Friedrich Schleiermacher

On Religion:
Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers

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ON RELIGION

FIRST SPEECH

DEFENCE

It may be an unexpected and even a marvellous undertaking, that any one should still venture to demand from the very class that have raised themselves above the vulgar, and are saturated with the wisdom of the centuries, attention for a subject so entirely neglected by them. And I confess that I am aware of nothing that promises any easy success, whether it be in winning for my efforts your approval, or in the more difficult and more desirable task of instilling into you my thought and inspiring you for my subject. From of old faith has not been every man's affair. At all times but few have discerned religion itself, while millions, in various ways, have been satisfied to juggle with its trappings. Now especially the life of cultivated people is far from anything that might have even a resemblance to religion. Just as little, I know, do you worship the Deity in sacred retirement, as you visit the forsaken temples. In your ornamented dwellings, the only sacred things to be met with are the sage maxims of our wise men, and the splendid compositions of our poets. Solitude and sociability, art and science have so fully taken possession of your minds, that no room remains for the eternal and holy Being that lies beyond the world. I
know how well you have succeeded in making your earthly life so rich and varied, that you no longer stand in need of an eternity. Having made a universe for yourselves, you are above the need of thinking of the Universe that made you. You are agreed, I know, that nothing new, nothing convincing can any more be said on this matter, which on every side by sages and seers, and I might add by scoffers and priests, has been abundantly discussed. To priests, least of all, are you inclined to listen. They have long been outcasts for you, and are declared unworthy of your trust, because they like best to lodge in the battered ruins of their sanctuary and cannot, even there, live without disfiguring and destroying it still more. All this I know, and yet, divinely swayed by an irresistible necessity within me, I feel myself compelled to speak, and cannot take back my invitation that you and none else should listen to me.

Might I ask one question? On every subject, however small and unimportant, you would most willingly be taught by those who have devoted to it their lives and their powers. In your desire for knowledge you do not avoid the cottages of the peasant or the workshops of the humble artisans. How then does it come about that, in matters of religion alone, you hold every thing the more dubious when it comes from those who are experts, not only according to their own profession, but by recognition from the state, and from the people? Or can you perhaps, strangely enough, show that they are not more experienced, but maintain and cry up anything rather than religion? Scarcely, my good sirs! Not setting much store on a judgment so baseless I confess, as is right, that I also am a member of this order. I venture, though I run the risk, if you do not give me an attentive hearing, of being reckoned among the great crowd from which you admit so few exceptions.

This is at least a voluntary confession, for my speech would not readily have betrayed me. Still less have I any expectations of danger from the praise which my brethren will bestow on this undertaking, for my present aim lies almost entirely outside their sphere, and can have but small resemblance to what they would most willingly see and hear.

With the cry of distress, in which most of them join, over the downfall of religion I have no sympathy, for I know no age that has given religion a better reception than the present. I have nothing to do with the conservative and barbarian lamentation whereby they seek to rear again the fallen walls and gothic pillars of their Jewish Zion.

Why then, as I am fully conscious that in all I have to say to you I entirely belie my profession, should I not acknowledge it like any other accident? Its prepossessions shall in no way hinder us. Neither in asking nor in answering shall the limits it holds sacred be valid between us. As a man I speak to you of the sacred secrets of mankind according to my views—of what was in me as with youthful enthusiasm I sought the unknown, of what since then I have thought and experienced, of the innermost springs of my being which shall for ever remain for me the highest, however I be moved by the changes of time and mankind. I do not speak from any reasoned resolve, nor from hope, nor from fear. Nor is it done from any caprice or accident. Rather it is the pure necessity of my nature; it is a divine call; it is that which determines my position in the world and makes me what I am. Wherefore, even if it were neither fitting nor prudent to speak of religion, there is something which compels me and represses with its heavenly power all those small considerations.

You know how the Deity, by an immutable law, has compelled Himself to divide His great work even to infinity. Each definite thing can only be made up by melting together two opposite activities. Each of His eternal thoughts can only be actualized in two hostile yet twin forms, one of which cannot exist except by means of the other. The whole corporeal world, insight into which is the highest aim of your researches, appears to the best
instructed and most contemplative among you, simply a never-ending play of opposing forces. Each life is merely the uninterrupted manifestation of a perpetually renewed gain and loss, as each thing has its determinate existence by uniting and holding fast in a special way the opposing forces of Nature. Wherefore the spirit also, in so far as it manifests itself in a finite life, must be subject to the same law. The human soul, as is shown both by its passing actions and its inward characteristics, has its existence chiefly in two opposing impulses. Following the one impulse, it strives to establish itself as an individual. For increase, no less than sustenance, it draws what surrounds it to itself, wearing it into its life, and absorbing it into its own being. The other impulse, again, is the dread fear to stand alone over against the Whole, the longing to surrender oneself and be absorbed in a greater, to be taken hold of and determined. All you feel and do that bears on your separate existence, all you are accustomed to call enjoyment or possession works for the first object. The other is wrought for when you are not directed towards the individual life, but seek and retain for yourselves what is the same in all and for all the same existence, that in which, therefore, you acknowledge in your thinking and acting, law and order, necessity and connection, right and fitness. Just as no material thing can exist by only one of the forces of corporeal nature, every soul shares in the two original tendencies of spiritual nature. At the extremes one impulse may preponderate almost to the exclusion of the other, but the perfection of the living world consists in this, that between these opposite ends all combinations are actually present in humanity.

And not only so, but a common band of consciousness embraces them all, so that though the man cannot be other than he is, he knows every other person as clearly as himself, and comprehends perfectly every single manifestation of humanity. Persons, however, at the extremes of this great series, are furthest removed from such a knowledge of the whole. The endeavour to appropriate, too little influenced by the opposite endeavour, takes the form of insatiable sensuality that is mindful only of its individual life, and endeavours only in an earthly way to incorporate into it more and more material and to keep itself active and strong. Swinging eternally between desire and enjoyment, such persons never get beyond consciousness of the individual, and being ever busy with mere self-regarding concerns, they are neither able to feel nor know the common, the whole being and nature of humanity. To persons, on the other hand, too forcibly seized by the opposite impulse, who, from defective power of grasp, are incapable of acquiring any characteristic, definite culture, the true life of the world must just as much remain hidden. It is not granted them to penetrate with plastic mind and to fashion something of their own, but their activity dissipates itself in a futile game with empty notions. They never make a living study of anything, but devote their whole zeal to abstract precepts that degrade everything to means, and leave nothing to be an end. They consume themselves in mistaken hate against everything that comes before them with prosperous force. How are these extremes to be brought together, and the long series be made into a closed ring, the symbol of eternity and completeness?

Persons in whom both tendencies are toned down to an unattractive equilibrium are not rare, but, in truth, they stand lower than either. For this frequent phenomenon which so many value highly, we are not indebted to a living union of both impulses, but both are distorted and smoothed away to a dull mediocrity in which no excess appears, because all fresh life is wanting. This is the position to which a false discretion seeks to bring the younger generation. But were the extremes avoided in no other way, all men would have departed from the right life and from contemplation of the truth, the higher spirit would have vanished from the
world, and the will of the Deity been entirely frustrated. Elements so separated or so reduced to equilibrium would disclose little even to men of deep insight, and, for a common eye that has no power of insight to give life to the scattered bones, a world so peopleed would be only a mock mirror that neither reflects their own forms nor allows them to see behind it.

Wherefore the Deity at all times sends some here and there, who in a fruitful manner are imbued with both impulses, either as a direct gift from above, or as the result of a severe and complete self-training. They are equipped with wonderful gifts, their way is made even by an almighty indwelling word. They are interpreters of the Deity and His works, and reconcilers of things that otherwise would be eternally divided. I mean, in particular, those who unite those opposing activities, by imprinting in their lives a characteristic form upon just that common nature of spirit, the shadow of which only appears to most in empty notions, as an image upon mist. They seek order and connection, right and fitness, and they find just because they do not lose themselves. Their impulse is not sighed out in inaudible wishes, but works in them as creative power. For this power they create and acquire, and for that degraded animal sensuality. They do not devour destructively, but, creatively recasting, they breathe into life and life's tools a higher spirit, ordering and fashioning a world that bears the impress of their mind. Earthly things they wisely control, showing themselves lawgivers and inventors, heroes and compellers of nature, or, in narrower circles, as good fairies they create and diffuse in quiet a nobler happiness. By their very existence they prove themselves ambassadors of God, and mediators between limited man and infinite humanity. To them the captive under the power of empty notions may look, to perceive in their works the right object of his own incomprehensible requirements, and in their persons the material hitherto despised, with which he ought to deal. They interpret to him the misunderstood voice of God, and reconcile him to the earth and to his place thereon. Far more the earthly and sensual require such mediators from whom to learn how much of the highest nature of humanity is wanting to their own works and ways. They stand in need of such a person to oppose to their base animal enjoyment another enjoyment, the object of which is not this thing or that, but the One in All, and All in One, an object that knows no other bounds but the world, that the spirit has learned to comprehend. He is needed to show to their anxious, restless self-love, another self-love whereby man in this earthly life and along with it loves the highest and the eternal, and to their restless passionate greed a quiet and sure possession.

Acknowledge, then, with me, what a priceless gift the appearance of such a person must be when the higher feeling has risen to inspiration, and can no longer be kept silent, when every pulse-beat of his spiritual life takes communicable form in word or figure, so that, despite of his indifference to the presence of others, he almost unwillingly becomes for others the master of some divine art. This is the true priest of the highest, for he brings it nearer those who are only accustomed to lay hold of the finite and the trivial. The heavenly and eternal he exhibits as an object of enjoyment and agreement, as the sole exhaustless source of the things towards which their whole endeavor is directed. In this way he strives to awaken the slumbering germ of a better humanity, to kindle love for higher things, to change the common life into a nobler, to reconcile the children of earth with the Heaven that hears them, and to counterbalance the deep attachment of the age to the baser side. This is the higher priesthood that announces the inner meaning of all spiritual secrets, and speaks from the kingdom of God. It is the source of all visions and prophecies, of all the sacred works of art and inspired
speeches that are scattered abroad, on the chance of finding some receptive heart where they may bring forth fruit.

Might it sometime arrive that this office of mediator cease, and a fairer destiny await the priesthood of humanity! Might the time come, which an ancient prophecy describes, when no one should need to be taught of man, for they should all be taught of God! If everywhere the sacred fire burned, fervid prayers would not be needed to call it down from heaven, but only the placid quiet of holy virgins to maintain it. Nor would it burst forth in oft-dreaded flames, but would strive only to communicate equally to all its hidden glow. In quiet, then, each one would illumine himself and others. The communication of holy thoughts and feelings would be an easy interchange, the different beams of this light being now combined and again broken up, now scattered, and again here and there concentrated on single objects. A whispered word would then be understood, where now the clearest expression cannot escape misconception. Men could crowd together into the Holy of Holies who now busy themselves with the rudiments in the outer courts. How much pleasanter it is to exchange with friends and sympathizers completed views, than to go into the wide wilderness with outlines barely sketched! But how far from one another now are those persons between whom such intercourse might take place! They are scattered with as wise an economy among mankind, as the hidden points from which the elastic primordial matter expands on every side are in space. The outer boundaries of their sphere of operations just touch so that there is no void, yet one never meets the other. A wise economy indeed! for all their longing for intercourse and friendliness is thus wholly directed towards those who stand most in need, and they labour the more persistently to provide for themselves the comrades they lack.

To this very power I now submit, and of this very nature is my call. Permit me to speak of myself. You know that what is spoken at the instigation of piety cannot be pride, for piety is always full of humility. Piety was the mother's womb, in whose sacred darkness my young life was nourished and was prepared for a world still sealed for it. In it my spirit breathed ere it had yet found its own place in knowledge and experience. It helped me as I began to sift the faith of my fathers and to cleanse thought and feeling from the rubbish of antiquity. When the God and the immortality of my childhood vanished from my doubting eyes it remained to me.⁴ Without design of mine it guided me into active life. It showed me how, with my endowments and defects, I should keep myself holy in an undivided existence, and through it alone I have learnt friendship and love. In respect of other human excellences, before your judgment-seat, ye wise and understanding of the people, I know it is small proof of possession to be able to speak of their value. They can be known from description, from observation of others, or, as all virtues are known, from the ancient and general traditions of their nature. But religion is of such a sort and is so rare, that whoever utters anything of it, must necessarily have had it, for nowhere could he have heard it. Of all that I praise, all that I feel to be the true work of religion, you would find little even in the sacred books. To the man who has not himself experienced it, it would only be an annoyance and a folly.

Finally, if I am thus impelled to speak of religion and to deliver my testimony, to whom should I turn if not to the sons of Germany? Where else is an audience for my speech? It is not blind predilection for my native soil or for my fellows in government and language, that makes me speak thus, but the deep conviction that you alone are capable, as well as worthy, of having awakened in you the sense for holy and divine things. Those proud Islanders whom many unduly honour, know no watchword but gain and enjoyment. Their zeal for knowledge is only a sham
fight, their worldly wisdom a false jewel, skilfully and deceptively composed, and their sacred freedom itself too often and too easily serves self-interest. They are never in earnest with anything that goes beyond palpable utility. All knowledge they have robbed of life and use only as dead wood to make masts and helms for their life's voyage in pursuit of gain. Similarly they know nothing of religion, save that all preach devotion to ancient usages and defend its institutions, regarding them as a protection wisely cherished by the constitution against the natural enemy of the state.

For other reasons I turn from the French. On them, one who honours religion can hardly endure to look, for in every act and almost in every word, they tread its holiest ordinances under foot. The barbarous indifference of the millions of the people, and the witty frivolity with which individual brilliant spirits behold the sublimest fact of history that is not only taking place before their eyes, but has them all in its grasp, and determines every movement of their lives, witnesses clearly enough how little they are capable of a holy awe or a true adoration. What does religion more abhor than the unbridled arrogance with which the rulers of the people bid defiance to the eternal laws of the world? What does it inculcate more strongly than that discreet and lowly moderation of which art, even the slightest feeling, does not seem to be suggested to them? What is more sacred to it than that lofty Nemesis, of whose most terrible dealings in the intoxication of infatuation they have no understanding? Where varied punishments that formerly only needed to light on single families to fill whole peoples with awe before the heavenly Being and to dedicate to eternal Fate the works of the poets for centuries, are a thousandfold renewed in vain, how ludicrously would a single lonely voice resound unheard and unnoticed.

Only in my native land is that happy clime which refuses no fruit entirely. There you find, though it be only scattered, all that adorns humanity. Somewhere, in individuals at least, all that grows attains its most beautiful form. Neither wise moderation, nor quiet contemplation is wanting; there, therefore, religion must find a refuge from the coarse barbarism and the cold worldly mind of the age.

Or will you direct me to those whom you look down upon as rude and uncultured, as if the sense for sacred things had passed like an old-fashioned garment to the lower portion of the people, as if it became them alone to be impressed with belief and awe of the unseen? You are well disposed towards these, our brethren. You would have them addressed also, on other higher subjects, on morals, justice and freedom, that for single moments, at least, their highest endeavours should be turned towards better things, and an impression of the worth of man be awakened in them. Let them be addressed at the same time on religion; arouse occasionally their whole nature; let the holiest impulse, asleep or hidden though it be, be brought to life; enchant them with single flashes, charmed from the depths of their hearts; open out of their narrow lives a glimpse into infinity; raise even for a moment their low sensuality to the high consciousness of human will and of human existence, and much cannot fail to be won. But, pray you, do you turn to this class when you wish to unfold the inmost connection and the highest ground of human powers and actions, when idea and feeling, law and fact are to be traced to their common source, when you would exhibit the actual as eternal and necessarily based in the nature of humanity? Is it not as much as can be looked for if your wise men are understood by the best among you? Now that is just my present endeavour in regard to religion. I do not seek to arouse single feelings possibly belonging to it, nor to justify and defend single conceptions, but I would conduct you into the profoundest depths whence every feeling and conception receives its form. I would show you from what human tendency religion proceeds and how it belongs
to what is for you highest and dearest. To the roof of the
temple I would lead you that you might survey the whole
sanctuary and discover its inmost secrets.

Do you seriously expect me to believe that those who
daily distress themselves most toilsomely about earthly
things have pre-eminent fitness for becoming intimate with
heavenly things, those who brood anxiously over the next
moment and are fast bound to the nearest objects can
extend their vision widest over the world, and that those,
who, in the monotonous round of a dull industry have not
yet found themselves will discover most clearly the living
Deity! Surely you will not maintain that to your
shame? You alone, therefore, I can invite, you who are
called to leave the common standpoint of mankind, who do
not shun the toilsome way into the depths of man's spirit to
find his inmost emotions and see the living worth and con-
nection of his outward works.

Since this became clear to me, I have long found myself
in the hesitating mood of one who has lost a precious jewel,
and does not dare to examine the last spot where it could
be hidden. There was a time when you held it a mark of
special courage to cast off partially the restraints of inherited
dogma. You still were ready to discuss particular subjects,
though it were only to efface one of those notions. Such a
figure as religion moving gracefully, adorned in eloquence,
still pleased you, if only that you wished to maintain in the
gentler sex a certain feeling for sacred things. But that
time is long past. Piety is now no more to be spoken of, and
even the Graces, with most unwomanly hardness, destroy
the tenderest blossoms of the human heart, and I can link the
interest I require from you to nothing but your contempt.

I will ask you, therefore, just to be well informed and
thorough-going in this contempt.

Let us then, I pray you, examine whence exactly religion
has its rise. Is it from some clear intuition, or from some
vague thought? Is it from the different kinds and sects
of religion found in history, or from some general idea which
you have perhaps conceived arbitrarily? Some doubtless
will profess the latter view. But here as in other things the
ready judgment may be without ground, the matter being
superficially considered and no trouble being taken to gain
an accurate knowledge. Your general idea turns on fear of
an eternal being, or, broadly, respect for his influence on the
occurrences of this life called by you providence, on expec-
tation of a future life after this one, called by you immor-
tality. These two conceptions which you have rejected,
are, you consider, in one way or another, the hinges of all
religion. But say, my dear sirs, how you have found this;
for there are two points of view from which everything
taking place in man or proceeding from him may be
regarded. Considered from the centre outwards, that
is according to its inner quality, it is an expression of
human nature, based in one of its necessary modes of acting
or impulses or whatever else you like to call it, for I will
not now quarrel with your technical language. On the
contrary, regarded from the outside, according to the defi-
nite attitude and form it assumes in particular cases, it is
a product of time and history. From what side have you
considered religion that great spiritual phenomenon, that
you have reached the idea that everything called by this
name has a common content?You can hardly affirm that
it is by regarding it from within. If so, my good sirs, you
would have to admit that these thoughts are at least in
some way based in human nature. And should you say
that as now found they have sprung only from misinterpre-
tations or false references of a necessary human aim, it
would become you to seek in it the true and eternal, and to
unite your efforts to ours to free human nature from the
injustice which it always suffers when aught in it is mis-
understood or misdirected.

By all that is sacred, and according to that avowal, some-
thing must be sacred to you, I adjure you, do not neglect
this business, that mankind, whom with us you honour, do not most justly scorn you for forsaking them in a grave matter. If you find from what you hear that the business is as good as done, even if it ends otherwise than you expect, I venture to reckon on your thanks and approval.

But you will probably say that your idea of the content of religion is from the other view of this spiritual phenomenon. You start with the outside, with the opinions, dogmas and usages, in which every religion is presented. They always return to providence and immortality. For these externals you have sought an inward and original source in vain. Wherefore religion generally can be nothing but an empty pretence which, like a murky and oppressive atmosphere, has enshrouded part of the truth. Doubtless this is your genuine opinion. But if you really consider these two points the sum of religion in all the forms in which it has appeared in history, permit me to ask whether you have rightly observed all these phenomena and have rightly comprehended their common content? If your idea has had its rise in this way you must justify it by instances. If anyone says it is wrong and beside the mark, and if he point out something else in religion not hollow, but having a kernel of excellent quality and extraction, you must first hear and judge before you venture further to despise. Do not grudge, therefore, to listen to what I shall say to those who, from first to last, have more accurately and laboriously adhered to observation of particulars.

You are doubtless acquainted with the histories of human follies, and have reviewed the various structures of religious doctrine from the senseless fables of wanton peoples to the most refined Deism, from the rude superstition of human sacrifice to the ill-put together fragments of metaphysics and ethics now called purified Christianity, and you have found them all without rhyme or reason. I am far from wishing to contradict you. Rather, if you really mean that the most cultured religious system is no better than the rudest, if you only perceive that the divine cannot lie in a series that ends on both sides in something ordinary and despicable, I will gladly spare you the trouble of estimating further all that lies between. Possibly they may all appear to you transitions and stages towards the final form. Out of the hand of its age each comes better polished and carved, till at length art has grown equal to that perfect plaything with which our century has presented history. But this consummation of doctrines and systems is often anything rather than consummation of religion. Nay, not infrequently, the progress of the one has not the smallest connection with the other. I cannot speak of it without indignation. All who have a regard for what issues from within the mind, and who are in earnest that every side of man be trained and exhibited, must bewail how the high and glorious is often turned from its destination and robbed of its freedom in order to be held in despicable bondage by the scholastic spirit of a barbarian and cold time. What are all these systems, considered in themselves, but the handiwork of the calculating understanding, wherein only by mutual limitation each part holds its place? What else can they be, these systems of theology, these theories of the origin and the end of the world, these analyses of the nature of an incomprehensible Being, wherein everything runs to cold argufying, and the highest can be treated in the tone of a common controversy? And this is certainly—let me appeal to your own feeling—not the character of religion.

If you have only given attention to these dogmas and opinions, therefore, you do not yet know religion itself, and what you despise is not it. Why have you not penetrated deeper to find the kernel of this shell? I am astonished at your voluntary ignorance, ye easy-going inquirers, and at the all too quiet satisfaction with which you linger by the first thing presented to you. Why do you not regard the religious life itself, and first those pious exaltations of the mind in which all other known activities are set aside or almost sup-
pressed, and the whole soul is dissolved in the immediate feeling of the Infinite and Eternal? In such moments the disposition you pretend to despise reveals itself in primordial and visible form. He only who has studied and truly known man in these emotions can rediscover religion in those outward manifestations. He will assuredly perceive something more in them than you. Bound up in them all something of that spiritual matter lies, without which they could not have arisen. But in the hands of those who do not understand how to unbind it, let them break it up and examine it as they may, nothing but the cold dead mass remains.

