOPHICAL.

There is nothing in the world, nay, generally speaking, even out of it, possible to be conceived, which can, without limitation, be held good, but a GOOD WILL. Understanding, wit, judgement, and however the *talents* of the mind may be named, or courage, resolution, and perseverance in the design, as properties of the *temperament*, are no doubt good, in many views, and worthy of being wished for; but they may become bad too and pernicious in the highest degree, when the will, which is to make use of these gifts of nature, and whose peculiar quality is on that account denominated *character*, is not good. In the very same manner are circum-
stanced

stanced the *gifts of fortune*. Power, opulence, honour, even health and the whole wellbeing and contentment with one's situation, under the name of *felicity*, give courage and by this frequently superciliousness also, where there does not exist a good will, which corrects and renders universally conformable-to-end their influence on the mind, and with this at the same time the whole principle of action; not to mention, that a reasonable impartial spectator, in viewing an uninterrupted prosperity of a being, whom no stroke of a pure and good will ornaments, can never feel a complacency; and thus the good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition of the worthiness even, to be happy.

Some properties are even favourable to this good will itself and can lighten its work very much, but have, notwithstanding that, no intrinsic unconditional value, but always presuppose a good will, that limits the estimation, in which one justly holds them, and does not allow them to be considered as absolutely good. Moderation in affections and passions, self-government and cool reflection are not only in many views good, but seem to constitute a part even of the intrinsic value of the person; there is however much wanting still, to declare them without limitation good, (how unconditional soever they may have been esteemed by the ancients). For without principles of a good will they may become highly bad, and the cold blood of a villain renders him not only much more dangerous, but immediately in our eyes still more detestable,

able, than he would have been held without this.

The good will is not good through that, which it causes, or effectuates, not by its fitness, for attaining any one end proposed, but by volition only, that is, good in itself, and, contemplated apart, beyond comparison to be valued much more, than all that could be accomplished by means of it in favour of any one inclination, ay, eyen the sum of all the inclinations. Though by a peculiar disfavour of fate, or through a scanty portion of a step-dame nature, this will should totally want the ability to obtain its end; if notwithstanding its greatest exertion nothing should be effected by it, and the good will only (not a mere wish, but, as it were, the collecting of all the means, as far as they are in our power) should remain: it would nevertheless, like a jewel, shine of itself, as something, which has in itself its full value. Neither the utility nor the uselessness can increase or diminish this value. It (the utility), would be like the setting of a diamond, in order to be able to handle it more easily, or to draw to it the attention of those, who are not sufficient connoisseurs, but not to recommend it to connoisseurs, and to determine its value.

There lies however in this idea of the absolute value of the mere will, without bringing to account any advantage by the estimation of it, something so singular, that, notwithstanding all the concurrence with it of common reason itself, a suspicion must arise, which

which is perhaps secretly founded on nothing but high-soaring phantastory, and may have ill understood nature in her design, why she has attributed to our will reason as a governour. Therefore from this point of view we shall put this idea to the test.

In the natural predispositions of a being, organized, that is, adjusted to the purpose of life, we assume as a principle, That no instrument for any one end whatever is found in that being, but what is the fittest for it and the most conformable to it. Were now in a being that is endowed with reason and with a will, its *preservation*, its *prosperity*, in a word, its *felicity*, the proper end of nature, she has contrived it very ill indeed in making choice of the reason of the creature for the executor of this her design. For all the actions, which this being has to perform with a view to its happiness, and the whole rule of its conduct would be much more exactly prescribed to it by instinct, and that end had thereby been much more certainly attained, than it ever can be by reason, and, should this over and above be bestowed on the favoured creature, it must only be of use to this creature, in order to contemplate the happy predisposition of its nature, to admire this, to rejoice in it, and to be grateful for it to the beneficent cause; but not in order to submit its appetitive faculty to the weak and deceitful guidance of reason and to bungle in the design of nature; in short, she would have prevented reason from manifesting itself in the PRACTICAL USE, and from having the auda-

audaciousness with its feeble insights to exco-
gitate for itself the project of felicity, and
the means of obtaining it; nature would
have taken upon herself not only the choice
of the ends, but the means, and had with
wise care intrusted both to instinct merely.

