Kant on Grace: A Reply to His Critics

It has become almost a commonplace in theological circles that despite the Augustinian echoes sounded by his doctrine of radical evil and his discussion of the need for divine forgiveness in his *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, Kant's understanding of salvation remains through and through Pelagian. Such was the verdict of Karl Barth;[1] more recently, Gordon E. Michalson has made the charge that, "Kant's conception of grace and divine aid reintroduces an obviously Pelagian element based on human effort and merit."[2] Michalson has noted further that "if the implicit point of a Kantian view of morality and religion is to equate salvation with the individual achievement of virtue, then there seems to be little role left for a heteronomous grace or divine act to play."[3] And in a similar vein, Nicholas Wolterstorff has argued that on Kant's scheme God is morally required to forgive the person who has altered her fundamental maxim for the good; salvation is thus understood in terms of a system of rights--that is, it is something that the moral individual can *expect* as that which is her due. It is something that she *merits.* Wolterstorff reads Kant's project as "probing the implications of our human rights and obligations," and argues that

> If we have a moral claim on someone's doing something, then for that person to do that is not for the person to act graciously, but for the person to grant what is due to us, it is to act justly, not graciously. . . . Thus Kant cannot have it both ways: he cannot hold that we can expect God's forgiveness, since God's failure to forgive would violate the moral order of rights and obligations, and also hold that God's granting forgiveness is an act of grace on God's part. . . . God must be understood on the Kantian scheme as *required* to forgive. Of course this means that a gap begins to open between Christianity, on the one hand, and Kant's rational religion, on the other.[4]

Against those who would dismiss Kant's project on the grounds that it is Pelagian, I hope to show that an analysis of the deep structure of Kant's views on divine justice and grace shows them not to conflict with an authentically Christian understanding of these concepts. To the contrary, Kant's analysis of them helps us to understand the implications of the Christian understanding of grace. An unfolding of these implications will also uncover the intrinsic relations that must hold between God's justice and his grace.

In the course of my argument I will show that Kant works with at least three different concepts of grace, all of them operating on distinct levels. Getting clear on what these concepts are and how they operate is of decisive significance if we are to understand correctly Kant's stand on divine aid. Accordingly, the paper will be organized into three parts. In my first section I deal with Kant's general conception of grace. An in-depth analysis of this most general notion should reveal why Kant is not Pelagian. In the second part of the paper I identify two more particular concepts of grace. While the general description still applies to both of them, they are distinguishable from one another in important ways. Not taking account of the differences between the two will make it very difficult to understand Kant's project in the *Religion* coherently. In fact, it is because the differences between the two concepts have been ignored that commentators such as Gordon Michalson have principally viewed the *Religion* as a failed attempt to weave together two world views, that of Bible and that of the Enlightenment. While I distinguish between these two concepts in my second section, there I focus on the one which I identify as *practically* useful. The third section is devoted to an investigation of Kant's understanding of the last of these concepts.

I. Kant's General Concept of Grace

The charge that Kant's understanding of religion is Pelagian rests on two assumptions. The first is that Kant's explication of the highest good as happiness in proportion to virtue, as well as his idea of worthiness to be happy, commits him to the idea that happiness is the *reward* of virtue. Insofar as the Christian concept of salvation is intrinsically bound up with that of the happiness of the individual, it is then very easy to think of salvation *qua* happiness as something that is acquired by the individual through her own *merit.* Wolterstorff, for instance, identifies Kant's understanding of salvation with an endless increase in happiness[5] and then faults him for having made divine forgiveness, a condition of salvation given our fallen state, itself conditional upon having a good will.[6] It then follows that for Kant salvation (as an endless increase in happiness) is something that we acquire through merit.

The second assumption combines with the first to make the charge of Kant's Pelagianism absolutely inevitable: for Kant the responsibility for a change in one's fundamental disposition rests ultimately with the free will itself. That Kant held to this is no doubt true. Nevertheless, we need to assess exactly how this assertion functions once we combine it with a renewed understanding of Kant's concept of grace. Only then will we be in a position to render a final verdict. Key to a resolution of the issue is the recognition that it is not *our* adoption of a good disposition that is the condition of *God's action upon us,* that is, his graciousness towards us, but that rather, our adoption of such a disposition is the condition of *our ability to be receptive of and to recognize God's grace,* which is ever present. No doubt Kant's language on this score is not completely uniform. Nevertheless, an analysis of the deep structure governing Kant's thinking will reveal that this makes the most sense out of his argument.

To elucidate this point, we must look into the character and aims of the holy will. Kant's remark in the *Foundations* that a perfectly good will "can be determined to act only through the conception of the good" and that "the volition itself [of the holy will] is

necessarily in unison with the law," is well known.[7] Because the holy will has no ends that do not of themselves *necessarily* coincide with the moral law, its ends can only be what Kant calls objective ends. The rational being is just such an "objective end, that is, a being whose existence in itself is an end."[8] Now it follows that if the ends of the holy will have to do with the absolute worth it assigns to the rational being, the well being of *all* rational creatures must be its end. This well being of the rational being concerns its "happiness" just in case that which constitutes its happiness does not conflict with the moral law. Precisely because such a holy will wills only the moral well-being and happiness of *all* rational creatures, its primary characteristic is that of universality; indeed, it is this universality that constitutes its holiness.