This recommendation to seek rather in those scattered and seemingly undeveloped elements your object that you have not yet found in the developed and the complete to which you have hitherto been directed, cannot surprise you who have more or less busied yourselves with philosophy, and are acquainted with its fortunes. With philosophy, indeed, it should be quite otherwise. From its nature it must strive to fashion itself into the closest connection. That special kind of knowledge is only verified and its communication assured by its completeness, and yet even here you must commence with the scattered and incomplete. Recollect how very few of those who, in a way of their own, have penetrated into the secrets of nature and spirit, viewing and exhibiting their mutual relation and inner harmony in a light of their own, have put forth at once a system of their knowledge. In a finer, if more fragile form, they have communicated their discoveries.

On the contrary, if you regard the systems in all schools, how often are they mere habitations and nurseries of the dead letter. With few exceptions, the plastic spirit of high contemplation is too fleeting and too free for those rigid forms whereby those who would willingly grasp and retain what is strange, believe they are best helped. Suppose that any one held the architects of those great edifices of philosophy, without distinction, for true philosophers! Suppose he would learn from them the spirit of their research! Would you not advise him thus, “See to it, friend, that you have not lighted upon those who merely follow, and collect, and rest satisfied with what another has furnished; with them you will never find the spirit of that art: to the discoverers you must go, on whom it surely rests.” To you who seek religion I must give the same advice. It is all the more necessary, as religion is as far removed, by its whole nature, from all that is systematic as philosophy is naturally disposed to it.

Consider only with whom those ingenious erections originate, the mutability of which you scorn, the bad proportions of which offend you, and the incongruity of which, with your contemptuous tendency, almost strikes you as absurd. Have they come from the heroes of religion? Name one among those who have brought down any kind of new revelation to us, who has thought it worth his while to occupy himself with such a labour of Sisyphus, beginning with Him who first conceived the idea of the kingdom of God, from which, if from anything in the sphere of religion, a system might have been produced to the new mystics or enthusiasts, as you are accustomed to call them, in whom, perhaps, an original beam of the inner light still shines. You will not blame me if I do not reckon among them the theologians of the letter, who believe the salvation of the world and the light of wisdom are to be found in a new vesture of formulas, or a new arrangement of ingenious proofs. In isolation only the mighty thunder of their speech, announcing that the Deity is revealing Himself through them, is accustomed to be heard when the celestial feelings are unburdened, when the sacred fires must burst forth from the overcharged spirit. Idea and word are simply the necessary and inseparable outcome of the heart, only to be understood by it and along with it. Doctrine is only united to doctrine occasionally to remove misunderstanding or expose unreality.

From many such combinations those systems were gradu-
ally compacted. Wherefore, you must not rest satisfied with
the repeated oft-broken echo of that original sound. You
must transport yourselves into the interior of a pious soul and
seek to understand its inspiration. In the very act, you
must understand the production of light and heat in a soul
surrendered to the Universe. Otherwise you learn nothing
of religion, and it goes with you as with one who should too
late bring fuel to the fire which the steel has struck from
the flint, who finds only a cold, insignificant speck of coarse
metal with which he can kindle nothing any more.

I ask, therefore, that you turn from everything usually
reckoned religion, and fix your regard on the inward emo-
tions and dispositions, as all utterances and acts of inspired
men direct. Despite your acquirements, your culture and
your prejudices, I hope for good success. At all events, till
you have looked from this standpoint without discovering
anything real, or having any change of opinion, or
enlarging your contemptuous conception, the product of
superficial observation, and are still able to hold in ridicule
this reaching of the heart towards the Eternal, I will not
confess that I have lost. Then, however, I will finally
believe that your contempt for religion is in accordance with
your nature, and I shall have no more to say.

Yet you need not fear that I shall betake myself in the
end to that common device of representing how necessary
religion is for maintaining justice and order in the world.
Nor shall I remind you of an all-seeing eye, nor of the
unspeakable short-sightedness of human management, nor of
the narrow bounds of human power to render help. Nor
shall I say how religion is a faithful friend and useful stay
of morality, how, by its sacred feelings and glorious pros-
pects, it makes the struggle with self and the perfecting of
goodness much easier for weak man. Those who profess
to be the best friends and most zealous defenders do indeed
speak in this way. Which of the two is more degraded in
being thus thought of together, I shall not decide, whether

justice and morality which are represented as needing
support, or religion which is to support them, or even
whether it be not you to whom such things are said.

Though otherwise this wise counsel might be given you, how
could I dare to suppose that you play with your consciences
a sort of fast and loose game, and could be impelled by
something you have hitherto had no cause to respect and
love to something else that without it you already honour,
and to which you have already devoted yourselves? Or
suppose that these Speeches were merely to suggest what
you should do for the sake of the people! How could you,
who are called to educate others and make them like your-
selves, begin by deceiving them, offering them as holy
and vitally necessary what is in the highest degree indi-
nifferent to yourselves, and which, in your opinion, they
can again reject as soon as they have attained your level?
I, at least, cannot invite you to a course of action in which
I perceive the most ruinous hypocrisy towards the world
and towards yourselves. To recommend religion by such
means would only increase the contempt to which it is at
present exposed. Granted that our civil organizations are
still burdened with a very high degree of imperfection and
have shown but small power to prevent or abolish injustice,
it would still be a culpable abandonment of a weighty
matter, a faint-hearted unbelief in the approach of better
things, if religion that in itself is not otherwise desirable
must be called in.

Answer me this one question. Could there be a legal
constitution resting on piety? Would not the whole idea
that you hold so sacred vanish as soon as you took such a
point of departure? Deal with the matter directly, there-
fore, if it seems to be in such an evil plight. Improve the
laws, recast the whole constitution, give the state an iron
hand, give it a hundred eyes if it has not got them already.
At least do not allow those it has to sleep veiled in delusion.
If you leave a business like this to an intermediary, you
FIRST SPEECH

have never managed it. Do not declare to the disgrace of mankind that your loftiest creation is but a parasitic plant that can only nourish itself from strange sap.

Speaking from your standpoint, law must not even require morality to assure for it the most unlimited jurisdiction in its own territory. It must stand quite alone. Statesmen must make it universal. Now quite apart from the question whether what only exists in so far as it proceeds from the heart can be thus arbitrarily combined, if this general jurisdiction is only possible when religion is combined with law, none but persons skilled to infuse the spirit of religion into the human soul should be statesmen. And in what dark barbarousness of evil times would that land us!

Just as little can morality be in need of religion. A weak, tempted heart must take refuge in the thought of a future world. But it is folly to make a distinction between this world and the next. Religious persons at least know only one. If the desire for happiness is foreign to morality, later happiness can be no more valid than earlier; if it should be quite independent of praise, dread of the Eternal cannot be more valid than dread of a wise man. If morality loses in splendour and stability by every addition, how much more must it lose from something that can never hide its foreign extraction.

All this, however, you have heard of sufficiently from those who defend the independence and might of the moral law. Yet let me add, that to wish to transport religion into another sphere that it may serve and labour is to manifest towards it also great contempt. It is not so ambitious of conquest as to seek to reign in a foreign kingdom. The power that is its due, being earned afresh at every moment, satisfies it. Everything is sacred to it, and above all everything holding with it the same rank in human nature. But it must render a special service; it must have an aim; it must show itself useful! What degradation! And its defenders should be eager for it!

DEFENCE

At the last remove, morality and justice also must conduce to some further advantage. It were better that such utilitarians should be submerged in this eternal whirlpool of universal utility, in which everything good is allowed to go down, of which no man that would be anything for himself understands a single sensible word, than that they should venture to come forward as defenders of religion, for of all men they are least skilled to conduct its case. High renown it were for the heavenly to conduct so wretchedly the earthly concerns of man! Great honour for the free and unconcerned to make the conscience of man a little sharper and more alert! For such a purpose religion does not descend from heaven. What is loved and honoured only on account of some extraneous advantage may be needful, but it is not in itself necessary, and a sensible person simply values it according to the end for which it is desired. By this standard, religion would be valueless enough. I, at least, would offer little, for I must confess that I do not believe much in the unjust dealings it would hinder, nor the moral dealings it would produce. If that is all it could do to gain respect, I would have no more to do with its case. To recommend it merely as an accessory is too unimportant. An imaginary praise that vanishes on closer contemplation, cannot avail anything going about with higher pretensions. I maintain that in all better souls piety springs necessarily by itself; that a province of its own in the mind belongs to it, in which it has unlimited sway; that it is worthy to animate most profoundly the noblest and best and to be fully accepted and known by them. That is my contention, and it now behoves you to decide whether it is worth your while to hear me, before you still further strengthen yourselves in your contempt.
EXPLANATIONS OF THE FIRST SPEECH

(1) Page 3.—Though I had been several years in the ministry when this was written, I stood very much alone among my professional brethren, and my acquaintance with them was small. What is here rather hinted at than uttered was more a distant presentiment than clear knowledge. Longer experience, however, and friendly relations have only confirmed the judgment, that any deeper insight into the nature of religion generally, or any genuinely historical, real way of regarding the present state of religion is much too rare among the members of our clerical order. We should have fewer complaints of the increase of the sectarian spirit and of factious religious associations, if so many of the clergy were not without understanding of religious wants and emotions. Their stand-point generally is too low. From the same cause we have the miserable views so often expressed respecting the means necessary for remedying this so-called decay of religion. It is an opinion that is not likely to find little favour, which yet, for the right understanding of this passage I cannot hide, that a deeper speculative discipline would best remove this evil. Most of the clergy, however, and most of those who train them, do not acknowledge this necessity, because they foolishly suppose it would render them more impractical.

(2) Page 2.—The first conception both of God and immortality, which at a time when the soul lives entirely in images is always highly sensuous, does not, by any means, always vanish. With most it is gradually purified and elevated. The analogy with the human in the conception of the Highest Being and the analogy with the earthly still remains the shell of the hidden kernel. But those who are early absorbed in a pure contemplative endeavour take another way. There is nothing in God, they say to themselves, opposed, divided or isolated. Wherefore nothing human can be said of Him. Nothing earthly is to be transferred from the earthly world that gave it birth in our souls. Both conceptions, therefore, in their first forms are found untenable, they become incapable of living reproduction and disappear. But this does not involve any positive unbelief, not even any positive doubt. The childish form vanishes with the known sensuous co-efficient, but the unknown greatness remains in the soul, and its reality is apparent in the endeavour to connect it with another co-efficient and so to bring it to a higher actual consciousness. In this endeavour faith is implicit, even when no fully satisfactory solution is reached. The unknown greatness, even though it do not appear in any definite result, is yet present in all operations of the spirit. The author was, therefore, far removed from suggesting that there ever was a time when he was an unbeliever or an atheist. Such a misunderstanding could only arise in those who have never felt the speculative impulse to annihilate anthropomorphism in the conception of the Highest Being, an impulse most clearly expressed in the writings of the profoundest Christian teachers.

(3) Page 10.—It is to be remembered that the severe judgment of the English people was given at a time when it seemed necessary to protest strongly against the prevailing Anglo-Mania. Moreover, the popular interest in missions and the spread of the Bible was not then as apparent as it is now. Yet I would not on that account retract much from my earlier judgment. For one thing the English are well accustomed to organized private companies, whereby they unite their individual resources for important undertakings. The results obtained in this way are so great that persons, caring for nothing but the progress of culture and the gain to be made of it, are not excluded from sharing in enterprises that have taken their rise with a far smaller number of truly pious people, and yet the principle is not weakened. Nor is it to be denied that those undertakings are regarded by a great number more from a political and mercantile point of view. The pure interest of Christian piety does not dominate as appears in this, that the religious needs at home have been attended to much later and with much less brilliant result. These are merely indications whereby I would express my belief that a closer acquaintance with the state of religion in England would rather confirm than disprove the above opinion. The same would apply to what was said about the scientific spirit. As France and England were almost the only countries in which we were interested, and which had much influence in Germany, it seemed superfluous to glance elsewhere. At present it might not be wrong to say a word on the capacity in the Greek Church for such researches. Despite the fine veil cast over it by the fascinating panegyrics of a Stourdza, all depth is lost in the mechanism of antiquated usages and liturgical forms. In all that is most important for a mind aroused to reflection, it still stands far behind the Catholic Church.

(4) Page 18.—A pious spirit, which is here unquestionably the sub-
ject of discourse, is elsewhere always defined as a soul surrendered to God. But here the Universe is put for God and the pantheism of the author is undeniable! This is the interpolation, not interpretation of superficial and suspicious readers who do not consider that the subject here is the production of light and warmth in such a spirit, the springing of such pious emotions as pass immediately into religious ideas and views (light) and into a temperament of surrender to God (warmth). It was therefore desirable to call attention to the way in which such emotions take their rise. They arise when a man surrenders himself to the Universe, and are only habitual in a spirit in which such surrender is habitual. Not only in general, but on each occasion we are conscious of God and of His divine power and godhead by the word of creation, and not by any one thing taken by itself, but by it only in so far as it is embraced in the unity and completeness in which alone God is immediately revealed. The further development of this subject can be seen in my "Glaubenslehre," § 8, 2, and § 36, 1, 2.

(5) Page 19.—That the state would not be a constitution if it rested on piety, does not mean that the state so long as it labours under imperfection can do without piety, the thing that best supplies all deficiency and imperfection. This would only mean, however, that it is politically necessary for the citizens to be pious in proportion as they are not equally and adequately perville by the legal principles of the state. Humanly speaking, this perfection is not to be looked for, but were it once effected the state, in respect of its own particular sphere of operation, could dispense with the piety of its members. This appears from the fact that in states where constitutionalism has not quite triumphed over arbitrariness, the relation of piety between the governor and the governed is most prominent and religious institutions have most sway. This ceases when the constitution is strengthened, unless indeed an institution have some special historical basis. When afterwards (page 20) it is said that statesmen must be able to produce universally in men the sense of law, it will doubtless appear absurd to those who think of the servants of the state. But the word statesman is here taken in the sense of the ancient διανηστής, and it means less that he accomplishes something definite in the state, a thing entirely accidental, than that he first of all lives in the idea of the state. The dark times referred to are the theocratic times. I make this reference because Novalis, my very dear friend in other respects, wished once more to glorify the theocracy. It is still, however, my strong conviction that it is one of the most essential tendencies of Christianity to separate completely church and state, and I can just as little agree with that

(6) Page 20.—I am not using the privileges of the rhetorical method to say to the despisers of religion at the very beginning that piety surpasses morality and law. Also I was not concerned in this place to say which is first, for, in my opinion, piety and scientific speculation share with each other, and the more closely they are conjoined the more both advance. The distinction however will be found in my "Glaubenslehre," but here I had to defend the equal rank of morality, law and piety in human nature. In so far as the two former do not involve an immediate relation of man to the Highest Being, they are inferior to the third, but all alike regulate as essentially what is eminent and characteristic in human nature. They are functions of human nature not to be subordinated to one another, and in so far are equal. Man can just as little be thought of without capacity for morality or endeavour after government as without capacity for religion.
SECOND SPEECH

THE NATURE OF RELIGION

You know how the aged Simonides, by long and repeated hesitation, put to silence the person who troubled him with the question, What are the gods? Our question, What is religion? is similar and equally extensive, and I would fain begin with a like hesitation. Naturally I would not mean by ultimate silence, as he did, to leave you in perplexity. But you might attempt something for yourselves; you might give steady and continuous attention to the point about which we are inquiring; you might entirely exclude other thoughts. Do not even conjurors of common spirits demand abstinence from earthly things and solemn stillness, as a preparation, and undistracted, close attention to the place where the apparition is to show itself? How much more should I claim? It is a rare spirit that I am to call forth, which can, only when long regarded with fixed attention, be recognized as the object of your desire. You must have that unbiased sobriety of judgment that seizes clearly and accurately every outline. Without being misled by old memories or hindered by preconceptions, you must endeavour to understand the object presented simply by itself. Even then it may not win your love, and otherwise I cannot hope for any unanimity about the meaning of religion or any recognition of its worth.

I could wish to exhibit religion in some well known form, reminding you, by feature, carriage and deportment, of what here and there at least you have seen in life. Religion, however, as I wish to show it, which is to say, in its own original, characteristic form, is not accustomed to appear openly, but is only seen in secret by those who love it. Not that this applies to religion alone. Nothing that is essentially characteristic and peculiar can be quite the same as that which openly exhibits and represents it. Speech, for example, is not the pure work of science nor morals of intention. Among ourselves at the present time this is specially recognized. It belongs to the opposition of the new time to the old that no longer is one person one thing, but everyone is all things. Just as among civilized peoples, by extensive intercourse their characteristic ways of thought no longer appear unalloyed, so in the human mind there is such a complete sociableness founded, that no special faculty or capacity, however much it may be separated for observation, can ever, in separation, produce its work. Speaking broadly, one is, in operation, influenced and permeated by the ready love and support of the others. The predominating power is all you can distinguish. Wherefore every activity of the spirit is only to be understood, in so far as a man can study it in himself. Seeing you maintain that in this way you do not know religion, it is incumbent upon me to warn you against the errors that naturally issue from the present state of things. We shall, therefore, begin by reviewing the main points in your own position to see whether they are right, or whether we may from them reach the right.

Religion is for you at one time a way of thinking, a faith, a peculiar way of contemplating the world, and of combining what meets us in the world: at another, it is a way of acting, a peculiar desire and love, a special kind of conduct and character. Without this distinction of a theoretical and practical you could hardly think at all, and though both sides belong to religion, you are usually accustomed to give heed chiefly to only one at a time. Wherefore, we shall look closely at religion from both sides.

We commence with religion as a kind of activity.
Activity is twofold, having to do with life and with art. You would ascribe with the poet earnestness to life and cheerfulness to art; or, in some other way, you would contrast them. Separate them you certainly will. For life, duty is the watchword. The moral law shall order it, and virtue shall show itself the ruling power in it, that the individual may be in harmony with the universal order of the world, and may nowhere encroach in a manner to disturb and confuse. This life, you consider, may appear without any discernible trace of art. Rather is it to be attained by rigid rules that have nothing to do with the free and variable precepts of art. Nay, you look upon it almost as a rule that art should be somewhat in the background, and non-essential for those who are strictest in the ordering of life. On the other hand, imagination shall inspire the artist, and genius shall completely sway him. Now imagination and genius are for you quite different from virtue and morality, being capable of existing in the largest measure along with a much more meagre moral endowment. Nay you are inclined, because the prudent power often comes into danger by reason of the fiery power, to relax for the artist somewhat of the strict demands of life.

How now does it stand with piety, in so far as you regard it as a peculiar kind of activity? Has it to do with right living? Is it something good and praiseworthy, yet different from morality, for you will not hold them to be identical? But in that case morality does not exhaust the sphere which it should govern. Another power works alongside of it, and has both right and might to continue working. Or will you perhaps betake yourselves to the position that piety is a virtue, and religion a duty or section of duties? Is religion incorporated into morality and subordinated to it, as a part to the whole? Is it, as some suppose, special duties towards God, and therefore a part of all morality which is the performance of all duties? But, if I have rightly appreciated or accurately reproduced what you say, you do not think so.

You rather seem to say that the pious person has something entirely peculiar, both in his doing and leaving undone, and that morality can be quite moral without therefore being pious.

And how are religion and art related? They can hardly be quite alien, because, from of old, what is greatest in art has had a religious character. When, therefore, you speak of an artist as pious, do you still grant him that relaxation of the strict demands of virtue? Rather he is then subjected, like every other person. But then to make the cases parallel, you must secure that those who devote themselves to life do not remain quite without art. Perhaps this combination gives its peculiar form to religion. With your view, there seems no other possible issue.

Religion then, as a kind of activity, is a mixture of elements that oppose and neutralize each other. Pray is not this rather the utterance of your dislike than your conviction? Such an accidental shaking together, leaving both elements unaltered, does not, even though the most accurate equality be attained, make something specific. But suppose it is otherwise, suppose piety is something which truly fuses both, then it cannot be formed simply by bringing the two together, but must be an original unity. Take care, however, I warn you, that you do not make such an admission. Were it the case, morality and genius apart would be only fragments of the ruins of religion, or its corpse when it is dead. Religion were then higher than both, the true divine life itself. But, in return for this warning, if you accept it, and discover no other solution, be so good as tell me how your opinion about religion is to be distinguished from nothing? Till then nothing remains for me but to assume that you have not yet, by examination, satisfied yourselves about this side of religion. Perhaps we shall have better fortune with the other side—what is known as the way of thinking, or faith.

You will, I believe, grant that your knowledge, however many-sided it may appear, falls, as a whole, into two con-
trusted sciences. How you shall subdivide and name belongs to the controversies of your schools, with which at present I am not concerned. Do not, therefore, be too critical about my terminology, even though it come from various quarters. Let us call the one division physics or metaphysics, applying both names indifferently, or indicating sections of the same thing. Let the other be ethics or the doctrine of duties or practical philosophy. At least we are agreed about the distinction meant. The former describes the nature of things, or if that seems too much, how man conceives and must conceive of things and of the world as the sum of things. The latter science, on the contrary, teaches what man should be for the world, and what he should do in it. Now, in so far as religion is a way of thinking of something and a knowledge about something, has it not the same object as these sciences? What does faith know about except the relation of man to God and to the world—God's purpose in making him, and the world's power to help or hinder him? Again it distinguishes in its own fashion a good action from a bad. Is then religion identical with natural science and ethics? You would not agree, you would never grant that our faith is as surely founded, or stands on the same level of certainty as your scientific knowledge! Your accusation against it is just that it does not know how to distinguish between the demonstrable and the probable. Similarly, you do not forget to remark diligently that very marvellous injunctions both to do and leave undone have issued from religion. You may be quite right; only do not forget that it has been the same with that which you call science. In both spheres you believe you have made improvements and are better than your fathers.