In fact we find, that, the more a cultivated
reason meddles with the purpose of the enjoy-
ment of life and of felicity, so much the more
doth man stray from the real contentment,
out of which, with many, and indeed with
the most experienced in the use of it, if they
are but candid enough to own it, arises a
certain degree of *misology*, that is, hatred of
reason, because, after the calculation of every
advantage, which they derive, I will not say
from the invention of all the arts of common
luxury, but even from the sciences (which
seem to them at last a luxury likewise of the
understanding), they find, that in fact they
have brought more trouble on themselves, than
they have gained felicity, and finally rather
envy, than despise the common sort of men,
which is nearer to the guidance of mere in-
stinct, and which does not grant its reason
much influence on its actions. And so far it
must be acknowledged, that the judgment of
those, who greatly moderate, and even, if I
may be allowed the expression, put below
null, the vain-glorious commendations of the
advantages, which reason, in regard to the
felicity and contentment of life, ought to
procure us, is by no means ill-humoured, or
ungrateful for the goodness of the government
of the world, but that, the idea of another
and

and much more worthy design secretly forms the basis of the existence of these judgments, for which design, and not for felicity, reason is properly destined, and to which, on that account, as chief condition, the private views of man must for the most part give place.

For as reason is not sufficiently fit to guide the will safely with regard to its objects and to the supplying of all our wants (that reason in part multiplies even), to which end an innate instinct would have led much more certainly, however reason, as a practical faculty, that is, as such a one, as shall have influence on the *will*, is allotted us; so its real destination must be to produce a will, not in another view *as a mean*, but a *will good in itself*, to which reason was absolutely necessary, since nature every-where else in the distribution of her predispositions went to work in a manner conformable-to-end. This will needs not then be the only and the whole, but it must be the chief, good, and the condition to all the rest, even to all desire of felicity, in which case it may be perfectly united with the wisdom of nature, when it is perceived, that the culture of reason, which is requisite to the first and unconditional design, limits in various manners, at least in this life, the attainment of the second, which is always conditional, namely, felicity, nay, it may bring it under null even, without nature's proceeding therein unconformably-to-end, because reason, which cognises its highest practical destination in the founding of a good will, is in the attaining of this purpose
capable

capable but of a contentment of its own sort, namely, from the accomplishment of an end, which reason itself only determines, even should this be combined with many detriments, which happen to the ends of inclination.

In order however to unfold the conception of a will highly estimable and without further views good in itself, such as natural sound reason is already endowed with, and which needs not be very learned, but rather enlightened, this conception always stands uppermost in the estimation of the whole value of our actions, and constitutes the condition of all the rest; we shall now take into consideration the conception of DUTY, which comprises that of a good will, though under certain subjective limitations and impediments, but which duty, instead of concealing and making them unknowable, points them out and renders them perfectly conspicuous.

I pass over here all the actions which, though they may in this or that view be useful, are already cognised as contrary to duty; for with regard to them the query cannot have place, Whether they may have been performed *out of duty*, as they are even repugnant to this; I set aside the actions likewise, which are actually contrary to duty, but to which men have immediately *no inclination*, yet do them, because they are spurred on by another inclination. For there it may be easily distinguished, whether the action conformable to duty be performed *out of duty* or from a selfish

motive. This distinction is much more difficult to be remarked, where the action is conformable to duty and the subject has besides an *immediate* inclination to it. For instance, it is by all means conformable to duty, that the shop-keeper shall not over-reach the unexperienced purchaser, and, where there is much trade, the prudent trader does not over-reach, but fixes an universal price for every body, so that a child can purchase from him, as easily, as any other person. One is therefore *honestly* served; but this is not enough to induce belief, that the trader acts in this manner out of duty and from principles of honesty; his interest requires it; but that he should over and above have an immediate inclination for the purchasers, in order, as it were, out of love, to give no preference in point of price to either, cannot here be supposed. Therefore the action is performed, neither out of duty, nor from immediate inclination, but merely with a self-interested view.

Whereas, to preserve one's life is duty, and more than that every body has thereto an immediate inclination. But the anxious care, which the greater part of mankind often takes of it, has on that account no intrinsic value, and its maxim no moral worth. They preserve their lives *conformably to duty*, it is true, but not *out of duty*. On the other hand, when adversity and hopeless sorrow have entirely taken away the taste for life; when the unfortunate, of a vigorous mind, more exasperated against his fate, than pusillanimous,
or