Since a holy will is principally characterized by such universality, and we must think of God as possessing such a holy will, divine punishment must first and foremost be conceived as the thwarting of the aims of finite rational creatures when their maxims do not have as their ground the moral law, i.e., when their ends and desires are such that their realization either entails the expense of other rational agents, or when they simply do not take into account the well being of others. The concept of happiness in *proportion* to virtue thus principally amounts to the limitation of the ends of the will that does not respect or take into account the autonomy and God-given right to happiness of all rational creatures. An implication of the notion that the holy will necessarily has the moral perfection and happiness of all rational creatures as its end is that punishment must have an educative function: through it the finite but rational self is taught to value moral incentives over those that are merely subjective in nature.

Related to this idea is Kant's conviction, noted in the text of the Danziger lectures on religion, that divine justice is punitive and *not* remunerative. While God punishes out of his justice, whatever good we receive from Him is *unmerited* grace. Happiness cannot be thought of as *merited,* something that we *earn* through our virtuous actions. Several

passages from Kant's lectures on religion are noteworthy in this regard. In the *Religionslehre Politz* Kant notes that

> God's justice is usually divided into a *justitiam remunerativam et punitivam,* according as God punishes evil and rewards good. But the rewards God bestows on us proceed not from his justice but from his benevolence. For if they came to us from justice, then there would be no *premia gratuita*, but rather we would have to possess some right to demand them, and God would have to be bound to give them to us. Justice gives nothing gratuitously; it gives to each only the *merited* reward. But even if we unceasingly observe all moral laws, we can never do more than is our duty; hence we can never expect rewards from God's justice.[9]

In the *Danziger Rationaltheologie,* Kant remarks further that "what good we receive from [God] is all unmerited grace. . . . Justice is a limitation of loving kindness. . . . Therefore justice does not reward, but alone punishes."[10] Happiness cannot be thought of as something we merit for two reasons. First, we cannot demand or expect a reward from God for our righteous actions, since to act righteously is our duty and responsibility; it is that which we *owe*. To think otherwise is to think of ourselves as special and as beyond the purview of the bindingness of the moral law, such that if we act in accordance with the moral law, it is out of our own "graciousness," and that for this reason something is owed to us. This is nothing other than unadulterated *self-conceit;* i.e., the belief that being special and thus beyond the bindingness of the moral law, we can act as if we are in a position to bargain with God. In this way we expect God to give us something (i.e., happiness) in return for the conformity of our actions with legality. Second, God *freely* wills the happiness of *all* rational beings. In this universal graciousness consists the holiness of his will. As such, happiness is a gift that *cannot* be earned. To strive for

holiness is thus to strive to conform one's will to the universal will of God through the progressive recognition that God loves *all* his sons and daughters equally, willing the happiness of all.[11] Kant's notion of *worthiness* to be happy, associated as it is with a progress towards holiness, cannot be thought of as an acquisition of merit. This is noted in the *Praktische Philosophie Powalski:* worthiness to be happy is not a merit, and here the concept of remuneration is spoken of in terms of *freely* given reward.[12]

From a theological perspective, this means that Kant cannot be accused of Pelagianism, since the happiness that God wills for all of his sons and daughters is *freely* given, and as such stands in the realm of grace. It may be objected that since the volition of the holy will is necessarily in unison with the rational concept of the good and cannot but will the well-being of all rational agents, we cannot say that whatever good God confers on rational agents is *freely* given. This objection, is, however, not significant for our understanding the theological concept of grace for two reasons: (1) it is perfectly intelligible to say that God acts freely in accordance with his nature; when we say this we mean there is no constraint *external* to God which compels him to act in a certain way;[13] (2) more importantly, the upshot of the theological concept of grace has more to do with *our* posture vis à vis God than with the metaphysical subtleties of divine freedom. When we say that grace is freely given, what we mean is that it is not something owed to us in virtue of some special characteristic we possess setting us apart from others, or in virtue of something we *do* making us special. Our actions do not *constrain* God to confer any good upon us or to enter into relation with us. The divine/human relationship is established by God with us *before* any act on our part, and this means that all that we can to is to be *receptive* of God's grace. This is the upshot of Kant's definition of grace in the *Religion:* "But only a capability of receiving, which is all that we, for our part, can credit to ourselves; and a superior's decree conferring a good for which the subordinate possesses nothing but the (moral) receptivity is called grace" (R 70).