What then, are we to say that religion is? As before, that it is a mixture—mingled theoretical and practical knowledge? But this is even less permissible, particularly if, as appears, each of these two branches of knowledge has its own characteristic mode of procedure. Such a mixture of elements that would either counteract or separate, could only be made most arbitrarily. The utmost gain to be looked for would be to furnish us with another method for putting known results into shape for beginners, and for stimulating them to a further study. But if that be so, why do you strive against religion? You might, so long as beginners are to be found, leave it in peace and security. If we presumed to subject you, you might smile at our folly, but, knowing for certain that you have left it far behind, and that it is only prepared for us by you wiser people, you would be wrong in losing a serious word on the matter. But it is not so, I think. Unless I am quite mistaken, you have long been labouring to provide the mass of the people with just such an epitome of your knowledge. The name is of no consequence, whether it be "religion" or "enlightenment" or aught else. But there is something different which must first be expelled, or, at least, excluded. This something it is that you call belief, and it is the object of your hostility, and not an article you would desire to extend.

Wherefore, my friends, belief must be something different from a mixture of opinions about God and the world, and of precepts for one life or for two. Piety cannot be an instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs. If it were, you would scarcely oppose it. It would not occur to you to speak of religion as different from your knowledge, however much it might be distant. The strife of the cultured and learned with the pious would simply be the strife of depth and thoroughness with superficiality; it would be the strife of the master with pupils who are to emancipate themselves in due time.

Were you, after all, to take this view, I should like to plague you with all sorts of Socratic questions, till I compelled many of you to give a direct answer to the question, whether it is at all possible to be wise and pious at the same time. I should also wish to submit whether in
other well-known matters you do not acknowledge the principle that things similar are to be placed together and particulars to be subordinated to generals? Is it that you may joke with the world about a serious subject, that in religion only the principle is not applied? But let us suppose you are serious. How does it come, then, that in religious faith, what, in science, you separate into two spheres, is united and so indissolubly bound together that one cannot be thought of without the other? The pious man does not believe that the right course of action can be determined, except in so far as, at the same time, there is knowledge of the relations of man to God; and again right action, he holds, is necessary for right knowledge. Suppose the binding principle lies in the theoretic side. Why then is a practical philosophy set over against a theoretic, and not rather regarded as a section? Or suppose the principle is in the practical side, the same would apply to a theoretic philosophy. Or both may be united, only in a yet higher, an original knowledge. That this highest, long-lost unity of knowledge should be religion you cannot believe, for you have found it most, and have opposed it most, in those who are furthest from science. I will not hold you to any such conclusion, for I would not take up a position that I cannot maintain. This, however, you may well grant, that, concerning this side of religion, you must take time to consider what is its proper significance.

Let us be honest with one another. As we recently agreed, you have no liking for religion. But, in carrying on an honourable war which is not quite without strain, you would not wish to fight against such a shadow as that with which we have so far been battling. It must be something special that could fashion itself so peculiarly in the human heart, something thinkable, the real nature of which can so be presented as to be spoken of and argued about, and I consider it very wrong that out of things so disparate as modes of knowing and modes of acting, you patch together an untenable something, and call it religion, and then are so needlessly ceremonious with it. But you would deny that you have not gone to work with straightforwardness. Seeing I have rejected systems, commentaries and apologies, you would demand that I unfold all the original sources of religion from the beautiful fictions of the Greeks to the sacred scriptures of the Christians. Should I not find everywhere the nature of the Gods, and the will of the Gods? Is not that man everywhere accounted holy and blessed who knows the former, and does the latter?

But that is just what I have already said. Religion never appears quite pure. Its outward form is ever determined by something else. Our task first is to exhibit its true nature, and not to assume off-hand, as you seem to do, that the outward form and the true nature are the same. Does the material world present you with any element in its original purity as a spontaneous product of nature? Must you, therefore, as you have done in the intellectual world, take very gross things for simple? It is the one ceaseless aim of all analysis to present something really simple. So also it is in spiritual things. You can only obtain what is original by producing it, as it were, by a second, an artificial creation in yourselves, and even then it is but for the moment of its production. Pray come to an understanding on the point, for you shall be ceaselessly reminded of it.

But let us go on to the sources and original writings of religion. To attach them to your sciences of resistance and of action, of nature and of spirit is an unavoidable necessity, because they are the sources of your terminology. Furthermore the best preparation for awaking consciousness for your own higher subject is to study what has already been more or less scientifically thought. The deepest and highest in a work is not always either first or last. Did you but know how to read between the lines! All sacred writings are like these modest books which were formerly in use in our modest Fatherland. Under
a paltry heading they treated weighty matters, and, offering
but few explanations, aimed at the most profound inquiry.
Similarly, the sacred writings include metaphysical and
moral conceptions. Except where they are more directly
poetic, this seems the beginning and the end. But of you
it is expected that, seeing through the appearance, you will
recognize the real intent. It is as when nature gives
precious metals alloyed with baser substances, and our skill
knows how to discover them and restore them to their
refulgent splendour. The sacred writings were not for
perfect believers alone, but rather for children in belief, for
novices, for those who are standing at the entrance and
would be invited in, and how could they go to work except
as I am now doing with you? They had to accept what
was granted. In it they had to find the means for stimu-
lating the new sense they would awake, by giving a severe
concentration and lofty temper to the mind. Can you not
recognize, even in the way these moral and metaphysical
conceptions are treated, in the creative, poetic impulse,
though it necessarily works in a poor and thankless speech,
an endeavour to break through from a lower region to a
higher? As you can easily see, a communication of this
sort could be nothing other than poetical or rhetorical.
Akin to the rhetorical is the dialectic, and what method
has from of old been more brilliantly or more successfully
employed in revealing the higher nature, not only of
knowledge, but of the deeper feelings? But if the vehicle
alone satisfies, this end will not be reached. Wherefore,
as it has become so common to seek metaphysics and
ethics chiefly, in the sacred writings, and to appraise them
accordingly, it seems time to approach the matter from the
other end, and to begin with the clear cut distinction
between our faith and your ethics and metaphysics,
between our piety and what you call morality. This is
what I would attain by this digression. I wished to throw
some light on the conception that is dominant among you.
That being done, I now return.

In order to make quite clear to you what is the original
and characteristic possession of religion, it resigns, at once,
all claims on anything that belongs either to science or
morality. Whether it has been borrowed or bestowed it is
now returned. What then does your science of being, your
natural science, all your theoretical philosophy, in so far
as it has to do with the actual world, have for its aim? To
know things, I suppose, as they really are; to show the
peculiar relations by which each is what it is; to determine
for each its place in the Whole, and to distinguish it rightly
from all else; to present the whole real world in its
mutually conditioned necessity; and to exhibit the oneness
of all phenomena with their eternal laws. This is truly
beautiful and excellent, and I am not disposed to
depreciate. Rather, if this description of mine, so slightly
sketched, does not suffice, I will grant the highest and most
exhaustive you are able to give.

And yet, however high you go; though you pass from the
laws to the Universal Lawgiver, in whom is the unity of all
things; though you allege that nature cannot be comprehen-
sed without God, I would still maintain that religion has
nothing to do with this knowledge, and that, quite apart from
it, its nature can be known. Quantity of knowledge is not
quantity of piety. Piety can gloriously display itself, both
with originality and individuality, in those to whom this
kind of knowledge is not original. They may only know it
as everybody does, as isolated results known in connection
with other things. The pious man must, in a sense, be a
wise man, but he will readily admit, even though you some-
what proudly look down upon him, that, in so far as he is
pious, he does not hold his knowledge in the same way as you.

Let me interpret in clear words what most pious persons
only guess at and never know how to express. Were
you to set God as the apex of your science as the
foundation of all knowing as well as of all knowledge,
they would accord praise and honour, but it would not be
their way of having and knowing God. From their way,
as they would readily grant, and as is easy enough to see, knowledge and science do not proceed.

It is true that religion is essentially contemplative. You would never call anyone pious who went about in impervious stupidity, whose sense is not open for the life of the world. But this contemplation is not turned, as your knowledge of nature is, to the existence of a finite thing, combined with and opposed to another finite thing. It has not even, like your knowledge of God—if for once I might use an old expression—to do with the nature of the first cause, in itself and in its relation to every other cause and operation. The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal. Where this is found religion is satisfied, where it hides itself there is for her unrest and anguish, extremity and death. Wherefore it is a life in the infinite nature of the Whole, in the One and in the All, in God, having and possessing all things in God, and God in all. Yet religion is not knowledge and science, either of the world or of God. Without being knowledge, it recognizes knowledge and science. In itself it is an affection, a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it in God.

Similarly, what is the object of your ethics, of your science of action? Does it not seek to distinguish precisely each part of human doing and producing, and at the same time to combine them into a whole, according to actual relations? But the pious man confesses that, as pious, he knows nothing about it. He does, indeed, contemplate human action, but it is not the kind of contemplation from which an ethical system takes its rise. Only one thing he seeks out and detects, action from God, God's activity among men. If your ethics are right, and his piety as well, he will not, it is true, acknowledge any action as excellent which is not embraced in your system. But to know and to construct this system is your business, ye learned, not his. If you will not believe, regard the case of women. You ascribe to them religion, not only as an adornment, but you demand of them the finest feeling for distinguishing the things that excel: do you equally expect them to know your ethics as a science?

It is the same, let me say at once, with action itself. The artist fashions what is given him to fashion, by virtue of his special talent. These talents are so different that the one he possesses another lacks; unless someone, against heaven's will, would possess all. But when anyone is praised to you as pious, you are not accustomed to ask which of these gifts dwell in him by virtue of his piety. The citizen—taking the word in the sense of the ancients, not in its present meagre significance—regulates, leads, and influences in virtue of his morality. But this is something different from piety. Piety has also a passive side. While morality always shows itself as manipulating, as self-controlling, piety appears as a surrender, a submission to be moved by the Whole that stands over against man. Morality depends, therefore, entirely on the consciousness of freedom, within the sphere of which all that it produces falls. Piety, on the contrary, is not at all bound to this side of life. In the opposite sphere of necessity, where there is no properly individual action, it is quite as active. Wherefore the two are different. Piety does, indeed, linger with satisfaction on every action that is from God, and every activity that reveals the Infinite in the finite, and yet it is not itself this activity. Only by keeping quite outside the range both of science and of practice can it maintain its proper sphere and character. Only when piety takes its place alongside of science and practice, as a necessary,
an indispensable third, as their natural counterpart, not less in worth and splendour than either, will the common field be altogether occupied and human nature on this side complete.

But pray understand me fairly. I do not mean that one could exist without the other, that, for example, a man might have religion and be pious, and at the same time be immoral. That is impossible. But, in my opinion, it is just as impossible to be moral or scientific without being religious. But have I not said that religion can be had without science? Wherefore, I have myself begun the separation. But remember, I only said piety is not the measure of science. Just as one cannot be truly scientific without being pious, the pious man may not know at all, but he cannot know falsely. His proper nature is not of that subordinate kind, which, according to the old adage that like is only known to like, knows nothing except semblance of reality.

His nature is reality which knows reality, and where it encounters nothing it does not suppose it sees something. And what a precious jewel of science, in my view, is ignorance for those who are captive to semblance. If you have not learned it from my Speeches or discovered it for yourselves, go and learn it from your Socrates. Grant me consistency at least. With ignorance your knowledge will ever be mixed, but the true and proper opposite of knowledge is presumption of knowledge. By piety this presumption is most certainly removed, for with it piety cannot exist.

Such a separation of knowledge and piety, and of action and piety, do not accuse me of making. You are only ascribing to me, without my deserving it, your own view and the very confusion, as common as it is unavoidable, which it has been my chief endeavour to show you in the mirror of my Speech. Just because you do not acknowledge religion as the third, knowledge and action are so much apart that you can discover no unity, but believe that right knowing can be had without right acting, and vice versa. I hold that is it only in contemplation that there is division. There, where it is necessary, you despise it, and instead transfer it to life, as if in life itself objects could be found independent one of the other. Consequently you have no living insight into any of these activities. Each is for you a part, a fragment. Because you do not deal with life in a living way, your conception bears the stamp of perishableness, and is altogether meagre.

True science is complete vision; true practice is culture and art self-produced; true religion is sense and taste for the Infinite. To wish to have true science or true practice without religion, or to imagine it is possessed, is obstinate, arrogant delusion, and culpable error. It issues from the unholy sense that would rather have a show of possession by cowardly purloining than have secure possession by demanding and waiting. What can man accomplish that is worth speaking of, either in life or in art, that does not arise in his own self from the influence of this sense for the Infinite? Without it, how can anyone wish to comprehend the world scientifically, or if, in some distinct talent, the knowledge is thrust upon him, how should he wish to exercise it? What is all science, if not the existence of things in you, in your reason? what is all art and culture if not your existence in the things to which you give measure, form and order? And how can both come to life in you except in so far as there lives immediately in you the eternal unity of Reason and Nature, the universal existence of all finite things in the Infinite?"
what else is this wretched uniformity that thinks it can grasp the highest human life in a single dead formula? The former arises because there is no fundamental feeling of that living nature which everywhere presents variety and individuality, and the latter because the sense fails to give infinity to the finite by determining its nature and boundaries only from the Infinite. Hence the dominion of the mere notion; hence the mechanical erections of your systems instead of an organic structure; hence the vain juggling with analytical formulas, in which, whether categorical or hypothetical, life will not be fettered. Science is not your calling, if you despise religion and fear to surrender yourself to reverence and aspiration for the primordial. Either science must become as low as your life, or it must be separated and stand alone, a division that precludes success. If man is not one with the Eternal in the unity of intuition and feeling which is immediate, he remains, in the unity of consciousness which is derived, for ever apart.

What, then, shall become of the highest utterance of the speculation of our days, complete rounded idealism, if it do not again sink itself in this unity, if the humility of religion do not suggest to its pride another realism than that which it so boldly and with such perfect right, subordinates to itself? It annihilates the Universe, while it seems to aim at constructing it. It would degrade it to a mere allegory, to a mere phantom of the one-sided limitation of its own empty consciousness. Offer with me reverently a tribute to the manes of the holy, rejected Spinoza. The high World-Spirit pervaded him; the Infinite was his beginning and his end; the Universe was his only and his everlasting love. In holy innocence and in deep humility he beheld himself mirrored in the eternal world, and perceived how he also was its most worthy mirror. He was full of religion, full of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, he stands there alone and unequalled; master in his art, yet without disciples and without citizenship, sublime above the profane tribe.

Why should I need to show that the same applies to art? Because, from the same causes, you have here also a thousand phantasms, delusions, and mistakes. In place of all else I would point to another example which should be as well known to you all. I would point in silence—for pain that is new and deep has no words. It is that superb youth, who has too early fallen asleep, with whom everything his spirit touched became art. His whole contemplation of the world was fortieth with a great poem. Though he had scarce more than struck the first chords, you must associate him with the most opulent poets, with those select spirits who are as profound as they are clear and vivacious. See in him the power of the enthusiasm and the caution of a pious spirit, and acknowledge that when the philosophers shall become religious and seek God like Spinoza, and the artists be pious and love Christ like Novalis, the great resurrection shall be celebrated for both worlds.

But, in order that you may understand what I mean by this unity and difference of religion, science and art, we shall endeavour to descend into the inmost sanctuary of life. There, perhaps, we may find ourselves agreed. There alone you discover the original relation of intuition and feeling from which alone this identity and difference is to be understood. But I must direct you to your own selves. You must apprehend a living movement. You must know how to listen to yourselves before your own consciousness. At least you must be able to reconstruct from your consciousness your own state. What you are to notice is the rise of your consciousness and not to reflect upon something already there. Your thought can only embrace what is sundered. Wherefore as soon as you have made any given definite activity of your soul an object of communication or of contemplation, you have already begun to separate. It is impossible, therefore, to adduce any definite example, for, as soon as anything is an example, what I
wish to indicate is already past. Only the faintest trace of the original unity could then be shown. Such as it is, however, I will not despise it, as a preliminary.

Consider how you delineate an object. Is there not both a stimulation and a determination by the object, at one and the same time, which for one particular moment forms your existence? The more definite your image, the more, in this way, you become the object, and the more you lose yourselves. But just because you can trace the growing preponderance of one side over the other, both must have been one and equal in the first, the original moment that has escaped you. Or sunk in yourselves, you find all that you formerly regarded as a disconnected manifold compacted now indivisibly into the one peculiar content of your being. Yet when you give heed, can you not see as it disappears, the image of an object, from whose influence, from whose magical contact this definite consciousness has proceeded? The more your own state sways you the paler and more unrecognizable your image becomes. The greater your emotion, the more you are absorbed in it, the more your whole nature is concerned to retain for the memory an imperishable trace of what is necessarily fleeting, to carry over to what you may engage in, its colour and impress, and so unite two moments into a duration, the less you observe the object that caused it. But just because it grows pale and vanishes, it must before have been nearer and clearer. Originally it must have been one and the same with your feeling. But, as was said, these are mere traces. Unless you will go back on the first beginning of this consciousness, you can scarcely understand them.

And suppose you cannot? Then say, weighing it quite generally and originally, what is every act of your life in itself and without distinction from other acts. What is it merely as act, as movement? Is it not the coming into being of something for itself, and at the same time in the Whole? It is an endeavour to return into the Whole, and to exist for oneself at the same time. These are the links from which the whole chain is made. Your whole life is such an existence for self in the Whole.

How now are you in the Whole? By your senses. And how are you for yourselves? By the unity of your self-consciousness, which is given chiefly in the possibility of comparing the varying degrees of sensation. How both can only rise together, if both together fashion every act of life, is easy to see. You become sense and the Whole becomes object. Sense and object mingle and unite, then each returns to its place, and the object rent from sense is a perception, and you rent from the object are for yourselves, a feeling. It is this earlier moment I mean, which you always experience yet never experience. The phenomenon of your life is just the result of its constant departure and return. It is scarcely in time at all, so swiftly it passes; it can scarcely be described, so little does it properly exist. Would that I could hold it fast and refer to it your commonest as well as your highest activities.

Did I venture to compare it, seeing I cannot describe it, I would say it is fleeting and transparent as the vapour which the dew breathes on blossom and fruit, it is bashful and tender as a maiden's kiss, it is holy and fruitful as a bridal embrace. Nor is it merely like, it is all this. It is the first contact of the universal life with an individual. It fills no time and fashions nothing palpable. It is the holy wedlock of the Universe with the incarnated Reason for a creative, productive embrace. It is immediate, raised above all error and misunderstanding. You lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world. In that moment, you are its soul. Through one part of your nature you feel, as your own, all its powers and its endless life. In that moment it is your body, you pervade, as your own, its muscles and members and your thinking and forecasting set its inmost nerves in motion. In this way every living, original movement in your life is first
received. Among the rest it is the source of every religious emotion. But it is not, as I said, even a moment. The incoming of existence to us, by this immediate union, at once stops as soon as it reaches consciousness. Either the intuition displays itself more vividly and clearly, like the figure of the vanishing mistress to the eyes of her lover; or feeling issues from your heart and overspreads your whole being, as the blush of shame and love over the face of the maiden. At length your consciousness is finally determined as one or other, as intuition or feeling. Then, even though you have not quite surrendered to this division and lost consciousness of your life as a unity, there remains nothing but the knowledge that they were originally one, that they issued simultaneously from the fundamental relation of your nature. Wherefore, it is in this sense true what an ancient sage has taught you, that all knowledge is recollection. It is recollection of what is outside of all time, and is therefore justly to be placed at the head of all temporal things.

And, as it is with intuition and feeling on the one hand, so it is with knowledge which includes both and with activity on the other. Through the constant play and mutual influence of these opposites, your life expands and has its place in time. Both knowledge and activity are a desire to be identified with the Universe through an object. If the power of the objects preponderates, if, as intuition or feeling, it enters and seeks to draw you into the circle of their existence, it is always a knowledge. If the preponderating power is on your side, so that you give the impress and reflect yourselves in the objects, it is activity in the narrower sense, external working. Yet it is only as you are stimulated and determined that you can communicate yourselves to things. In founding or establishing anything in the world you are only giving back what that original act of fellowship has wrought in you, and similarly everything the world fashions in you must be by the same act. One must mutually stimulate the other. Only in an interchange of knowing and activity can your life consist. A peaceful existence, wherein one side did not stimulate the other, would not be your life. It would be that from which it first developed, and into which it will again disappear.

There then you have the three things about which my Speech has so far turned,—perception, feeling and activity, and you now understand what I mean when I say they are not identical and yet are inseparable. Take what belongs to each class and consider it by itself. You will find that those moments in which you exercise power over things and impress yourselves upon them, form what you call your practical, or, in the narrower sense, your moral life; again the contemplative moments, be they few or many, in which things produce themselves in you as intuition, you will doubtless call your scientific life. Now can either series alone form a human life? Would it not be death? If each activity were not stimulated and renewed by the other, would it not be self-consumed? Yet they are not identical. If you would understand your life and speak comprehensively of it, they must be distinguished. As it stands with these two in respect of one another, it must stand with the third in respect of both. How then are you to name this third, which is the series of feeling? What life will it form? The religious as I think, and as you will not be able to deny, when you have considered it more closely.

The chief point in my Speech is now uttered. This is the peculiar sphere which I would assign to religion—the whole of it, and nothing more. Unless you grant it, you must either prefer the old confusion to clear analysis, or produce something else, I know not what, new and quite wonderful. Your feeling is piety, in so far as it expresses, in the manner described, the being and life common to you and to the All. Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you. This series is not
made up either of perceptions or of objects of perception, either of works or operations or of different spheres of operation, but purely of sensations and the influence of all that lives and moves around, which accompanies them and conditions them. These feelings are exclusively the elements of religion, and none are excluded. There is no sensation that is not pious, except it indicate some diseased and impaired state of the life, the influence of which will not be confined to religion. Wherefore, if ideas and principles are all foreign to religion, this truth we here come upon for the second time. If ideas and principles are to be anything, they must belong to knowledge which is a different department of life from religion.

Now that we have some ground beneath us, we are in a better position to inquire about the source of this confusion. May there not be some reason for this constant connection of principles and ideas with religion? Is there no way is there not a cause for the connection of action with religion? Without such an inquiry it would be vain to proceed farther. The misunderstanding would be confirmed, for you would change what I say into ideas and begin seeking for principles in them. Whether you will follow my exposition, who can tell? What now is to hinder that each of the functions of life just indicated should not be an object for the others? Or does it not rather manifestly belong to their inner unity and equality that they should in this manner strive to pass over into one another? So at least it seems to me. Thus, as a feeling person, you can become an object to yourself and you can contemplate your own feeling. Nay, you can, as a feeling person, become an object for yourself to operate upon and more and more to impress your deepest nature upon. Would you now call the general description of the nature of your feelings that is the product of this contemplation a principle, and the description of each feeling, an idea, you are certainly free to do so. And if you call them religious principles and ideas, you are not in error. But do not forget that this is a scientific treatment of religion, knowledge about it, and not religion itself.

Nor can the description be equal to the thing described. The feeling may dwell in many sound and strong, as for example in almost all women, without ever having been specially a matter of contemplation. Nor may you say religion is lacking, but only knowledge about religion. Furthermore, do not forget what we have already established, that this contemplation presupposes the original activity. It depends entirely upon it. If the ideas and principles are not from reflection on a man's own feeling, they must be learned by rote and utterly void. Make sure of this, that no man is pious, however perfectly he understands these principles and conceptions, however much he believes he possesses them in clearest consciousness, who cannot show that they have originated in himself and, being the outcome of his own feeling, are peculiar to himself. Do not present him to me as pious, for he is not. His soul is barren in religious matters, and his ideas are merely supposititious children which he has adopted, in the secret feeling of his own weakness. As for those who parade religion and make a boast of it, I always characterize them as unholy and removed from all divine life. One has conceptions of the ordering of the world and formulas to express them, the other has prescriptions whereby to order himself and inner experiences to authenticate them. The one weaves his formulas into a system of faith, and the other spins out his prescriptions a scheme of salvation. It being observed that neither has any proper standing ground without feeling, strife ensues as to how many conceptions and declarations, how many precepts and exercises, how many emotions and sensations must be accepted in order to conglomerate a sound religion that shall be neither specially cold nor enthusiastic, dry nor shallow. O fools, and slow of heart! They do not know that all this is mere analysis of the religious sense, which they must have made for themselves, if it is to have any meaning.
SECOND SPEECH

But if they are not conscious of having anything to analyze, whence have they those ideas and rules? They have memory and imitation, but that they have religion do not believe. They have no ideas of their own from which formulas might be known, so they must learn them by rote, and the feelings which they would have accompanying them are copies, and like all copies, are apt to become caricatures. And out of this dead, corrupt, second-hand stuff, a religion is to be concocted! The members and juices of an organized body can be dissected; but take these elements now and mix them and treat them in every possible way; and will you be able to make heart's blood of them? Once dead, can it ever again move in a living body? Such restoration of the products of living nature out of its component parts, once divided, passes all human skill, and, just as little, would you succeed with religion, however completely the various kindred elements be given from without. From within, in their original, characteristic form, the emotions of piety must issue. They must be indubitably your own feelings, and not mere stale descriptions of the feelings of others, which could at best issue in a wretched imitation.

Now the religious ideas which form those systems can and ought to be nothing else than such a description, for religion cannot and will not originate in the pure impulse to know. What we feel and are conscious of in religious emotions is not the nature of things, but their operation upon us. What you may know or believe about the nature of things is far beneath the sphere of religion. The Universe is ceaselessly active and at every moment is revealing itself to us. Every form it has produced, everything to which, from the fulness of its life, it has given a separate existence, every occurrence scattered from its fertile bosom is an operation of the Universe upon us. Now religion is to take up into our lives and to submit to be swayed by them, each of these influences and their consequent emotions, not by themselves

THE NATURE OF RELIGION

but as a part of the Whole, not as limited and in opposition to other things, but as an exhibition of the Infinite in our life. Anything beyond this, any effort to penetrate into the nature and substance of things is no longer religion, but seeks to be a science of some sort.

On the other hand, to take what are meant as descriptions of our feelings for a science of the object, in some way the revealed product of religion, or to regard it as science and religion at the same time, necessarily leads to mysticism and vain mythology. For example, it was religion when the Ancients, abolishing the limitations of time and space, regarded every special form of life throughout the whole world as the work and as the kingdom of a being who in this sphere was omnipresent and omnipotent, because one peculiar way in which the Universe operates was present as a definite feeling, and they described it after this fashion. It was religion when they assigned a peculiar name and built a temple to the god to whom they ascribed any helpful occurrence whereby in an obvious, if accidental, way, the laws of the world were revealed, because they had comprehended something as a deed of the Universe, and after their own fashion set forth its connection and peculiar character. It was religion when they rose above the rude iron age, full of flaws and inequalities, and sought again the golden age on Olympus in the joyous life of the gods, because beyond all change and all apparent evil that results only from the strife of finite forms, they felt the ever-stirring, living and serene activity of the World and the World-Spirit. But when they drew up marvellous and complex genealogies of the gods, or when a later faith produced a long series of emanations and procreations, it was not religion. Even though these things may have their source in a religious presentation of the relation of the human and the divine, of the imperfect and the perfect, they were, in themselves, vain mythology, and, in respect of science, ruinous mysticism. The sum total of religion is to feel
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the free self-determination of this very disposition, and mirrors one passing moment of the world.

It would be impious to demand here something held in constraint, something limited and determined from without. If anything of this kind lies in your conception of system then you must set it quite aside. A system of perceptions and feelings you may yourselves see to be somewhat marvellous. Suppose now you feel something. Is there not at the same time an accompanying feeling or thought—make your own choice—that you would have to feel in accordance with this feeling, and not otherwise were but this or that object, which does not now move you, to be present? But for this immediate association your feeling would be at an end, and a cold calculating and refining would take its place. Wherefore it is plainly an error to assert that it belongs to religion, to be conscious of the connection of its separate manifestations, not only to have it within, and to develop it from within, but to see it described and to comprehend it from without, and it is presumption to consider that, without it, piety is poverty-stricken. The truly pious are not disturbed in the simplicity of their way, for they give little heed to all the so-called religious systems that have been erected in consequence of this view.

Poor enough they are too, far inferior to the theories about music, defective though they be. Among those systematizers there is less than anywhere, a devout watching and listening to discover in their own hearts what they are to describe. They would rather reckon with symbols, and complete a designation which is about as accidental as the designation of the stars. It is purely arbitrary and never sufficient, for something new that should be included, is always being discovered, and a system, anything permanent and secure, anything corresponding to nature, and not the result of caprice and tradition, is not to be found in it. The designation, let the forms of religion be ever so inward and self-dependent, must be from without. Thousands might be moved religiously in the same way, and yet each, led, not so much by disposition, as by external circumstances, might designate his feeling by different symbols. Furthermore, those systematizers are less anxious to present the details of religion than to subordinate them one to the other, and to deduce them from a higher. Nothing is of less importance to religion, for it knows nothing of deducing and connecting. There is no single fact in it that can be called original and chief. Its facts are one and all immediate. Without dependence on any other, each exists for itself. True, a special type of religion is constituted by one definite kind and manner of feeling, but it is mere perversion to call it a principle, and to treat it as if the rest could be deduced from it. This distinct form of a religion is found, in the same way, in every single element of religion. Each expression of feeling bears on it immediately this peculiar impress. It cannot show itself without it, nor be comprehended without it. Everything is to be found immediately, and not proved from something else. Generals, which include particulars, combination and connection belong to another sphere, if they rest on reality, or they are merely a work of phantasy and caprice. Every man may have his own regulation and his own rubrics. What is essential can neither gain nor lose thereby. Consequently, the man who truly knows the nature of his religion, will give a very subordinate place to all apparent connection of details, and will not sacrifice the smallest for the sake of it.

By taking the opposite course, the marvellous thought has arisen of a universality of one religion, of one single form which is true, and in respect of which all others are false. Were it not that misunderstanding must be guarded against, I would say that it is only by such deducing and connecting that such a comparison as true and false, which is not peculiarly appropriate to religion, has ever been reached. It only applies where we have to
do with ideas. Elsewhere the negative laws of your logic are not in place. All is immediately true in religion, for except immediately how could anything arise? But that only is immediate which has not yet passed through the stage of idea, but has grown up purely in the feeling. All that is religious is good, for it is only religious as it expresses a common higher life. But the whole circumference of religion is infinite, and is not to be comprehended under one form, but only under the sum total of all forms. It is infinite, not merely because any single religious organization has a limited horizon, and, not being able to embrace all, cannot believe that there is nothing beyond; but more particularly, because everyone is a person by himself, and is only to be moved in his own way, so that for everyone the elements of religion have most characteristic differences. Religion is infinite, not only because something new is ever being produced in time, by the endless relations both active and passive between different minds and the same limited matter; not only because the capacity for religion is never perfected, but is ever being developed anew, is ever being more beautifully reproduced, is ever entering deeper into the nature of man; but religion is infinite on all sides. As the knowledge of its eternal truth and infallibility accompanies knowledge, the consciousness of this infinity accompanies religion. It is the very feeling of religion, and must therefore accompany everyone that really has religion. He must be conscious that his religion is only part of the whole; that about the same circumstances there may be views and sentiments quite different from his, yet just as pious; and that there may be perceptions and feelings belonging to other modifications of religion, for which the sense may entirely fail him.

You see how immediately this beautiful modesty, this friendly, attractive forbearance springs from the nature of religion. How unjustly, therefore, do you reproach religion with loving persecution, with being malignant, with overturning society, and making blood flow like water. Blame those who corrupt religion, who flood it with an army of formulas and definitions, and seek to cast it into the fetters of a so-called system. What is it in religion about which men have quarrelled and made parties and kindled wars? About definitions, the practical sometimes, the theoretical always, both of which belong elsewhere. Philosophy, indeed, seeks to bring those who would know to a common knowledge. Yet even philosophy leaves room for variety, and the more readily the better it understands itself. But religion does not, even once, desire to bring those who believe and feel to one belief and one feeling. Its endeavour is to open in those who are not yet capable of religious emotions, the sense for the unity of the original source of life. But just because each seer is a new priest, a new mediator, a new organ, he flees with repugnance the bald uniformity which would again destroy this divine abundance.

This miserable love of system rejects what is strange, often without any patient examination of its claims, because, were it to receive its place, the closed ranks would be destroyed, and the beautiful coherence disturbed. There is the seat of the art and love of strife. War must be carried on, and persecution, for by thus relating detail to finite detail, one may destroy the other, while, in its immediate relation to the Infinite, all stand together in their original genuine connection, all is one and all is true. These systematizers, therefore, have caused it all. Modern Rome, godless but consequent, hurls anathemas and ejects heretics. Ancient Rome, truly pious, and, in a high style religious, was hospitable to every god. The adherents of the dead letter which religion casts out, have filled the world with clämour and turmoil.

Seers of the Infinite have ever been quiet souls. They abide alone with themselves and the Infinite, or if they do look around them, grudge to no one who understands the
mighty word his own peculiar way. By means of this wide vision, this feeling of the Infinite, they are able to look beyond their own sphere. There is in religion such a capacity for unlimited many-sidedness in judgment and in contemplation as is nowhere else to be found. I will not except even morality and philosophy, not at least so much of them as remains after religion is taken away. Let me appeal to your own experience. Does not every other object whereof man's thinking and striving are directed, draw around him a narrow circle, inside of which all that is highest for him is enclosed, and outside of which all appears common and unworthy? The man who only thinks methodically, and acts from principle and design, and will accomplish this or that in the world, unavoidably circumscribes himself, and makes everything that does not forward him an object of antipathy. Only when the free impulse of seeing, and of living is directed towards the Infinite and goes into the Infinite, is the mind set in unbounded liberty. Religion alone rescues it from the heavy fetters of opinion and desire. For it, all that is is necessary, all that can be is an indispensable image of the Infinite. In this respect, it is all worthy of preservation and contemplation, however much, in other respects, and in itself, it is to be rejected. To a pious mind religion makes everything holy, even unhollowness and commonness, whether he comprehends it or does not comprehend it, whether it is embraced in his system of thought, or lies outside, whether it agrees with his peculiar mode of acting or disagrees. Religion is the natural and sworn foe of all narrowmindedness, and of all onesidedness.

These charges, therefore, do not touch religion. They rest upon the confusion between religion and that knowledge which belongs to theology. It is a knowledge, whatever be its value, and is to be always distinguished from religion. Just as inapplicable are the charges you have made in respect of action. Something of this I have already touched upon, but let us take a general glance at it in order to set it entirely aside, and to show you exactly what I mean. Two things must be carefully distinguished. In the first place, you charge religion with causing not infrequently in the social, civil, and moral life, improper, horrible, and even unnatural dealings. I will not demand proof that these actions have proceeded from pious men. I will grant it provisionally. But in the very utterance of your accusation, you separate religion and morality. Do you mean then that religion is immorality, or a branch of it? Scarcely, for your war against it would then be of quite another sort, and you would have to make success in vanquishing religion a test of morality. With the exception of a few who have shown themselves almost mad in their mistaken zeal, you have not yet taken up this position. Or do you only mean that piety is different from morality, indifferent in respect of it, and capable therefore of accidentally becoming immoral? Piety and morality can be considered apart, and so far they are different. As I have already admitted and asserted, the one is based on feeling, the other on action. But how, from this opposition do you come to make religion responsible for action? Would it not be more correct to say that such men were not moral enough, and had they been, they might have been at least as pious without harm? If you are seeking progress—as doubtless you are—where two faculties that should be equal have become unequal, it is not advisable to call back the one in advance. It would be better to urge forward the laggard.

Lest you should think I am merely quibbling, consider that religion by itself does not urge men to activity at all. If you could imagine it implanted in man quite alone, it would produce neither these nor any other deeds. The man, according to what we have said, would not act, he would only feel. Wherefore, as you rightly complain, there have been many most religious men in whom the proper impulses to action have been wanting, and morality been too
much in the background, who have retired from the world and have betaken themselves in solitude to idle contemplation. Religion, when isolated and morbid, is capable of such effects, but not of cruel and horrible deeds. In this way, your accusation can be turned into praise.

However different the actions you blame may be, they have this in common, that they all seem to issue immediately from one single impulse. Whether you call this special feeling religious or not, I am far from disagreeing with you when you so constantly blame it. Rather I praise you the more thorough and impartial you are. Blame also, I pray you, not only where the action appears bad, but still more where it has a good appearance. When action follows a single impulse, it falls into an undue dependence and is far too much under the influence of the external objects that work upon this one emotion. Feeling, whatever it be about, if it is not dormant, is naturally violent. It is a commotion, a force to which action should not be subject and from which it should not proceed. Quiet and discretion, the whole impress of our nature should give action birth and character, and this is as much required in common life as in politics and art. But this divergence could only come because the agent did not make his piety sufficiently evident. Wherefore, it would rather appear that, if he had been more pious he would have acted more morally. The whole religious life consists of two elements, that man surrender himself to the Universe and allow himself to be influenced by the side of it that is turned towards him is one part, and that he transplant this contact which is one definite feeling, within, and take it up into the inner unity of his life and being, is the other. The religious life is nothing else than the constant renewal of this proceeding. When, therefore, anyone is stirred, in a definite way, by the World, is it his piety that straightway sets him to such working and acting as bear the traces of commotion and disturb the pure connection of the moral life? Impossible.

On the contrary, his piety invites him to enjoy what he has won, to absorb it, to combine it, to strip it of what is temporal and individual, that it may no more dwell in him as commotion but be quiet, pure and eternal. From this inner unity, action springs of its own accord, as a natural branch of life. As we agreed, activity is a reaction of feeling, but the sum of activity should only be a reaction of the sum of feeling, and single actions should depend on something quite different from momentary feeling. Only when each action is in its own connection and in its proper place, and not when, dependently and slavishly, it corresponds to one emotion, does it exhibit, in a free and characteristic way, the whole inner unity of the spirit.

Consequently your charge does not touch religion. And, if you are speaking of a morbid state of it, you are speaking of what is quite general and is not in any way original to religion nor specially seated in it, and from which consequently nothing is to be concluded against religion in particular. Religion is of course finite, and therefore subject to imperfections, but it must be apparent to you that, in a healthy state, man cannot be represented as acting from religion or being driven to action by religion, but piety and morality form each a series by itself and are two different functions of one and the same life. But while man does nothing from religion, he should do everything with religion. Uninterruptedly, like a sacred music, the religious feelings should accompany his active life.

That by this representation of religion I am neither deceiving you nor myself, you can easily see, if you observe that each feeling in proportion as it bears the character of piety, is disposed to withdraw itself into the heart and not break forth into deeds. Would not a pious person who was right deeply moved find himself in great perplexity, or even quite fail to understand you, if you asked him by what particular action he proposed to give expression and vent to his feeling? They are bad spirits and not good that
take possession of man, and drive him. The legions of angels with which the Father provided His Son, exercised no power over Him. They had no call to help Him in any doing or forbearing, but they poured serenity and calm into a soul exhausted with doing and thinking. For a little, in that moment when His whole power was roused for action, these friendly spirits were lost to His view, but again they hovered round Him in joyous throng and served Him. But why do I direct you to instances and speak in images? Because by starting from the separation which you make between religion and morality, and following it closely, we have come back to their essential unity in real life. This separation means corruption in the one and weakness in the other; and if one is not what it should be, neither can be perfect.

There are, however, other actions you often speak of. The distinct purpose of them is to produce religion. Being of no importance for morality, they are not moral, and being of no importance for sense, they are not immoral, but they are nevertheless disastrous, because they accustom man to attach himself to what is void and to value what is worthless. Let them be ever so inane and meaningless, they, far too often, take the place of moral action or hide its absence.

I know what you mean. Spare me the long catalogue of outward disciplines, spiritual exercises, privations, mortifications and the rest. All these things you accuse religion of producing, and yet you cannot overlook the fact that the greatest heroes of religion, the founders and reformers of the church, have regarded them with great indifference. There is a difference, I admit, but I believe that, in this regard also, the subject I defend will justify itself.

First of all, let us understand what we are dealing with. It is with action as an exercise of feeling, not with any symbolical or significant action meant to represent feeling. We have already seen how those dogmas and opinions that would join themselves more closely to religion than is fitting, are only designations and descriptions of feeling. In short, they are a knowledge about feeling, and in no way an immediate knowledge about the operations of the Universe, that gave rise to the feeling. We saw also, how it necessarily resulted in evil, when they were put in place of the feeling, of the proper and original perception. Similarly this conducting and exercising of feeling which often turns out so vain and meaningless, is an acting at second-hand. Just as that knowledge made feeling an object to be contemplated and understood, this acting makes it an object to be operated upon and cultivated. What value this kind of activity may have, and whether it may not be as unreal as that kind of knowing, I shall not here decide. In what sense man can act upon himself and particularly upon his feeling is difficult to determine, and needs to be well weighed. Can it be the result of a personal resolve, or does it not rather appear to be the business of the Whole, and therefore a given product of life? But as I said, this does not belong here, and I would rather discuss it with the friends of religion than with you. So much, however, is certain, and I grant it fully, that few errors are so disastrous as the substitution of these disciplinary exercises of feeling for the original feeling itself. Only, it is plainly an error into which religious men could not fall.

If you would recall that something quite similar is to be found in morality, you would perhaps at once agree with me. Men, as they say, lay down for themselves just such acting upon their own acting, just such exercisings of morals, to the end of self-improvement. It happens that these are sometimes put in place of direct moral action, of goodness and righteousness themselves, but you would not admit that it is through moral men. Men do all kinds of things, accepting them from one and transmitting them to another, though they have no meaning or value for themselves.

These actions are always, however, to be understood as
being done to rouse, sustain and direct religious feeling. Where the activity is self-produced and really has this meaning, it manifestly rests on the man’s own feeling. A special state of feeling of which the man is conscious, is presupposed, a knowledge of his own inner life with its weaknesses and inequalities. It presupposes an interest, a higher self-love directed to himself, as a morally feeling person, as an essential part of the spiritual world. When this love ceases, the action also must cease. By supplanting feeling, it abolishes itself, and such an error could only arise among those who are in their hearts hostile to piety.

For them such exercisings of feeling have a special worth, as if they also had some of the hidden virtue, seeing they can outwardly imitate what, in others, has a deep significance. Consciously or unconsciously, they deceive themselves and others with the appearance of a higher life which they do not really have. Either it is base hypocrisy or wretched superstition, and I willingly expose it to your condemnation. No exercise of this kind is of any value, and we shall reject not only what, regarded by itself, is manifestly void, unnatural and perverted, but all that in this way arises, however specious. Severe mortifications, dull renunciation of the beautiful, empty phrases and usages and charities shall all be reckoned at the same value. Every superstition shall be alike unholy.

But we must never confuse it with the well-meant endeavours of pious souls. The difference is easy to discern. Each religious person fashions his own asceticism according to his need, and looks for no rule outside of himself, while the superstitious person and the hypocrite adhere strictly to the accepted and traditional, and are zealous for it, as for something universal and holy. This zeal is natural, for if they were expected to think out for themselves, their own outward discipline and exercise, their own training of the feelings, having regard to their own personal state, they would be in an evil case, and their inward poverty could be no longer hidden.

The most general, almost preliminary truths have long delayed us. They should have been understood of themselves, but neither you, nor many who would at least wish to be counted among you, understood the relation of religion to the other branches of life. Wherefore, it was necessary to drain off at once the sources of the commonest misconceptions, that they might not afterwards retard us. This having been done to the utmost of my ability, we have now, I hope, firm ground beneath us. We have attached ourselves to that moment, which is never directly observed, but in which all the different phenomena of life fashion themselves together, as in the buds of some plants blossom and fruit are both enclosed. When, therefore, we have asked where now among all it produces is religion chiefly to be sought, we have found only one right and consistent answer. Chiefly where the living contact of man with the world fashions itself as feeling. These feelings are the beautiful and sweet scented flowers of religion, which, after the hidden activity opens, soon fall, but which the divine growth ever anew produces from the fulness of life. A climate of paradise is thus created in which no penuriousness disturbs the development, and no rude surrounding injures the tender lights and fine texture of its flowers. To this I would now conduct you, your vision having been purified and prepared.

First of all, then, follow me to outward nature, which is to many the first and only temple of the Godhead. In virtue of its peculiar way of stirring the heart, it is held to be the inmost sanctuary of religion. At present, however, this outward nature, although it should be more, is little else than the outer court, for the view with which you next oppose me is utterly to be repudiated. The fear of the powers which rule in nature, which spare nothing, which threaten the life and works of man, is said to give the first feeling of the Infinite, or even to be the sole basis of religion. Surely in that case you
must admit that if piety came with fear it must go with fear.

Let us then consider the matter. Manifestly the great aim of all industry spent in cultivating the earth is to destroy the dominion of the powers of nature over man, and to bring all fear of them to an end. Already a marvellous amount has been done. The lightnings of Zeus terrify no more since Hephaistus has prepared for us a shield against them; and Hestia protects what she has won from Poseidon, even against the angriest blows of his trident; the sons of Ares unite with those of Æsculapius to ward off the deadly arrows of Apollo. Man is ever learning to resist and to destroy one of these gods by means of the others, and is preparing soon, as conqueror and lord, to be but a smiling spectator at this play. Were fear then the ground of reverence for the powers of nature, by thus mutually destroying one another, they would gradually appear ordinary and common; for what man has controlled or attempted to control, he can measure, and what is measurable cannot stand in awful opposition to him as the Infinite. The objects of religion would thus be ever more and more unfaithful to it. But, are they? Would not these gods, conducting themselves towards one another as brethren and kinsfolk, and caring for man as the youngest son of the same Father, be just as zealously worshipped? If you are still capable of being filled with reverence for the great powers of nature, does it depend on your security or insecurity? When you stand under your lightning conductors, have you, perhaps, a laugh ready wherewith to mock the thunder? Is not nature protecting and sustaining quite as much an object of adoration? Or, consider it in this way. Does the great and infinite alone threaten man’s existence and oppose his working? Does he not also suffer from much that is small and paltry, which, because it cannot be definitely comprehended or fashioned into something great, you call accident and the accidental? Has this ever been made an object of religion and been worshipped? If you have such a small conception of the Fates of the Ancients, you must have understood little of their poetic piety. Under this dread Fate the sustaining powers were as much embraced as the destructive. Very different from that slavish fear, to banish which was a credit and a virtue, was the holy reverence for Fate, the rejection of which, in the best and most cultured times of Antiquity, was accounted, among better disposed persons, absolute recklessness.11 Such a sacred reverence I will readily acknowledge as the first element of religion, but the fear you mean is not only not religion itself, it is not even preparatory or introductory. If it should be praised, it must be for urging men, by the desire to be rid of it, into earthly fellowship in the state. But piety first begins when it is put aside, for the aim of all religion is to love the World-Spirit 12 and joyfully to regard his working, and fear is not in love.

But that joy in Nature, which so many extol, is just as little truly religious. I almost hate to speak of their doings when they dart off into the great, glorious world to get for themselves little impressions: how they inspect the delicate markings and tints of flowers, or gaze at the magic play of colours in the glowing evening sky, and how they admire the songs of the birds on a beautiful country-side. They are quite full of admiration and transport, and will have it that no instrument could conjure forth these sounds and no brush attain this gloss and marking. But suppose we take their course and subtilize after their fashion! What is it that they do admire? Rear the plant in a dark cellar, and, if you are successful, you can rob it of all these beauties, without in the least degree altering its nature. Suppose the vapour above us somewhat differently disposed; instead of that splendour, you would have before your eyes one unpleasant grayness, and yet what you are contemplating would be essentially the same. Once more, try to imagine how the midday sun, the glare of which you cannot endure,
already appears to the inhabitants of the East the glimmering twilight. Is it not manifest, then, when they have not the same sensation, that they have gone after a mere void appearance? But they do not believe in it merely as an appearance; it is for them really true. They are in perplexity between appearance and reality, and what is so doubtful cannot be a religious stimulus, and can call forth no genuine feeling. Were they children who, without further thinking and willing, without comparison and reflection, received the light and splendour, their hearts being opened for the world by the soul of the world, so that they are stirred to pious feeling by every object; or were they sages in whose clear intuition all strife between appearance and reality is resolved, and who, therefore, undisturbed by these refinements, can again be stirred like children, their joy would be a real and pure feeling, a living impulse, a gladly communicative contact between them and the world. If you understand this better way, then you can say that this also is a necessary and indispensable element of religion. But do not present me that empty affected thing that sits so loose and is but a wretched mask for their cold, hard refinement, as an emotion of piety. In opposing religion, do not ascribe to it what does not belong to it. Do not scoff, as if man entered most easily into this sanctuary by being debased to fear of the irrational, and by vain trifling with transitory show, as if piety were easiest, and most becoming to timid, weak, sensitive souls.

The next thing to meet us in corporeal nature is its material boundlessness, the enormous masses which are scattered over illimitable space and which circulate in measureless orbits. Many hold that the exhaustion of the imagination, when we try to expand our diminished pictures of them to their natural size, is the feeling of the greatness and majesty of the Universe. This arithmetical amazement which, just on account of their ignorance, is easiest to awake in infants and ignoramuses, you are quite right in finding somewhat childish and worthless. But would those who are accustomed to take this view grant us that, when these great orbits had not yet been calculated, when half of those worlds were not discovered, nay, when it was not yet known that these shining points were worlds, piety, lacking one essential element, was necessarily poorer? Just as little can they deny that, in so far as it can be conceived—and without that it means nothing for us—the infinity of mass and number is only finite and the mind can comprehend every infinity of this kind into short formulæ, and reckon with them, as daily happens. But they would certainly not grant that anything of their reverence for the greatness and majesty of the Universe is lost through advancing education and skill. As soon, however, as we are in a position to compare these units, which are our measure of size and motion, with those great world units, this spell of number and mass must disappear. As long as this feeling rests on difference of mass, it is merely a feeling of personal incapacity, which is doubtless a religious feeling, but is not that glorious reverence, as exalting as it is humbling, which is the feeling of our relation to the Whole. Neither a world operation too great for an organization, nor anything beyond it from smallness, can constitute this feeling, but it must be just as strong when the operation is equal and conformable to our powers.

What moves us so wondrously is not the contrast between small and great, but the essence of greatness, the external law in virtue of which size and number in general first arose. Life alone can work on us in a characteristic way, and not what is captive to weight and in so far dead. The religious sense corresponds not to the masses in the outer world, but to their eternal laws. Rise to the height of seeing how these laws equally embrace all things, the greatest and the smallest, the world systems and the mote which floats in the air, and then say whether you are not conscious of the divine unity and the eternal immutability of the world.
By the most constant repetition, some elements in these laws cannot escape even common perception. There is the order in which all movements return in the heavens and on the earth, the recognized coming and going of all organized forces, the perpetual trustworthiness of the rules of mechanics, and the eternal uniformity in the striving of plastic Nature. But, if it is allowable to make a comparison, this regularity gives a less great and lively religious feeling than the sense of law in all difference. Nor should this appear strange to you.

Suppose you are looking at a fragment of a great work of art. In the separate parts of this fragment you perceive beautiful outlines and situations, complete and fully to be understood without anything besides. Would not the fragment then rather appear a work by itself than a part of a greater work, and would you not judge that, if the whole was wrought throughout in this style, it must lack breadth and boldness and all that suggests a great spirit? If a loftier unity is to be suspected, along with the general tendency to order and harmony, there must be here and there situations not fully explicable. Now the world is a work of which you only see a part. Were this part perfectly ordered and complete in itself, we could be conscious of the greatness of the whole only in a limited way.

You see that the irregularity of the world, so often employed against religion, has really a greater value for religion than the order which is first presented to us in our study of the world and which is visible in a smaller part. The perturbations in the course of the stars point to a higher unity and a bolder combination than those we have already discovered in the regularity of their orbits. The anomalies, the idle sports of plastic Nature, compel us to see that she handles her most definite forms with free, nay capricious arbitrariness, with a phantasy the laws of which only a higher standpoint can show.

Wherefore, in the religion of the Ancients, only inferior divinities and ministering virgins had the oversight of all that recurred uniformly and had an already discovered order, but the exceptions which were not understood, the revolutions for which there was no law, were the work of the father of the gods. We also have strange, dread, mysterious emotions, when the imagination reminds us that there is more in nature than we know. They are easy to distinguish from the quiet and settled consciousness that everything is involved in the most distant combinations of the Whole, that every individual thing is determined by the yet unexplored general life. This consciousness is produced by what we understand in Nature, but I mean those dim presentiments which are the same in all, even though, as is right, only the educated seek to elucidate them and change them into a more lively activity of perception. In others, being comprehended in ignorance and misunderstanding, they grow into a delusion which we call pure superstition, under which, however, there manifestly lies a pious shudder of which we shall not be ashamed.

Furthermore, consider how you are impressed by the universal opposition of life and death. The sustained, conquering power, whereby every living thing nourishes itself, forcefully awakes the dead and enters it on a new course by drawing it into its own life. On every side we find provision prepared for all living, not lying dead, but itself alive and everywhere being reproduced. With all this multitude of forms of life, and the enormous mass of material which each uses in turn, there is enough for all. Thus each completes his course and succumbs to an inward fate and not to outward want. What a feeling of endless fulness and superabundant riches! How are we impressed by a universal paternal care and a childlike confidence that without anxiety plays away sweet life in a full and abundant world! Consider the lilies of the field, they sow not, neither do they reap, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them, wherefore be not anxious. This happy view, this
serene, easy mind was for one of the greatest heroes of religion, the fair profit of a very limited and meagre communion with nature. How much more should we win who have been permitted by a richer age to go deeper!

Already we know something more of the universally distributed forces, the eternal laws, whereby individual things, that is things which have their souls in themselves apart, in a more definite boundary, in what we call bodies, are fashioned and destroyed. See how attraction and repulsion, everywhere and always active, determine everything; and how all difference and opposition are again resolved into a higher unity. Only in appearance, can anything finite boast itself of a separate existence. See how all likeness is concealed by being distributed in a thousand different shapes. Nothing simple is to be found, but all is skilfully connected and interwoven. We would see and exhort all who share in the culture of the age to observe, how, in this sense, the Spirit of the World reveals itself as visibly, as completely, in small as in great, and we would not stop with such a consciousness of it as might be had anywhere and from anything. Even without all the knowledge which has made our century glorious, the World-Spirit showed itself to the most ancient sages. Not only did they have, by intuition, the first pure speaking image of the world, but there was kindled in their hearts a love for nature and a joy in her, that is for us still lovely and pleasing. Had this but penetrated to the people, who knows what strong and lofty way religion might have taken from the beginning? At present it has penetrated to all who would be considered cultured. Through the gradual operation of the fellowship between knowledge and feeling, they have arrived at the immediate feeling that there is nothing even in their own nature that is not a work of this Spirit, an exhibition and application of these laws. In virtue of this feeling, all that touches their life becomes truly a world, a unity permeated by the Divinity that fashions it. It is natural, therefore, that there should be in them all, that love and joy, that deep reverence for nature which made sacred the art and life of Antiquity, which was the source of that wisdom, which we have returned to and are at length beginning to commend and glorify by fruits long delayed. Such a feeling of being one with nature, of being quite rooted in it, so that in all the changing phenomena of life, even in the change between life and death itself, we might await all that should befall us with approbation and peace, as merely the working out of those eternal laws, would indeed be the germ of all the religious feelings furnished by this side of existence.

But is it so easy to find original in nature the love and resistance, the unity and peculiarity, whereby it is a Whole for us? Just because our sense tends in quite another direction, is there so little truly religious enjoyment of nature. The sense of the Whole must be first found, chiefly within our own minds, and from thence transferred to corporeal nature. Therefore the spirit is for us not only the seat of religion but its nearest world. The Universe portrays itself in the inner life, and then the corporeal is comprehensible from the spiritual. If the mind is to produce and sustain religion it must operate upon us as a world and as in a world.

Let me reveal a secret to you that lies almost hidden in one of the oldest sources of poetry and religion. As long as the first man was alone with himself and nature, the Deity ruled over him and addressed him in various ways, but he did not understand and answered nothing. His paradise was beautiful, the stars shone down on him from a beautiful heaven, but there awoke in him no sense for the world. Even from within, this sense was not developed. Still his mind was stirred with longing for a world, and he collected the animal creation before him, if perhaps out of them a world might be formed. Then the Deity recognized that the world would be nothing, as long as man was alone. He created a helpmate for him. At length the deep-toned harmonies awoke in him, and the world fashioned itself
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before his eyes. In flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, he discovered humanity. In this first love he had a foretaste of all love's forms and tendencies—in humanity he found the world. From this moment he was capable of seeing and hearing the voice of the Deity, and even the most insolent transgression of His laws did not any more shut him out from intercourse with the Eternal Being. 14

The history of us all is related in this sacred legend. All is present in vain for those who set themselves alone. In order to receive the life of the World-Spirit, and have religion, man must first, in love, and through love, have found humanity. Wherefore, humanity and religion are closely and indissolubly united. A longing for love, ever satisfied and ever again renewed, forthwith becomes religion. Each man embraces most warmly the person in whom the world mirrors itself for him most clearly and purely; he loves most tenderly the person whom he believes combines all he lacks of a complete manhood. Similarly the pious feelings are most holy that express for him existence in the whole of humanity, whether as blessedness in attaining or of need in coming short.

Wherefore, to find the most glorious elements of religion, let us enter upon the territory where you are in your peculiar, your most loved home. Here your inner life had its birth, here you see the goal of all your striving and doing before your eyes, and here you feel the growth of your powers whereby you are evermore conducted towards it. Humanity itself is for you the true universe, and the rest is only added in so far as it is related to it or forms its surroundings. Even for me, this point of view suffices. Yet it has often pained me that, with all your interest in humanity, and with all your zeal for it, you are always in difficulties with it, and divided from it, and pure love cannot become right prominent in you. Each of you in his own way harasses himself to improve it, and to educate it, and what will not come to an issue you finally cast aside in dejection.

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I make bold to say, that this also comes from your lack of religion. You wish to work on humanity, and you select men, individuals for contemplation. They displease you vastly. Among the thousand possible causes, unquestionably that which is finest in itself, and which belongs to the best of you, is that you are, in your own way, far too ethical. You take men singly, and you have an ideal of the individual to which no one corresponds. If you would begin with religion, you would have far more success. If you would only attempt to exchange the objects of your working and the objects of your contemplation! Work on individuals, but rise in contemplation, on the wings of religion, to endless, undivided humanity. Seek this humanity in each individual; regard the nature of every person as one revelation of it, and of all that now oppresses you no trace would remain. I at least boast myself of a moral disposition, I know how to value human excellence, and commonness could almost overwhelm me with the unpleasant feeling of contempt, were it not that religion gives me a great and glorious view of all.

Just consider what a consummate artist the Genius of humanity is. It can make nothing that has not a nature of its own. As soon as it assays its brush, or sharpens its pencil, there appear living and significant features. It imagines and fashions countless forms. Millions wear the costume of the time, and are faithful pictures of its necessities and its tastes. In others there are memories of the past, or presentiments of a distant future. Some are most lofty and striking types of the fairest and divinest, others resemble grotesques produced in the most original and fleeting mood of a master. The common view, based on a misunderstanding of the sacred words that there are vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour, is not pious. Only by comparing details could such an opposition appear to you. You must not contemplate anything alone, you must rather rejoice in everything in its own place. All that we can be
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identical. They would be the same formula with a different co-efficient. What would it be in comparison with the endless variety which humanity does manifest? Take any element of humanity, and you will find it in almost every possible condition. You will not find it quite by itself, nor quite combined with all other elements, but you will find all possible mixtures between, in every odd and unusual combination. And if you could think of unions you do not see, this gap would be a negative revelation of the Universe, an indication that, in the present temperature of the world, this mixture is not possible, in the requisite degree. Your imagination thus gives you a glimpse beyond the present boundaries of humanity, and whether it be only a ray from a vanished past, or an involuntary and unconscious prophecy of the future, it is a real higher inspiration. And just as this, that seems to come short of the requisite infinite variety is not really too little, so what, from your standpoint appears superfluous, is not really too much.

This oft-bewailed superfluity of the commonest forms of humanity, ever returning unchanged in a thousand copies, does not disturb the pious mind. The Eternal Mind commands that the forms in which individuality is most difficult to discern, should stand closest together, and even the finite mind can see the reason why. And each has something of its own, and no two are identical. In every life there is some moment, like the coruscation of baser metals, when, by the approach of something higher, or by some electric shock, it surpasses itself and stands on the highest pinnacle of its possibilities. For this moment it was created, in this moment it fulfilled its purpose, and, after this moment its exhausted vitality again subsides. To call forth this moment in ordinary souls and to contemplate them during it is a pleasure to be envied, and to those who have not known it, the whole existence of them must appear superfluous and despicable.

Yet the existence of such an ordinary soul has a double meaning in respect of the Whole. If I arrest in thought
the course of that unresting machinery whereby all that is human is woven together and made interdependent, I see that each individual in his inner nature is a necessary complement of a complete intuition of humanity. One shows me how any fragment, if only the plastic impulse of the Whole still quickens it, can calmly progress, fashioning itself in graceful, regular forms; another how, from want of a vivifying and combining warmth, the hardness of the earthly material cannot be overcome; while, in a third, I see how, in an atmosphere too violently agitated, the spirit within is disturbed in its working, so that nothing comes clearly and recognizably to light. One appears as the rude and animal portion of mankind, stirred only by the first ungainly motions of humanity; another is the pure dematerialized spirit that, having been separated from all that is base and unworthy, hovers with noiseless foot over the earth. But everything between also has a purpose. It shows how, in the minute detached phenomena of individual lives, the different elements of human nature all appear at every stage and in every manner. It is not enough that among this countless multitude there are always a few at least who are the distinguished representatives of humanity, who strike different melodious chords that require no further accompaniment, and no subsequent explication, but who, in the one note, charm and satisfy by their harmony the whole soul. But even the noblest only presents mankind in one way and in one of its movements, and in some sense everyone is a peculiar exhibition of humanity and does the same thing, and were a single figure to fail in the great picture, it would be impossible to comprehend it completely and perfectly. If now every one is so essentially connected with that which is the inner kernel of our own life, how can we avoid feeling this connection, and embracing all, without distinction of disposition or mental capacity, with heartfelt liking and affection? That is one meaning that every individual has in respect of the Whole.

Do I, on the other hand, observe the eternal wheels of humanity in motion, this vast interaction, nothing moved by itself, nothing moving only itself, I am greatly quieted about the other side of your complaint, that reason and soul, sensuality and morality, understanding and blind force appear in such separate masses. Why do you see things singly that are not single and do not work by themselves? The reason of one and the disposition of another have as strong a mutual influence as if they were in one and the same subject. The morality that belongs to this sensuality is set apart from it, and do you suppose its dominion is, on that account, limited? Would the sensuality be better ruled if the morality, without being specially concentrated anywhere, were divided out in small, scarce noticeable portions to each individual? The blind power which is allotted to the great mass, is not, in its operation on the Whole, abandoned to a rude peradventure, but the understanding, concentrated at other points, leads it, without being aware of the fact, and it follows, in invisible bands, quite as unconsciously. The outlines of personality which appear to you so definite, from my standpoint, dissolve. The magic circle of prevailing opinions and infectious feelings surrounds all and plays around all like an atmosphere filled with dissolving and magnetic forces. By the most vital diffusion it smelts all things, even the most distant, into a single activity, the issue of which is to impel those who are really in possession of light and truth to activity, so that some are deeply influenced, and others have at least a superficial illumination, brilliant and deceptive.

In this connection of everything with the sphere to which it belongs and in which it has significance all is good and divine, and a fullness of joy and peace is the feeling of those who allow all things to work upon them in this great connection. But they will also feel how contemplation isolates single things in single moments. The common impulse of men, who know nothing of this dependence, is to seize and retain this and that, to hedge in their Ego and to
surround it with manifold outworks. They seek to conduct their own existence according to their own self-will and not be disturbed by the eternal current of the world. And when we who have an entirely opposite impulse perceive how fate necessarily sweeps all this away and how they wound and torture themselves in a thousand ways, what is more natural than the most heartfelt compassion with all the bitter suffering that must arise from this unequal strife, and with all the stripes which awful Nemesis deals out on every side?

From these wanderings through the whole territory of humanity, pious feeling returns, quickened and educated, into its own Ego, and there finds all the influences that had streamed upon it from the most distant regions. If, on returning with the consecration of intercourse with the world still fresh upon us, we give heed how it is with us in this feeling, we become conscious that our Ego vanishes, not only into smallness and insignificance, but into one-sidedness, insufficiency and nothingness. What lies nearer to mortal man than unaffected humility? And when gradually our feeling becomes quick and alert to what there is in the path of humanity that sustains and forwards, and what, on the contrary, must sooner or later be conquered and destroyed, if it is not recast and transformed, and when from this law we regard all doings in the world, what is more natural than deep contrition for all in us that is hostile to human nature, the submissive desire to conciliate the Deity, and the most earnest longing to put ourselves and all that belongs to us in safety in that sacred region where alone there is security against death and destruction? Advancing further, we perceive how the Whole only becomes clear to us, how we only reach intuition of it and unity with it in fellowship with others, by the influence of those who have long been freed from dependence on their own fleeting being, and from the endeavour to expand and isolate it. How, then, can we avoid a feeling of special affinity to those whose actions have defended our existence, and happily guided it through threatening dangers? Though by us they become conscious of their life in the Whole, we honour them as those who, before us, have reached this union.

Not by examples which are rare, but by passing through these and similar feelings you discover in yourselves the outlines of the fairest and the basest, the noblest and the most despicable. You not only find at times all the manifold degrees of human powers within you, but when self-love is quite submerged in sympathy, all the countless mixture of human tendencies that you have ever seen in the characters of others appears simply arrested impulses of your own life. There are moments when, despite all distinction of sex, culture, or environment, you think, feel, and act as if you were really this or that person. In your own order, you have actually passed through all those different forms. You are a compendium of humanity. In a certain sense your single nature embraces all human nature. Your Ego, being multiplied and more clearly outlined, is in all its smallest and swiftest changes immortalized in the manifestations of human nature. As soon as this is seen, you can love yourselves with a pure and blameless love. Humility, that never forsakes you, has its counterpart in the feeling that the whole of humanity lives and works in you. Even contrition is sweetened to joyful self-sufficiency. This is the completion of religion on this side. It works its way back to the heart, and there finds the Infinite. The man in whom this is accomplished, is no more in need of a mediator for any sort of intuition of humanity. Rather he is himself a mediator for many.

But there is not merely the swinging of feeling between the world and the individual, in the present moment. Except as something going on, we cannot comprehend what affects us, and we cannot comprehend ourselves, except as thus progressively affected. Wherefore, as feeling
persons, we are ever driven back into the past. The spirit
furnishes the chief nourishment for our piety, and history
immediately and especially is for religion the richest source.
History is not of value for religion, because it hastens or
controls in any way the progress of humanity in its develop-
ment, but because it is the greatest and most general reveal-
ation of the deepest and holiest. In this sense, however,
religion begins and ends with history. Prophecy and
history are for religion the same and indistinguishable, and
all true history has at first had a religious purpose, and has
taken its departure from religious ideas.

What is finest and tenderest in history, moreover,
cannot be communicated scientifically, but can only be
comprehended in the feeling of a religious disposition.
The religious mind recognizes the transmigration of
spirits and souls, which to others is but graceful fiction,
as, in more than one sense, a wonderful arrangement
of the Universe for comparing the different periods of
humanity according to a sure standard. After a long
period, during which nature could produce nothing similar,
some distinguished individual almost entirely the same
returns. But only the seers recognize him, and it is they
who should judge by his works the signs of different times.
A movement of humanity returns exactly like something
of which some distant foretime has left you an image, and
you are to recognize from the various causes which have
now produced it, the course of development and the
formula of its law. The genius of some human endow-
ment awakes as from slumber. Here and there rising and
falling, it has already finished its course. Now it appears
in a new life in another place and under different circum-
stances. Its quicker increase, its deeper working, its fairer
stronger form, indicate how much the climate of humanity
has improved, and how much fitter the soil has grown to
nourish nobler plants. Peoples and generations of mortals
appear as all alike necessary for the completeness of history,

though, like individuals, of different worth. Some are
estimable and spirited, and work strongly without ceasing,
permeating space and defying time. Others are common
and insignificant, fitted only to show some peculiar shade
of some single form of life. For one moment only they
are really living and noticeable. One thought they
exhibit, one conception they produce, and then they hasten
towards destruction that the power that produced them may
be given to something else. As vegetable nature, from
the destruction of whole species, and from the ruins of
whole generations of plants, produces and nourishes a new
race, so spiritual nature rears from the ruins of a glorious
and beautiful world of men, a new world that draws its
first vital strength from elements decomposed and wond-
erously transformed. Being deeply impressed with this
sense of a universal connection, your glance perhaps passes
so often directly from least to greatest and greatest to
least, going backwards and forwards, till through dizziness
it can neither distinguish great nor small, cause nor
effect, preservation nor destruction. This state continues,
and then that well-known figure of an eternal fate appears.
Its features bear the impress of this state, being a
marvellous mixture of obstinate self-will and deep wisdom,
of rude unfeeling force and heartfelt love, of which first one
seizes you and then another, now inviting you to impotent
defiance and now to childlike submission.

Penetrate further and compare this partial striving of the
individual, the fruit of opposing views, with the quiet uniform
course of the Whole. You will see how the high World-
Spirit smilingly marches past all that furiously opposes him.
You will see how dread Nemesis, never wearied, follows his
steps, meting out punishment to the haughty who resist
the gods. Even the stoniest and choicest who have with
steadfastness, worthy perhaps of praise and wonder, refused
to bow before the gentle breath of the great Spirit, it mows
down with iron band. Would you comprehend the proper
character of all changes and of all human progress, a feeling resting on history must show you more surely than aught else, that living gods rule who hate nothing so much as death, and that nothing is to be persecuted and destroyed like this first and last foe of the spirit. The rude, the barbarian, the formless are to be absorbed and recast. Nothing is to be a dead mass that moves only by impact and resists only by unconscious collision; all is to be individual, connected, complex, exalted life. Blind instinct, unthinking custom, dull obedience, everything lazy and passive, all those sad symptoms of the death slumber of freedom and humanity are to be abolished. To this the work of the minutes and the centuries is directed, it is the great ever advancing work of redemptive love.

Some prominent emotions of religion connected with nature and humanity, I have now sketched in vague outline. I have brought you to the limits of your horizon. Here is the end and summit of religion for all to whom humanity is the whole world. But consider that in your feeling there is something that despises these bounds, something in virtue of which you cannot stay where you are. Beyond this point only infinity is to be looked into. I will not speak of the presentiments which define themselves and become thoughts which might by subtility be established, that humanity, being capable of motion and cultivation, being not only differently manifested in the individual, but here and there really being different, cannot possibly be the highest, the sole manifestation of the unity of spirit and matter. As the individual is only one form of humanity, so humanity may be only one form of this unity. Beside it many other similar forms may exist, bounding it and standing over against it. But in our own feeling we all find something similar. The dependence of our earth, and therefore of the highest unity it has produced, upon other worlds, has been impressed upon us both by nature and by education. Hence this ever active but seldom understood presentiment of some other marriage of spirit and matter, visible and finite, but above humanity, higher and closer and productive of more beautiful forms. But any sketch that could be drawn would be too definite. Any echo of the feeling could only be fleeting and vague. Hence it is exposed to misconception and is so often taken for folly and superstition.

This is sufficient evidence to a thing so immeasurably far from you. More would be incomprehensible. Had you only the religion that you could have! Were you but conscious of what you already have! Were you to consider the few religious opinions and feelings that I have so slightly sketched, you would be very far from finding them all strange to you. Something of the same kind you must have had in your thoughts before. But I do not know whether to lack religion quite, or not to understand it, is the greater misfortune. In the latter case it fails of its purpose, and you impose upon yourselves in addition.

Two things I would specially blame in you. Some things you select and stamp as exclusively religious, other things you withdraw from religion as exclusively moral. Both you apparently do on the same ground. Religion with you is the retribution which alights on all who resist the Spirit of the Whole, it is the hatred everywhere active against haughtiness and audacity, the steady advance of all human things to one goal. You are conscious of the feeling that points to this unfailing progress. After it has been purified from all abuses, you would willingly see it sustained and extended. But you will then have it that this is exclusively religion, and you would exclude other feelings that take their rise from the same operation of the mind in exactly the same way.

How have you come to this torn off fragment? I will tell you. You do not regard it as religion but as an echo of moral action, and you simply wish to foist the name upon it, in order to give religion the last blow. What we have
agreed to acknowledge as religion does not arise exclusively in the moral sphere, not at least in the narrow sense in which you understand the word. Feeling knows nothing of such a limited predilection. If I direct you specially to the sphere of the spirit and to history, it does not follow that the moral world is religion's Universe. In your narrow sense of it the moral world would produce very few religious emotions. The pious man can detect the operation of the World-Spirit in all that belongs to human activity, in play and earnest, in smallest things and in greatest. Everywhere he perceives enough to move him by the presence of this Spirit and without this influence nothing is his own. Therein he finds a divine Nemesis that those who, being predominantly ethical or rather legal, would, by selecting from religion only the elements suited to this purpose, make of it an insignificant appendage to morals, do yet, purify religion as they may, irrecoverably corrupt their moral doctrine itself and sow in it the seed of new errors. When anyone succumbs in moral action, it sounds well to say it is the will of the Eternal, and that what does not succeed through us, will sometime, by others, come to pass. But if this high assurance belonged to moral action, moral action would be dependent on the degree of receptivity for this assurance in each person at any moment. Morality cannot include immediately aught of feeling without at once having its original power and purity disturbed.

With all those feelings, love, humility, joy, and the others that I pictured as the undulation of the mind between the two points of which the world is one, and your Ego the other, you deal in another way. The ancients knew what was right. They called them all piety. For them those feelings were an essential part of religion, the noblest part. You also recognize them, but you try to persuade yourselves that they are an essential section of your moral action. You would justify these sentiments on moral principles, and assign them their place in your moral system. But in vain, for, if you remain true to yourselves, they will there neither be desired nor endured. If action proceed directly from the emotions of love or affection, it will be insecure and thoughtless. Moral action should not proceed from such a momentary influence of an outward object. Wherefore your doctrine of morals, when it is strict and pure, acknowledges no reverence except for its own law. Everything done from pity or gratitude it condemns as impure, almost as selfish. It makes light of, almost despises, humility. If you talk of contrition it speaks of lost time being needlessly increased. Your own feeling must assure you that the immediate object of all these sentiments is not action. They are spontaneous functions of your deepest and highest life, coming by themselves and ending by themselves. Why do you make such an ado, and begging for grace for them, where they have no right to be? Be content to consider them religion, and then you will not need to demand anything for them except their own sure rights, and you will not deceive yourselves with the baseless claims which you are disposed to make in their name. Return them to religion: the treasure belongs to it alone. As the possessor of it, religion is for morality and all else that is an object of human doing, not the handmaid, but an indispensable friend and sufficient advocate with humanity. This is the rank of religion, as the sum of all higher feelings.

That it alone removes man from one-sidedness and narrowness I have already indicated. Now I am in a position to be more definite. In all activity and working, be it moral or artistic, man must strive for mastery. But when man becomes quite absorbed, all mastery limits and chills, and makes one-sided and hard. The mind is directed chiefly to one point, and this one point cannot satisfy it. Can man, by advancing from one narrow work to another, really use his whole power? Will not the larger part be unused, and
turn, in consequence, against himself and devour him? How many of you go to ruin because you are too great for yourselves? A superfluity of power and impulse that never issues in any work, because there is no work adequate, drives you aimlessly about, and is your destruction.

To resist this evil would you have those who are too great for one object of human endeavour, unite them all—art, science, life, and any others you may know of? This would simply be your old desire to have humanity complete everywhere, your ever recurring love of uniformity. But is it possible? Those objects, as soon as they are attended to separately, all alike strive to rouse and dominate the mind. Each tendency is directed to a work that should be completed, it has an ideal to be copied, a totality to be embraced. This rivalry of several objects of endeavour can only end by one expelling the others. Nay, even within this one sphere, the more eminent a mastery a man would attain, the more he must restrict himself. But if this pre-eminence entirely occupy him, and if he lives only to attain it, how shall he duly participate in the world, and how shall his life become a whole? Hence most virtuosos are one-sided and defective, or at least, outside of their own sphere, they sink into an inferior kind of life.

The only remedy is for each man, while he is definitely active in some one department, to allow himself, without definite activity, to be affected by the Infinite. In every species of religious feeling he will then become conscious of all that lies beyond the department which he directly cultivates. The Infinite is near to everyone, for whatever be the object you have chosen for your deliberate technical working, it does not demand much thought to advance from it to find the Universe. In it you discover the rest as precept, or inspiration or revelation. The only way of acquiring what lies outside the direction of the mind we have selected, is to enjoy and comprehend it thus as a whole, not by will as art, but by instinct for the Universe as religion.

Even in the religious form these objects again fall into rivalry. This result of human imperfection causes religion to appear dismembered. Religion takes the form of some peculiar receptivity and taste for art, philosophy or morality, and is consequently often mistaken. Often, I say, it appears thus than freed from all participation in one-sidedness, than completed, all-embracing. Yet this complete form of religion remains the highest, and it is only by it, that, with satisfactory result, man sets alongside of the finite that he specially concentrates on, an Infinite; alongside of the contracting endeavour for something definite and complete, expansive soaring in the Whole and the Inexhaustible. In this way he restores the balance and harmony of his nature, which would be lost for ever, if, without at the same time having religion, he abandon himself to one object, were it the most beautiful, most splendid. A man's special calling is the melody of his life, and it remains a simple, meagre series of notes unless religion, with its endlessly rich variety, accompany it with all notes, and raise the simple song to a full-voiced, glorious harmony.

If then this, I trust I have indicated clearly enough for you all, is really the nature of religion, I have already answered the questions, Whence do those dogmas and doctrines come that many consider the essence of religion? Where do they properly belong? And how do they stand related to what is essential in religion? They are all the result of that contemplation of feeling, of that reflection and comparison, of which we have already spoken. The conceptions that underlie these propositions are, like your conceptions from experience, nothing but general expressions for definite feelings. They are not necessary for religion itself, scarcely even for communicating religion, but reflection requires and creates them. Miracle, inspiration, revelation, supernatural intimations, much piety can be had without the need of any one of these conceptions. But when feeling is made the subject of reflection and comparison they are absolutely
unavoidable. In this sense all these conceptions do certainly belong to the sphere of religion, and indeed belong without condition or the smallest limit to their application.

The strife about what event is properly a miracle, and wherein its character properly consists, how much revelation there may be and how far and for what reasons men may properly believe in it, and the manifest endeavour to deny and set aside as much as can be done with decency and consideration, in the foolish notion that philosophy and reason are served thereby, is one of the childish operations of the metaphysicists and moralists in religion. They confuse all points of view and bring religion into discreditable discredit, as if it trespassed on the universal validity of scientific and physical conclusions. Pray do not be misled, to the detriment of religion, by their sophistical disputations, nor even by their hypocritical mystery about what they would only too willingly publish. Religion, however loudly it may demand back all those well abused conceptions, leaves your physics untouched, and please God, also your psychology.

What is a miracle? What we call miracle is everywhere else called sign, indication. Our name, which means a wonder, refers purely to the mental condition of the observer. It is only in so far appropriate that a sign, especially when it is nothing besides, must be fitted to call attention to itself and to the power in it that gives it significance. Every finite thing, however, is a sign of the Infinite, and so these various expressions declare the immediate relation of a phenomenon to the Infinite and the Whole. But does that involve that every event should not have quite as immediate a relation to the finite and to nature? Miracle is simply the religious name for event. Every event, even the most natural and usual, becomes a miracle, as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. To me all is miracle. In your sense the inexplicable and strange alone is miracle, in mine it is no miracle. The more religious you are, the more miracle would you see everywhere. All dis-

puting about single events, as to whether or not they are to be called miraculous, gives me a painful impression of the poverty and wretchedness of the religious sense of the combatants. One party show it by protesting everywhere against miracle, whereby they manifest their wish not to see anything of immediate relationship to the Infinite and to the Deity. The other party display the same poverty by laying stress on this and that. A phenomenon for them must be marvellous before they will regard it as a miracle, whereby they simply announce that they are bad observers.16

What is revelation? Every original and new communication of the Universe to man is a revelation, as, for example, every such moment of conscious insight as I have just referred to. Every intuition and every original feeling proceeds from revelation. As revelation lies beyond consciousness, demonstration is not possible, yet we are not merely to assume it generally, but each one knows best himself what is repeated and learned elsewhere, and what is original and new. If nothing original has yet been generated in you, when it does come it will be a revelation for you also, and I counsel you to weigh it well.

What is inspiration? It is simply the general expression for the feeling of true morality and freedom. But do not mistake me. It is not that marvellous and much-praised morality and freedom that accompany and embellish actions with deliberations. It is that action which springs from the heart of man, despite of, or at least, regardless of, all external occasion. In the same measure in which this action is freed from all earthly entanglement, it is felt as divine and referred to God.

What is prophecy? Every religious anticipation of the other half of a religious event, one half being given, is prophecy. It was very religious of the ancient Hebrews to measure the divineness of a prophet, neither by the difficulty of predicting, nor by the greatness of the subject, but, quite simply, by the issue, for we cannot know from one
thing how complete the feeling is in everything, till we see whether the religious aspect of this one special circumstance has been rightly comprehended.

What is operation of grace? 17 Nothing else manifestly than the common expression for revelation and inspiration, for interchange between the entrance of the world into man, through intuition and feeling, and the outgoing of man into the world, through action and culture. It includes both, in their originality and in their divine character, so that the whole life of the pious simply forms a series of operations of divine grace.

You see that all these ideas, in so far as religion requires, or can adopt ideas, are the first and the most essential. They indicate in the most characteristic manner a man's consciousness of his religion, because they indicate just what necessarily and universally must be in it. The man who does not see miracles of his own from the standpoint from which he contemplates the world, the man in whose heart no revelation of his own arises, when his soul longs to draw in the beauty of the world, and to be permeated by its spirit; the man who does not, in supreme moments, feel, with the most lively assurance, that a divine spirit urges him, and that he speaks and acts from holy inspiration, has no religion. The religious man must, at least, be conscious of his feelings as the immediate product of the Universe; for less would mean nothing. He must recognize something individual in them, something that cannot be imitated, something that guarantees the purity of their origin from his own heart. To be assured of this possession is the true belief.

Belief, on the contrary, usually so called, which is to accept what another has said or done, or to wish to think and feel as another has thought and felt, is a hard and base service. So far is it from being the highest in religion, as is asserted, that it must be rejected by all who would force their way into the sanctuary of religion. To wish to have and

hold a faith that is an echo, proves that a man is incapable of religion; to demand it of others, shows that there is no understanding of religion. You wish always to stand on your own feet and go your own way, and this worthy intent should not scare you from religion. Religion is no slavery, no captivity, least of all for your reason. You must belong to yourselves. Indeed, this is an indispensable condition of having any part in religion.

Every man, a few choice souls excepted, does, to be sure, require a guide to lead and stimulate, to wake his religious sense from its first slumber, and to give it its first direction. But this you accord to all powers and functions of the human soul, and why not to this one? For your satisfaction, be it said, that here, if anywhere, this tutelage is only a passing state. Hereafter, shall each man see with his own eyes, and shall produce some contribution to the treasures of religion; otherwise, he deserves no place in its kingdom, and receives none. You are right in despising the wretched echoes who derive their religion entirely from another, or depend on a dead writing, swearing by it and proving out of it.

Every sacred writing is in itself a glorious production, a speaking monument from the heroic time of religion, but, through servile reverence, it would become merely a mausoleum, a monument that a great spirit once was there, but is now no more. Did this spirit still live and work, he would look with love, and with a feeling of equality upon his work which yet could only be a weaker impress of himself. Not every person has religion who believes in a sacred writing, but only the man who has a lively and immediate understanding of it, and who, therefore, so far as he himself is concerned, could most easily do without it.

Your very contempt for the poverty stricken and powerless venerators of religion, in whom, from lack of nourishment, religion died before ever it came to the birth, convinces me that you have a talent for religion. The same
Second Speech

thing appears from your regard for the persons of all true heroes of religion. That you should treat them with shallow scoffing or not acknowledge what is great or powerful in them, I would hardly ascribe to you. This regard for the persons confirms me in the thought that your contempt for the thing rests merely on a misunderstanding, and has for its object only the miserable figure which religion takes in the great incapable mass, and the abuses which presumptuous leaders carry on.

I have tried, as best I could, therefore, to show you what religion really is. Have you found anything therein unworthy of you, nay, of the highest human culture? Must you not rather long all the more for that universal union with the world which is only possible through feeling, the more you are separated and isolated by definite culture and individuality? Have you not often felt this holy longing, as something unknown? Become conscious of the call of your deepest nature and follow it, I conjure you. Banish the false shame of a century which should not determine you but should be made and determined by you. Return to what lies so near to you, yes, even to you, the violent separation from which cannot fail to destroy the most beautiful part of your nature.

It appears to me, however, that many among you do not believe that I can here mean to end my present business. How can I have spoken thoroughly of the nature of religion, seeing I have not treated at all of immortality, and of God only a little in passing? Is it not incumbent upon me, most of all, to speak of these two things and to represent to you how unhappy you would be without belief in them? For are not these two things, for most pious people, the very poles and first articles of religion?

But I am not of your opinion. First of all, I do not believe I have said nothing about immortality and so little about God. Both, I believe, are in all and in everything that I have adduced as an element of religion. Had I not presupposed God and immortality I could not have said what I have said, for, only what is divine and immortal has room in which to speak of religion.

In the second place, just as little do I consider that I have the right to hold the conceptions and doctrines of God and of immortality, as they are usually understood, to be the principal things in religion. Only what in either is feeling and immediate consciousness, can belong to religion. God and immortality, however, as they are found in such doctrines, are ideas. How many among you—possibly most of you—are firmly convinced of one or other or both of those doctrines, without being on that account pious or having religion. As ideas they can have no greater value in religion than ideas generally.

But that you may not think I am afraid to speak a straightforward word on this subject, because it would be dangerous to speak, till some definition of God and existence that has stood its trial, has been brought to light and has been accepted in the German Empire as good and valid; or lest you should, on the other hand, perhaps, believe that I am playing on you a pious fraud and wish, in order to be all things to all men, with seeming indifference to make light of what must be of far greater importance to me than I will confess—lest you should think these things, I shall gladly be questioned and will endeavour to make clear to you that, according to my best conviction, it really is, as I have just now maintained.

Remember in the first place that any feeling is not an emotion of piety because in it a single object as such affects us, but only in so far as in it and along with it, it affects us as revelation of God. It is, therefore, not an individual or finite thing, but God, in whom alone the particular thing is one and all, that enters our life. Nor do we stand over against the World and in it at the same time by any one faculty, but by our whole being. The divine in us, therefore, is immediately affected and
called forth by the feeling." Seeing then that I have presented nothing but just this immediate and original existence of God in us through feeling, how can anyone say that I have depicted a religion without God? Is not God the highest, the only unity? Is it not God alone before whom and in whom all particular things disappear? And if you see the world as a Whole, a Universe, can you do it otherwise than in God? If not, how could you distinguish the highest existence, the original and eternal Being from a temporal and derived individual? Otherwise than by the emotions produced in us by the world we do not claim to have God in our feeling, and consequently I have not said more of Him.

If you will not admit that this is to have God, and to be conscious of Him, I can neither teach nor direct you farther. How much you may know I do not judge, for it does not at present concern me, but in respect of feeling and sentiment, you would be for me godless. Science, it is true, is extolled as giving an immediate knowledge about God, that is the source of all other knowledge; only we are not now speaking of science, but of religion. This way of knowing about God which most praise and which I also am to land, is neither the idea of God as the undivided unity and source of all, that is placed by you at the head of all knowledge; nor is it the feeling of God in the heart, of which we boast ourselves. It lags far behind the demands of science, and is for piety something quite subordinate. It is an idea compounded from characteristics, from what are called attributes of God. These attributes correspond to the different ways in which the unity of the individual and the Whole, expresses itself in feeling. Hence I can only say of this idea, what I have said of ideas generally, in reference to religion, that there can be much piety without it, and that it is first formed when piety is made an object of contemplation.

Yet this idea of God, as it is usually conceived, is different from the other ideas before adduced, for though it seeks to be the highest and to stand above all, God, being thought of as too like us, as a thinking and willing Person, is drawn down into the region of opposition. It therefore appears natural that the more like man God is conceived, the more easily another mode of presentation is set over against it. Hence, we have an idea of the Highest Being, not as personally thinking and willing, but exalted above all personality, as the universal, productive, connecting necessity of all thought and existence.

Nothing seems to me less fitting than for the adherents of the former view to charge with godlessness those who, in dread of this anthropomorphism, take refuge in the other, or for the adherents of this latter view to make the humanness of the idea of God a ground for charging the adherents of the former with idolatry, or for declaring their piety void.

It matters not what conceptions a man adheres to; he can still be pious. His piety, the divine in his feeling, may be better than his conception, and his desire to place the essence of piety in conception, only makes him misunderstand himself. Consider how narrow is the presentation of God in the one conception, and how dead and rigid in the other. Neither corresponds to its object, and thus cannot be a proof of piety, except in so far as it rests on something in the mind, of which it has come far short. Rightly understood, both present, at least, one element of feeling, but, without feeling, neither is of any value. Many believe in and accept a God presented in conception, and yet are nothing less than pious, and in no case is this conception the germ from which their piety could ever spring, for it has no life in itself. Neither conception is any sign of a perfect or of an imperfect religion, but perfection and imperfection depend upon the degree of cultivation of the religious sense. As I know of nothing more that could bring us to an understanding on this subject of conceptions, let us now go on to consider the development of the religious sense.
As long as man's whole relation to the world has not arrived at clearness, this feeling is but a vague instinct, the world can appear to him nothing but a confused unity. Nothing of its complexity is definitely distinguishable. It is to him a chaos, uniform in its confusion, without division, order, or law. Apart from what most immediately concerns the subsistence of man, he distinguishes nothing as individual except by arbitrarily cutting it off in time and space. Here you will find but few traces of any conception, and you will scarcely discern to which side they incline. You will not set much value on the difference, whether a blind fate, only to be indicated by magic rites, exhibits the character of the Whole, or a being, alive indeed, but without definite characteristics, an idol, a fetish, one, or, if many, only distinguishable by the arbitrarily appointed limits of their sphere.

As we advance, the feeling becomes more conscious. Circumstances display themselves in their complexity and definiteness. The multiplicity of the heterogeneous elements and powers, by whose constant and determined strife, phenomena are determined, becomes more prominent in man's consciousness of the world. In the same degree the result of the contemplation of this feeling changes. The opposite forms of the idea stand more distinctly apart. Blind fate changes into a higher necessity, in which, though unattainable and unsearchable, reason and connection rest. Similarly, the idea of a personal God becomes higher, but at the same time divides and multiplies, each power and element becomes animate, and gods arise in endless number. They are now distinguishable by means of the different objects of their activity, and different inclinations and dispositions. A stronger, fairer life of the Universe in feeling you must acknowledge is here exhibited. It is most beautiful when this new won complexity and this innate highest unity are most intimately bound together in feeling, as for example, among the Greeks, whom you so justly revere. Both forms then unite in reflection, one being of more value for thought, the other for art, one showing more of the complexity, the other of the unity. But this stage, even without such a union is more perfect than the former, especially if the idea of the Highest Being is placed rather in the eternal unattainable necessity, than in single gods.

Let us now mount higher where opposing elements are again united, where existence, by exhibiting itself as totality, as unity in variety, as system, first deserves its name. Is not the man who perceives existence both as one and as all, who stands over against the Whole, and yet is one with it in feeling, to be accounted happier in his religion, let his feeling mirror itself in idea as it may? There as elsewhere then, the manner in which the Deity is present to man in feeling, is decisive of the worth of his religion, not the manner, always inadequate, in which it is copied in idea. Suppose there is someone arrived at this stage, who rejects the idea of a personal God. I will not decide on the justice of the names you are accustomed to apply to him, whether Pantheist or Spinozist. This rejection of the idea of a personal Deity does not decide against the presence of the Deity in his feeling. The ground of such a rejection might be a humble consciousness of the limitation of personal existence, and particularly of personality joined to consciousness. He might stand as high above a worshipper of the twelve gods whom you would rightly name after Lucrètius, as a pious person at that stage would be above an idolator.

But we have here the old confusion, the unmistakable sign of defective culture. Those who are at the same stage, only not at the same point, are most strongly repudiated. The proper standard of religiousness, that which announces the stage to which a man has attained, is his sense for the Deity. But to which idea he will attach himself depends purely on what he requires it for, and
Second Speech

whether his imagination chiefly inclines towards existence and nature or consciousness and thought.

You will not, I trust, consider it blasphemy or incongruity that such a matter should depend on the direction of the imagination. By imagination I do not mean anything subordinate or confused, but the highest and most original faculty in man. All else in the human mind is simply reflection upon it, and is therefore dependent on it. Imagination in this sense is the free generation of thoughts, whereby you come to a conception of the world; such a conception you cannot receive from without, nor compound from inferences. From this conception you are then impressed with the feeling of omnipotence. The subsequent translation into thought depends on whether one is willing in the consciousness of his own weakness to be lost in the mysterious obscurity, or whether, first of all, seeking definiteness of thought, he cannot think of anything except under the one form given to us, that of consciousness or self-consciousness. Recoil from the obscurity of indefinite thought is the one tendency of the imagination, recoil from the appearance of contradiction in transferring the forms of the finite to the Infinite is the other.

Now cannot the same inwardness of religion be combined with both? Would not a closer consideration show that the two ways of conceiving are not very wide apart? But the pantheistic idea is not to be thought of as death, and no effort is to be spared to surpass in thought the limits of the personal idea.

So much I have thought it necessary to say, not so much in explanation of my own position, as to prevent you from thinking that all are despisers of religion who will not accept the personality of the Highest Being as it is usually set forth. And I am quite convinced that what has been said will not make the idea of the personality of God more uncertain for anyone who truly has it; nor will anyone more easily rid himself of the almost absolute necessity to

Acquire it, for knowing whence this necessity comes. Among truly religious men there have never been zealots, enthusiasts, or fanatics for this idea. Even when timidity and hesitation about it is called atheism, truly pious persons will leave it alone with great tranquillity. Not to have the Deity immediately present in one’s feeling has always seemed to them more irreligious. They would most unwillingly believe that anyone could in point of fact be quite without religion. They believe that only those who are quite without feeling, and whose nature has become brutish, can have no consciousness of the God that is in us and in the world, and of the divine life and operation whereby all things consist. But whosoever insists, it matters not how many excellent men he excludes, that the highest piety consists in confessing that the Highest Being thinks as a person and wills outside the world, cannot be far travelled in the region of piety. Nay, the profoundest words of the most zealous defenders of his own faith must still be strange to him.

The number who would have something from this God, that is alien to piety, is only too great. He is to give an outward guarantee of their blessedness and incite them to morality. They want to have it before their eyes. They would not have God working on man by freedom, but in the only way in which one free being can work on another, by necessity, by making himself known either by pain or by pleasure. But this cannot incite us to morality. Every external incitement is alien to morality, whether it be hope or fear. To follow it where it concerns morality is unfree, therefore unmoral. But the Highest Being, particularly when he is thought of as free, cannot wish to make freedom itself not free, and morality not moral.

This now brings me to the second point, to immortality. I cannot conceal that in the usual manner of treating this subject there is still more that seems to me inconsistent with the nature of piety. I believe I have just shown you in what way each one bears in himself an unchangeable and
eternal nature. If our feeling nowhere attaches itself to the individual, but if its content is our relation to God wherein all that is individual and fleeting disappears, there can be nothing fleeting in it, but all must be eternal. In the religious life then we may well say we have already offered up and disposed of all that is mortal, and that we actually are enjoying immortality. But the immortality that most men imagine and their longing for it, seem to me irreligious, may quite opposed to the spirit of piety. Dislike to the very aim of religion is the ground of their wish to be immortal. Recall how religion earnestly strives to expand the sharply cut outlines of personality. Gradually they are to be lost in the Infinite that we, becoming conscious of the Universe, may as much as possible be one with it. But men struggle against this aim. They are anxious about their personality, and do not wish to overpower the accustomed limit or to be anything else but a manifestation of it. The one opportunity that death gives them of transcending it, they are very far from wishing to embrace. On the contrary, they are concerned as to how they are to carry it with them beyond this life, and their utmost endeavour is for longer sight and better limbs. But God speaks to them as it stands written, “Whosoever loses his life for my sake, the same shall keep it, and whosoever keeps it, the same shall lose it.” The life that they would keep is one that cannot be kept. If their concern is with the eternity of their single person, why are they not as anxious about what it has been as about what it is to be? What does forwards avail when they cannot go backwards? They desire an immortality that is no immortality. They are not even capable of comprehending it, for who can endure the effort to conceive an endless temporal existence? Thereby they lose the immortality they could always have, and their mortal life in addition, by thoughts that distress and torture them in vain. Would they but attempt to surrender their lives from love to God! Would they but strive to annihilate their person-

ality and to live in the One and in the All! Whosoever has learned to be more than himself, knows that he loses little when he loses himself. Only the man who denying himself sinks himself in as much of the whole Universe as he can attain, and in whose soul a greater and holier longing has arisen, has a right to the hopes that death gives. With him alone it is really possible to hold further converse about the endlessness to which, through death, we infallibly soar.

This then is my view of these subjects. The usual conception of God as one single being outside of the world and behind the world is not the beginning and the end of religion. It is only one manner of expressing God, seldom entirely pure and always inadequate. Such an idea may be formed from mixed motives, from the need for such a being to console and help, and such a God may be believed in without piety, at least in my sense, and I think in the true and right sense. If, however, this idea is formed, not arbitrarily, but somehow by the necessity of a man’s way of thinking, if he needs it for the security of his piety, the imperfections of his idea will not cumber him nor contaminate his piety. Yet the true nature of religion is neither this idea nor any other, but immediate consciousness of the Deity as He is found in ourselves and in the world. Similarly the goal and the character of the religious life is not the immortality desired and believed in by many—or what their craving to be too wise about it would suggest—pretended to be believed in by many. It is not the immortality that is outside of time, behind it, or rather after it, and which still is in time. It is the immortality which we can now have in this temporal life; it is the problem in the solution of which we are for ever to be engaged. In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite and in every moment to be eternal is the immortality of religion.
EXPLANATIONS OF THE SECOND SPEECH

(1) Page 32.—The rhetorical character of this book and the impossibility of continuing the subject, had my opinion really been that religion is this restored unity of knowledge, would have allowed me to say so by a very slight suggestion of irony. My meaning would then have been that I would not now press this truth upon my opponents, but that elsewhere and in another form I would carry it to a victorious issue. Wherefore it seems necessary to guard myself against this interpretation, especially as so many theologians seem to maintain at present that religion, and not religion generally, but the Christian religion, is the highest knowledge. Not only in dignity but in form is it identified with metaphysical speculations. It is the most successful and pre-eminent, and all speculations that do not reach the same results, as for example, if they cannot deduce the Trinity, have failed. The assertion of others that the more imperfect, especially the Polytheistic religions have no kinship with Christianity is similar. I reject both, and in respect of the latter I have sought, in the further progress of this book, and in the Introduction to my “Glaubenlehre,” to show how all forms of religion, even the most imperfect, are the same in kind. In respect of the former position, if a philosopher as such will attempt to prove a Trinity in the Highest Being, he does it at his risk, and I would maintain that this is not a Christian Trinity because, being a speculative idea, it has its origin in another part of the soul. Were religion really the highest knowledge, the scientific method alone would be suitable for its extension, and religion could be acquired by study, a thing not hitherto asserted. Philosophy would be the first round in the ladder, the religion of the Christian laity would as πίστις be an imperfect way of having the highest knowledge, and theology as γνώσις would be the perfect way and stand at the top, and no one of the three stages would be consistent with the other two. This I cannot at all accept; therefore I cannot hold religion the highest knowledge, or indeed knowledge at all. Wherefore, what the Christian layman has in less perfection than the theologian and which manifestly is a knowledge is not religion itself, but something appended to it.

(2) Page 39.—In rhetorical exposition generally, strict definitions are dispensed with, and descriptions are substituted. This whole speech is simply an extended description, mixed with criticism of other conceptions, which in my opinion are false. The chief points being scattered are of necessity repeated in different places, under different expressions. This change of expression presents different sides of the matter, and I find it useful even in more scientific treatment for avoiding the scrupulosity of too rigid a terminology. In this kind of writing it seemed specially appropriate. Wherefore three different expressions follow in rapid succession. It is said here of religion that through it, the universal existence of all finite things in the Infinite lives immediately in us. On page 39 it stands religion is sense and taste for the Infinite. Sense may be capacity of perception or capacity of sensibility. There it is the latter. In the former editions, sensibility and taste stood not quite correctly for sense and taste for the Infinite. What I am conscious of or feel, must be imagined, and that is what I call the life of the object in me. But the Infinite, meaning not something unconditioned, but the infinity of existence generally, we cannot be conscious of immediately and through itself. It can only be through a finite object, by means of which our tendency to postulate and seek a world, leads us from detail and part to the All and the Whole. Hence sense for the Infinite and the immediate life of the finite in us as it is in the Infinite, are one and the same. If then, in the first expression, taste be now added to sense, and in the latter expression, the universal existence of all finite things in the Infinite be made explicit, both become essentially identical. Taste includes liking as well as mere faculty, and it is by this liking, this desire to find not merely the finite thing, but to be conscious through it of the Infinite, that the pious person finds that the existence of the finite in the Infinite is universal. There is a similar passage on page 36. The connection shows that the expression contemplation is to be taken in the widest sense, not as speculation proper, but as all movement of the spirit withdrawn from outward activity. What, however, has struck most readers is that the Infinite Existence does not appear to be the Highest Being as cause of the World but the World itself. I do not think that God can be placed in such a relation as cause, and I leave you to say whether the World can be conceived as a true All and Whole without God. Therefore I remained satisfied with that expression, that I might not decide on the various ways of conceiving
God and the World as together or as outside of one another, which
did not fall to be considered here, and could only have limited the
horizon in a harmful manner.

(3) Page 41.—This passage on the departed Novalis was first
inserted in the second edition. Many I believe will wonder at this
juxtaposition, not seeing that he is like Spinoza, or that he holds
the same conspicuous position in art as Spinoza in science. Without
destroying the balance of the Speech, I could only suggest my reason.
There is now another reason why I should say no more. During these
fifteen years the attention to Spinoza, awakened by Jacobi’s writings
and continued by many later influences, which was then somewhat
marked, has relaxed. Novalis also has again become unknown to
many. At that time, however, these examples seemed significant
and important. Many coquetted in insipid poetry with religion,
believing they were akin to the profound Novalis, just as there
were advocates enough of the All in the One taken for followers of
Spinoza who were equally distant from their original. Novalis was
cried down as an enthusiastic mystic by the prosaic, and Spinoza as
godless by the literalists. It was incumbent upon me to protest
against this view of Spinoza, seeing I would review the whole sphere
of piety. Something essential would have been wanting in the ex-
position of my views if I had not in some way said that the mind and
heart of this great man seemed deeply influenced by piety, even
though it were not Christian piety. The result might have been
different, had not the Christianity of that time been so distorted and
obscured by dry formulas and vain subtilities that the divine form
could not be expected to win the regard of a stranger. This I said
in the first edition, somewhat youthfully indeed, yet so that I
have found nothing now needing to be altered, for there was no
reason to believe that I ascribed the Holy Spirit to Spinoza in the
special Christian sense of the word. As interpolation instead of
interpretation was not then so common or so honourable as at
present, I believed that a part of my work was well done. How was
I to expect that, because I ascribed piety to Spinoza, I would myself
be taken for a Spinozist? Yet I had never defended his system, and
anything philosophic that was in my book was manifestly inconsis-
tent with the characteristics of his views and had quite a different
basis than the unity of substance. Even Jacobi has in his criticism
by no means hit upon what is most characteristic. When I recovered
my astonishment, in revising the second edition, this parallel occurred
to me. As it was known that Novalis in some points had a tendency
to Catholicism, I felt sure that, in praising his art, I should have his

religious aberrations ascribed me as Spinozism had been because I
praised Spinoza’s piety. Whether my expectation has deceived me
I do not yet very well know.

(4) Page 46.—Even among the few who admit that religion
originally is feeling stirred in the highest direction, there will be
many to whom it will appear that I assert too much when I say that
all healthy feelings are pious, or at least that, in order not to be
diseased, they should be pious. Even were this granted of all social
feelings, it must be shown how piety is to be found in all those feelings
that unite men for a higher or even a more sensuous enjoyment of life.
Yet I can retract nothing from the universality of the statement and
in no way admit that it was a rhetorical hyperbole. To take one
example, Protestantism can only completely and consistently defend
the domestic and paternal relations of the clergy against the
melancholy folly of the peculiar holiness of the celibate life, by
showing that wedded love and all foregoing natural attraction of
the sexes are not, in the nature of the case, absolutely inconsistent
with a pious state. This only happens when the feeling is diseased,
when there is a tendency in it to the rage of Bacchus or the folly of
Narcissus. In accordance with this analogy I believe that the same
could be shown of each department of feeling not inconsistent with
morality. But, if it be inferred from this passage that, as all true
human feelings belong to the religious sphere, all ideas and principles
of every sort are foreign to it, the connection seems to show my
meaning. Religion itself is to be rigidly distinguished from what
merely belongs to it. Yet, even those feelings which are usually
separated from the religious sphere, require ideas for their commu-
nication and representation, and principles to exhibit their due
measure. But these principles and ideas do not belong to the
feelings themselves, and it is similar with the dogmatic and ascetic
in respect of religion, as is shown more fully further on.

(5) Page 49.—For understanding my whole view I could desire
nothing better than that my readers should compare these Speeches
with my “Christliche Glaubenslehre.” In form they are very
different and their points of departure lie far apart, yet in matter
they are quite parallel. But to provide the Speeches for this
purpose with a complete commentary was impossible, and I must
content myself with single references to such passages as seem to
me capable of appearing contrary or at least of lacking agreement.
Thus every one perhaps might not find the description here given
of an action of things upon us underlying all religious emotions, in
agreement with the declaration which goes through the whole
"Glaubenslehre," that the essence of the religious emotions consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence. The matter stands thus. Even there it is admitted that we cannot really have this feeling except it is occasioned by the action of single things. But if the single things are in their action only single, the sole result is definiteness of the sensuous self-consciousness. In the "Glaubenslehre," likewise this is postulated as the substratum of religious emotion. Yet, let the single thing be great or small, our single life reacts against it, and there can be no feeling of dependence except fortuituously in so far as the reaction is not equal to the action. If, however, the single thing does not work upon us as a single thing, but as part of the Whole, it will be, in acting upon us, an opening for the Whole. This result will depend entirely on the mood and attitude of the mind. But then our reaction will appear to us determined by the same cause and in the same way as the action, and being over against the Universe, our state must be the feeling of entire dependence. And this also shows that however we exhibit the World and God they cannot be divided. We do not feel ourselves dependent on the Whole in so far as it is an aggregate of mutually conditioned parts of which we ourselves are one, but only in so far as underneath this coherence there is a unity conditioning all things and conditioning our relations to the other parts of the Whole. Only on this condition can the single thing be, as it is here put, an exhibition of the Infinite, being so comprehended that its opposition to all else entirely vanishes.

(6) Page 50.—By mythology I understand in general a purely ideal subject enunciated in historical form. Exactly in accordance with the analogy of Polytheistic Mythology, it seems to me that we have a Monotheistic and a Christian. For this a dialogue of divine persons, such as is found in Kloppstock's poems and elsewhere, is not necessary. It is found in more rigid didactic form when something is represented as happening in the Divine Being, as divine resolves made in respect of something that has happened in the world, or again to modify former resolves, not to speak of the special divine resolves that give reality to the idea that prayer is heard. The representations of many divine attributes also have this historical form and are therefore mythical. The divine pity for example, as the idea is mostly understood, is only something when the divine will that lightens the evil is separated from the will that ordained it. Are both regarded as one, then one cannot limit the other, but the divine will that decrees the evil, decrees it only in a definite measure, and the idea of pity is out of place. Similarly, in the idea of the veracity of God, promise and fulfilment are separated, and both together exhibit a historical transaction. But when the activity that promises, is regarded as the same that accomplishes the fulfilment, the conception of divine veracity is something only in so far as many divine activities are linked or not to one expression of them. In this distinction also a history is told, but if the activity that brings to pass and its expression are regarded in general as one, there is hardly place for a special idea of the divine veracity. The same may be shown in other things. By applying this name to them I in no wise blame these representations. Rather I acknowledge them as indispensable, for otherwise the subject could not be spoken of in such a way that any distinction could be drawn between the more correct and less correct. Even in more scientific presentations of religion, the use of such mythology has no danger, for there it is always incumbent to think away the historical and the time form generally. In the sphere of religious poetry and oratory also it is indispensable. There we have only to do with the like-minded, and for them the chief worth of those presentations is that by them they communicate and realize their own religious moods. They naturally at once adjust the defective expression. But I blame it as vain mythology when this, that is only a help in need, is regarded as exact knowledge, and treated as the essence of religion.

(7) Page 53.—If here the system of marks or attributes which in its completest form composes the theological outline is represented rather as being determined by outward circumstances than as coming forth of itself from the religious capacity, the oft-repeated assertion, so contemptuous of all historical sense, that the religious movements which in Christianity have determined a great body of the most important ideas, were merely accidental and the fruit of entirely alien interests, is not to be made. I only wished to recall what is also expounded in my "Kurze Darstellung" and in the Introduction to the "Glaubenslehre," that the formation of the idea depends here, as elsewhere, on the dominating language, the degree, manner, and quality of its scientific development embracing of course the manner and quality of the philosophizing. But in respect of religion in and for itself, these are only external circumstances. Apart from the universal, divine connection of all things, we can say, for example, that if Christianity had had a great and prepondering Eastern extension, the Hellenic and Western bellig, on the contrary, kept back, without being essentially different, it might have been contained in another type of doctrines.

(8) Page 54.—This passage also might occasion various miscon-
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exceptions. First, in respect of the opposition between true and false religion, I refer to my “Glaubenslehre,” §§ 7 and 8 (2nd edit.). It is there treated fully, and I would simply add that, in religion, error only exists by truth and not merely so, but it can be said that every man’s religion is his highest truth. Error therein would not only be error, it would be hypocrisy. In religion then everything is immediately true, as nothing is expressed at any moment of it, except the state of mind of the religious person. Similarly, all types of religious association are good, for the best in the existence of each man must be stored up in them. But how little this prejudices the superiority of one type of faith to another is in part plainly stated and in part easy to infer. One may be the utterance of a superior state of mind, or there may be in the religious communion a higher spiritual power and love. Furthermore, the rejection here of the thought of the universality of any one religion and the assertion that only in the sum of all religions is the whole extent of this bias of the mind comprehended, in no way expresses a doubt that Christianity will be able to extend itself over the whole human race, though perhaps among many races, this greatest of all religions may suffer important changes. Just as little did this passage express a wish that other religions should always continue alongside of Christianity. The influence of Judaism and Hellenic Heathenism on Christianity was through a long period visible in hostile, raging commotions. Thus both still appear in Christianity, and therefore in the history of Christianity have a place. The same thing would happen if Christianity should annex the territory of all existing great religions. Consequently the religious sphere would not be enclosed in narrower borders, but all religions would in a historical way be visible in Christianity. From the connection again it is clear that I only deny that a religion is universally true in the sense that everything that exists or has existed outside of it, is not to be called religion at all. Similarly, what follows is to be understood, about every truly pious person willingly acknowledging that to other types of religion much belongs for which the sense fails him. Even if Christianity had supplanted all other religions, he would not have a sense for all that would thereby be historically mirrored in Christianity, for as little then as now would the Christianity of all Christian people be quite the same. And if no one has an adequate sense for all that is Christian, there can be none with the sense for all there is in other religions that may be the germ of some future Christian peculiarity.

(9) Page 55.—There are still Christian divines who reject the whole purpose of Christian dogmatics, and there was a far greater number when this passage was first written. They believe that Christianity would have been a healthier development and would have shown a freer, fairer form if no one had ever thought of presenting the Christian conceptions in a finished connection. Hence they labour to prune it, to abolish it, as much as possible, and to have it acknowledged as merely a collection of monographs, as an accidental aggregate of single theses of very unequal value. Their good intentions I do not question, but even then, I was far removed from agreeing with them. It would be a grave misunderstanding to believe that this invective against the mania for system makes light of the endeavour to present the Christian faith in the closest possible connection. The mania for system is merely a morbid degeneration of this praiseworthy and wholesome endeavour. That systematic treatment of religious conceptions is the best which, on the one side, does not take the conception and the idea for original and constitutive, and on the other, that the living mobility of the letter be secured, that it may not die and the spirit be drawn to death with it. Within the great conformity characteristic difference is not only to be endured, it is to be assigned its place. If this were to be taken for the chief aim in my presentation of the Christian faith, I would faint believe that I am in perfect agreement with myself.

(10) Page 55.—I feel that this passage gives a two-fold, grave offence. First I prefer Heathen Rome, on account of its boundless mixture of religions, to Christian Rome which, in comparison, I call godless, and that I condemn the expulsion of heretics, while I myself declare certain views to be heretical, and even seek to systematize heresy. I begin with the latter as the deeper and more important. It does not appear to me possible that there can be a sound dogmatic procedure without a formula of the character of what is Christian, by the application of which it would be possible, from any point of the line of cleavage, to cut off the ordinates, and so to describe the extent of Christian conceptions by approximation. It naturally follows that what lies outside of this extent, and would yet be considered Christian, is what has long been called in the Christian Church heretical. In my dogmatics I could not avoid offering such a formula, and I can only wish to attain my object as fully as possible. But this definition of the subject has nothing to do with the treatment of persons. That many, while contending for the defence of their own opinion, may use a heretical expression without meaning anything heretical, is apparent, and I have declared myself fully on it in the “Glaubenslehre,” § 22, 3 and note, and § 23, note.
On many sides the wish has been expressed in the Evangelical Church to renew church discipline in a judicious manner that a Christian congregation may be in a position to withdraw a measure of fellowship from persons disproving by their lives their Christian disposition. This makes it specially necessary to obviate the confusion between this proceeding and the right to pronounce the ban on all we may choose to consider heretics. If heretics are not also without a Christian disposition, the Evangelical Church will rather acknowledge that its sole duty towards them is to maintain fellowship with them that, by mutual understanding, they may the sooner be led into the right way. If individuals or small societies employ a contrary method and, regardless of disposition, exclude from their fellowship all who do not agree with them in the same letter of doctrine, they do not act in an Evangelical spirit, but assume an authority our church grants to none. And now passing to the second point, my preference of Heathen to Christian Rome, and my statement that through toleration the former was full of gods, and that through persecution of heretics, the latter was godless. First, the character of the expressions used shows that this passage bears specially the rhetorical cast of the book. What, however, is to be taken literally is that the dogmatizing love of system which scorns to assign its place to difference, but rather excludes all difference, plainly suppresses, as much as it can, the living knowledge of God, and changes doctrine into a dead letter. A rule so rigid that it condemns everything of another shade, crushes out productiveness. As this alone contains living knowledge of God, the system itself must become dead. This is the history of the Roman Catholic system in contrast to the Protestant. From this point of view the rise of the Evangelical Church was simply to rescue its own productiveness from fellowship with such a rule. My praise of the receptivity of ancient Rome for strange worship is also to be taken seriously. It involved an acknowledgment of the narrowness and oneness of each individualized Polytheism, and the desire to free the religious need from the limits of political forms. Now these two things were not only praiseworthy in themselves, but were much more favourable to the spread of Christianity than heresy hunting, however well meant, could ever be for its establishment and preservation.

(11) Page 65.—In the "Glaubenslehre," also § 8, note 1, I have declared myself against the opinion that idolatry, embracing, according to the somewhat perspective usage of the Holy Scriptures, all kinds of Polytheism, has arisen from fear. There, however, I wished to show that, in essence, the lower and the higher stages of religion were alike, which could not be if the former arose from fear and the latter did not. There I am dealing with the conception that piety generally has had its source in fear. Despite the somewhat variable use of ἔσθενσιον, the proof here given in general would apply to the particular instance, for it could not be said of the Greek and Roman Polytheists that their faith in the gods would have been extinct if, in the courageous use of life, they had shaken off all fear. Similarly, what is said there may here be applied generally, for if fear is not in some way a perversion of love, it can only regard its object as malevolent. Where then higher beings are not worshipped or rather entreated as bad, the motive cannot be fear entirely separated from love. Hence it remains true that in all religions from the beginning love is operative, and all growth towards perfection is simply a progressive purification of love.

(12) Page 65.—It should hardly be necessary to justify the use of the expression World-Spirit where I wish to indicate the object of pious adoration in a way that would include all different forms and stages of religion. In particular, I do not believe it can be said with justice that, by this choice of expression, I have sacrificed the interests of the most perfect form of religion to the inferior. On the contrary, I believe, not only that it is a perfectly Christian name for the Highest Being, but that the expression could only have arisen on Monotheistic soil, and is as free from Jewish Particularism as from the incompleteness of the Mohammedan Monotheism which I have attempted to specify in the "Glaubenslehre," § 8, 4. No one will confuse it with World-Soul. It neither expresses reciprocal action between the World and the Highest Being, nor any kind of independence of the World from Him. I believe therefore that Christian authors are justified in using the term, even though it has not directly proceeded from the special standpoint of Christianity.

(13) Page 71.—In my "Glaubenslehre," the Introduction of which contains the outlines of what I take to be the philosophy of religion, and therefore has many points of contact with this book, my chief division was into what I have called the aesthetic and the teleological form. Here another ground of classification seems to be assumed. The peculiar world of religion seems to be the mind, regarded as an individual thing having one or more things standing over against it—the mind in our sphere and at our stage of culture. In the same way on the other side, as there indicated, the world of religion may be external nature. Two things there rigidly distinguished seem here to be both ascribed to the religion of the mind, for whether the
active state be referred to the passive, or the passive to the active, all religious emotions are states of mind. Hence the distinction that is here regarded as the higher, is there quite overlooked. By a natural religion, however, I do not mean that religious emotions can come to man through contemplation of the external world. This contemplation is exalted by speculative natural science, which, however, always remains science, and only gives rise to religious emotions in proportion as the soul is conscious of itself in the contemplation, and therefore again by the mental state. In the same way they arise from the immediate relation of nature to our life and existence, only in proportion to its effect upon our mood at any moment, and therefore, again from the mental state. The classification given in the "Glaubenslehre" therefore remains. The religious emotions, whether from nature or the historical life, have all this two-fold form. If the influence of the contemplation of nature is referred to the soul and its activities and its laws, it has a teleological or ethical character; if it is referred to nature, it has an aesthetic character.

Page 72.—This is only to be taken as an application of the narrative, not as the author’s own opinion. I believe it can be shown that the narrative necessarily implies that neither can man come to a consciousness of God, nor can he form general ideas, until he has gained a consciousness of the species, of his subordination as an individual in it and his difference from it. And, it appears as clearly, that neither the consciousness of the Highest Being, nor the endeavour to order the world for itself can be quite lost to the soul till the consciousness of the species has quite vanished.

I will here also explain two passages not specially marked in the text. On page 79 humility, formerly given as a natural form of religious emotion, is spoken of as if it were opposed to an exalted feeling of personal existence, and condition, similarly depicted as natural and essential to piety, as if it must be changed to joyful self-sufficiency. Now, I do not consider that a contradiction, for I think that all pious emotions both exalt and debase. Even in Christianity that spreads itself only by awaking the emotions that debase, penitence is quenched in the consciousness of the divine forgiveness. The words “satisfy thyself with my mercy,” express just that very joyful self-sufficiency here meant. The opposite feeling to humility, the feeling that in each one the whole of humanity lives and works is just the consciousness to which the Christian of all men should raise. He should feel that all believers form a living organic whole, wherein not only is each member, as Paul puts it, indispensable to all the others. But each one presupposes the characteristic activity of all the others.

Further, when it is said that a man who has thus combined both forms of emotion needs no mediator any more, but can himself be a mediator for many, this statement is only to be taken in the limited meaning indicated by earlier expositions, namely, each man has not in himself the right key for understanding all men. To almost everyone much is so alien that he can only acknowledge it when he finds it in a form more akin to himself or linked to something else that has a special value for him. In this sense, therefore, those who unite the most alien elements with those most acknowledged, mediate an understanding. Chiefly in that feeling which is in contrast to humility, the self-consciousness advances to such transparency and accuracy that the most distant ceases to appear strange and ceases to repel. But this feeling will be purest when all human limits are seen in Him from whom all limitation was banished. Hence there is here no derogation from the higher mediatorialship of the Redeemer.

Page 85.—Without wishing to retract anything from the leading position in this Speech, which is that all higher feelings belong to religion, or to deny that single actions should not proceed directly from stimulus of single feelings, I would say that this passage is specially applicable only to the ethics of that time, to Kant and Fichte, and particularly Kant. So long as ethics adhered to the imperative method so rigidly followed in those systems, feelings could find no place in morals, for there could not be a command, thou shalt have this or that feeling. Such a system should logically say of them all only what has been said of friendship, that man must have no time to begin it or to cherish it. But ethics should not be restricted to the narrow imperative form. It should assign to these feelings their place in the human soul. It should also acknowledge their ethical worth, not as something that can or ought to be made for some purpose and for which guidance is given in morals, but as a free, natural function of the higher life in close connection with the higher maxims and modes of acting. Ethics would then so far embrace religion, just as a presentation of religion would embrace ethics, yet both would not be on that account one and the same.

Page 86.—The expression here employed that miracle is only the religious name for event, and that all that happens is miracle might easily be suspected of being a practical denial of the miraculous, for if everything is a miracle then nothing is. This stands in close connection with the explanations given in the "Glaubenslehre." § 14 note, § 34, 2, 3 and § 47. If the reference of an event to the Divine
omnipotence and the contemplation of it in its natural connection do not exclude one another but may be parallel, which view is first taken depends upon the direction of the attention. Where the bearing of an event on our aims most interests us, and the examination of the connection goes too much into details, the divine provision will be least observed and the course of nature best. But which of the two views will most satisfy us depends on the one side, on how certain we are that we have grasped the full meaning of the event, so that we can say with some assurance that this is willed of God, and on the other how deeply we can penetrate into the natural connection. All this is mere subjective difference. Hence it is plainly true that all the events that most awake religious attention, and in which at the same time the natural connection is most hidden, are most regarded as miracle. Yet it is equally true that in themselves and in respect of the divine causality all events alike are miracle. As in the expositions of the "Glaubenslehre," though absolute miracle is rejected, the religious interest in the miraculous is acknowledged and guarded, so here I merely seek to exhibit miracle in its purity and to remove all foreign ingredients which are more akin to stupid amazement than to the joyful anticipation of a higher meaning.

(17) Page 90.—It is difficult to treat an idea like the effects of grace, which is scarcely at all current except in a peculiarly Christian form, in such a general way as to embrace everything analogous to be found in other religious forms. To it belongs all that distinguishes a human being as a special favourite of the gods. Revelation is more receptivity, inspiration more productivity. Now both are combined in the idea of grace, and pious persons are always characterized by both. In what follows, however, the expression entrance of the world into man is substituted for revelation, and the original outgoing of man into the world for inspiration. The latter will admit of little doubt, for every inspiration must go forth and accomplish something in the world, and everything original must be at least occasioned from without, and for the most part is regarded as inspiration. The former also is in agreement with the preceding explanation of revelation, and because here it was necessary to make it general it could not otherwise be conceived. Yet it may easily be charged to it that, for the sake of the less perfect forms of religion, it puts the Christian in the background. But it is not to be overlooked that the idea of the Deity does not enter our consciousness except along with the idea of the World, and that this entrance is looked upon religiously, not speculatively, is shown sufficiently further on.

(18) Page 94.—By what is said in my "Glaubenslehre," § 3-5, I trust that what is here said, and especially the statement that all pious emotions exhibit through feeling the immediate presence of God in us, may be set in a clearer light. It is hardly necessary to remind you that the existence of God generally can only be active, and as there can be no passive existence of God, the divine activity upon any object is the divine existence in respect of that object. It may, however, require to be explained why I represent the unity of our being in contrast to the multiplicity of function, as the divine in us. And you may ask why I say of this unity that it appears in the emotions of piety, seeing it can be shown from other manifestations also that self-consciousness is but a single function. In respect of the former the divine in us must be that in which the capacity to be conscious of God has its seat. Even were the criticisms just, it might still be the divine that is awakened in us in the pious emotions, and that is here the main point. For the rest, the unity of our being cannot, certainly, appear by itself, for it is absolutely inward. Most immediately it appears in the self-consciousness, in so far as single references are in the background. On the other hand, when references to single things are most prominent, the self-consciousness then most appears as a single function.

(19) Page 95.—This exposition also, it is hoped, will be made clearer and at the same time be completed by what is said in the "Glaubenslehre," especially in § 8, note 2. As everyone can compare them, it is not necessary for me to enter on a defence of myself against the supposition—I would not willingly call it accusation—which men whom I greatly honour, and some of whom have already gone hence, have drawn from this Speech. For myself I am supposed to prefer the impersonal form of thinking of the Highest Being, and this has been called now my atheism and again my Spinozism. I, however, thought that it is truly Christian to seek for piety everywhere, and to acknowledge it under every form. I find, at least, that Christ enjoined this upon his disciples, and that Paul obeyed not only among the Jews and the Proselytes, but among the Heathen at Athens. When I had said in all simplicity, that it is still not indifferent whether one does not acquire or quite rejects a definite form of representing the Highest Being, and thereby obstructs generally the growth of his piety, I did not think it necessary to protest further against all consequences. I did not remember how often a person going straightforward seems to be going to the left to a person going to the right. But none who reflect on the little that is said about pantheism will suspect me of any materialistic pantheism. And if any one look at it rightly, he will find that, on
the one side, every one must recognize it as an almost absolute necessity for the highest stage of piety to acquire the conception of a personal God, and on the other he will recognize the essential imperfection in the conception of a personality of the Highest Being, nay, how hazardous it is, if it is not most carefully kept pure. The conception is necessary whenever one would interpret to himself or to others immediate religious emotions, or whenever the heart has immediate intercourse with the Highest Being. Yet the profoundest of the church fathers have ever sought to purify the idea. Were the definite expressions they have used to clear away what is human and limited in the form of personality put together, it would be as easy to say that they denied personality to God as that they ascribed it to Him. As it is so difficult to think of a personality as truly infinite and incapable of suffering, a great distinction should be drawn between a personal God and a living God. The latter idea alone distinguishes from materialistic pantheism and atheistic blind necessity. Within that limit any further wavering in respect of personality must be left to the representative imagination and the dialectic conscience, and where the pious sense exists, they will guard each other. Does the former fashion a too human personality, the latter restrains by exhibiting the doubtful consequences; does the latter limit the representation too much by negative formulas, the former knows how to suit it to its need. I was specially concerned to show that, if one form of the conception does not in itself exclude all piety, the other as little necessarily includes it. How many men are there in whose lives piety has little weight and influence, for whom this conception of personality is indispensable as a general supplement to their chain of causality which on both sides is broken off; and how many, on the other hand, show the deepest piety who, in what they say of the Highest Being, have never rightly developed the idea of personality!

(20) Page 99.—This passage is different from the former edition. Partially the statement that morality generally cannot be manipulated, though right in the connection, seemed to require closer definition if there was not to be misunderstanding; partly the whole view seemed to me only rightly completed by the addition that freedom and morality would be endangered by the prospect of divine recompense. In the strife on this point, especially as it is carried on between the Kantians and the Eudaïmists, the great difference between presenting divine recompense as an inducement and using it theoretically to explain the order of the world has very often been overlooked. The former is an immoral and therefore specially an unchristian procedure, and is never employed by true heralds of Christianity and has no place in the Scriptures; the other is natural and necessary, for it alone shows how the divine law extends over the whole nature of man, and so far from causing a rift in human nature, it most fully guards its unity. But this explanation will be very different in proportion as love of truth and desire of knowledge are free from all foreign ingredients. It is hardly to be denied that the demands of self-love will most claim arbitrariness for the divine recompense, and as arbitrariness can only have its seat in personality, it will be accompanied by the narrowest conceptions of the divine personality.

(21) Page 101.—This passage has met very much the same fate as the passage which treated of the personality of God. It was also directed against narrow and impure conceptions and it has raised the same misunderstandings. I am supposed to disparage the hope of immortality in the usual sense of the word, representing it as a weakness and contending against it. But this was not the place to declare myself in respect of the truth of the matter, or to offer the view of it which I, as a Christian, hold. This will be found in the second part of my "Glaubenslehre," and both passages should supplement each other. There I had only to answer the question whether this hope was so essential a to a pious direction of the mind that the two stood or fell together. What could I do but answer in the negative, seeing it is now usually accepted that the people of the old Covenant did not, in earlier times, have this hope, and seeing also that it is easy to show that, in the state of pious emotion, the soul is rather absorbed in the present moment than directed towards the future? Only it appears hard that this Speech should deduce not doubtfully the hope so widely diffused among the noblest men of a restoration of the individual life not again to be interrupted, from the lowest stage of self-love, seeing it might as well have been ascribed to the interest of love in the beloved objects. All the forms under which the hope of immortality can present itself as the highest self-consciousness of the spirit being before me, just in contrast to the opponents of the faith it seemed to me natural and necessary to utter the warning that any particular way of conceiving immortality and especially that which has unmistakable traces of a lower interest hidden behind it, is not to be confused with the reality. I thus sought to prepare for grasping the question, not as it is entirely limited to personality or to a self-consciousness chained to single affinities, but as it is natural in one in whom personal interest is purified by subordination to a self-consciousness
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that is ennobled by the consciousness of the human race and of human nature. On the other side, in order to avoid endless and widespread explanations, it was necessary to make the opponents of religion observe that there could be no religious discussion of this matter except among those who have already cultivated in themselves the higher life, given by true piety, which is worthy to conquer death. If I am somewhat severe on the self-deception of a mean way of thinking and feeling, which is proud that it can comprehend immortality and that it is guided by the accompanying hope and fear, I can only say in self-defence that there is nothing of mere rhetoric in it, but that it has always been with me a very strong feeling. I desire no more than that each man, if he would test his piety, should see, not merely, as Plato says, that souls appear before the judges of the Underworld stripped of all alien ornament conferred by the external relations of life, but, laying aside these claims to endless existence and considering himself just as he is, that he then decide whether these claims are anything more than the titles of lands, never possessed and never to be possessed, wherewith the great ones of the earth often think they must adorn themselves. If, thus stripped, he still find that that eternal life is with him to which the end of this Speech points, he will readily understand what I am aiming at in my presentation of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the parallel between the two ideas of God and immortality in respect of the different ways of conception here indicated, is not to be overlooked. The most anthropomorphic view of God usually presupposes a morally corrupt consciousness, and the same holds of such a conception of immortality as pictures the Elysian fields as just a more beautiful and wider earth. As there is a great difference between inability to think of God as in this way personal and the inability to think of a living God at all, so there is between one who does not hold such a sensuous conception of immortality and one who does not hope for any immortality. As we call everyone pious who believes in a living God, so without excluding any kind or manner we would hold the same of those who believe in an eternal life of the spirit.

THIRD SPEECH

THE CULTIVATION OF RELIGION

As I myself have willingly confessed, the endeavour to make proselytes from unbelievers is deep rooted in the character of religion. Yet that is not what now urges me to speak to you of the cultivation of man for this noble capacity. For this cultivation we believers know of only one means—the free expression and communication of religion. When religion moves in a man with all its native force, when it carries every faculty of his spirit imperiously along in the stream of its impulse, we expect it to penetrate into the hearts of all who live and breathe within its influence. Every corresponding element being stirred by this life-giving power, they should attain a consciousness of their existence, and the attentive ear should be gladdened by an answering note of kindred sound. Where the pious person fails to awake a life like his by the natural expression of his own life, he will despise nobly every strange charm, every exercise of force, in the calm conviction that the time has not yet come for anything congenial to appear.

The unsuccessful issue is not new to any of us. How often have I struck up the music of my religion, seeking to move the bystanders! Beginning with single soft notes, I have soon been swept on by youthful impetuosity to the fullest harmony of the religious feelings. But nothing stirred, nothing answered in the hearers. I have entrusted these words to a larger and more versatile