One might object that Kant qualifies his understanding of this receptivity with the adjective "moral." At first blush, it seems Kant gives a Pelagian twist to his very definition of grace: a condition attaches to this receptivity, and it concerns something in our power, i.e., whether we chose to be moral or not. If we put this aspect of Kant's definition at the forefront and leave it at that, he will, no doubt, appear Pelagian. But if we search deeper, making connections with Kant's moral philosophy, we will see why a kind of necessity binds our ability to be receptive of grace to our moral state. There is an intrinsic connection between the universality of the moral law, grounded in the absolute worth of *all* rational creatures, and the concept of *unmerited* grace. Only if we think of a holy will as gracious to all rational creatures, and as therefore universal in scope, can we preserve a significant sense of the *unmerited* character of grace. For if God's grace were to extend to only some persons and not to others, this would imply that they are so favored in virtue of some characteristic which separates them out from others not so lucky. Otherwise God's will would be purely arbitrary. However, once this is granted God's grace could no longer be thought of as *unmerited*, since God's favor would really rest on some hidden ground, a characteristic in virtue of which some are special and others not. To believe oneself to belong to such a special class would commit one to believing that God's favor is one's *due,* something owed to oneself in virtue of one's particular characteristics.

The belief in specialness brings with it the idea that one has more worth than others, and implies that one's subjective ends should be given prima facie priority over theirs. Ascribing such priority to the ends of the self, the attitude towards others is that of domination and manipulation. Such an attitude conflicts with the level playing field of Kantian morality, which stipulates that *all* rational agents are of unconditioned worth and are ends in themselves. At its bottom lies self-conceit, itself closely allied with radical evil. On the other hand, willing in accordance with the moral law, God assigns an absolute worth to all rational beings and does not favor some over others. This is the

deep structure of the *unmerited* character of God's grace; we might even say that the moral law, which stipulates the *universality* of the holy will in willing the happiness of all rational wills, is simply its *formal* component. The individual who sets him or herself up as special and as the arbiter of all value (in this way standing in fundamental conflict with the moral law) thus cuts *himself* off from grace. He does so because he cannot bear the unmerited character of this favor, which is given to all. He seeks instead to *constrain* God to recognize in him a special worth, one that he will not grant to others. And it is for this reason that the receptivity of which Kant speaks *must* be a moral one.

This implies that there are analytic connections between our decision to be open to and receptive of God's grace and our wanting the universal moral law to be the supreme incentive for our actions. Only through a revolution in the fundamental maxim of the will, wherein we "put on Christ," are we able to appreciate, and to be receptive to, God's freely given and unmerited favor, since only in recognizing the *universal* character of God's love for all his sons and daughters are we able to understand its unmerited and unconditioned character. In other words, we cannot genuinely appropriate God's freely given favor unless its formal constituent, namely, universality, [finding concrete expression in the moral law] is also understood and valued. Thus the turning from an evil disposition to a good one, which as the "highest condition of grace" (R 109), itself really constitutes our *return* to God's grace, cannot be effected without a real recognition (expressed in maxims of action) of the supreme value of the universal moral law, a law which as unconditioned, is binding upon all rational wills.

Our argument thus far reveals Kant's most general and principal conception of grace. It can be defined simply as "God's unmerited favor," to which the individual can relate both practically and existentially. In what precedes I have shown how this concept relates to the unconditioned worth of all rational beings, and hence, with the moral law. I have not developed it in the way that most commentators do, on the heels of Kant's doctrine of radical evil. This is because this general notion of grace *is not simply* a

response to the problem of radical evil. If it were merely this, the problem of evil would define the contours of that which is needed to solve it, namely grace. But here we see that the opposite is the case: given the close connections between the ability to be receptive of grace and the moral law, radical evil can be defined in terms of a decision not to be receptive of God's grace. It is no doubt true that in the *Religion* Kant extends and develops his concept of grace to take into account the difficulty of radical evil: God's unmerited divine favor also implies divine aid in helping us to overcome the infirmity plaguing our wills. The above discussion serves as an essential propadeutic to an understanding of Kant's subsequent development of the concept of grace as divine aid.

II. Two Concepts of Grace as Divine Aid

Besides his general understanding of grace, Kant works with two other notions. The first of these corresponds to a kind of grace that Kant believes cannot be brought into our practical maxim. It has to do with God's supernatural cooperation in our becoming better persons, that is, with how God may affect the will itself such that its very desires and motives will become different. It is important to note that Kant explicitly does *not* deny the possibility of this kind of assistance, but cautions repeatedly both that its possibility remains inscrutable to us and that furthermore, even if it were posited, on a practical level we wouldn't be able to make use of such a supposition. The second of these corresponds to the kind of divine aid which must be *laid hold* of by the person. It differs from the first in that such aid does not alter a person's will at the outset, but is, rather, some historical occurence--a person or situation--to which the person must *respond* in some way. Only after the practical and existential import of the person or situation has been assessed and interiorized by the individual can it affect a person's character. It will be the purpose of this section to sort through these two understandings of grace.

The failure to distinguish between these two concepts of grace in Kant has resulted in a great deal of confusion about what Kant is up to. For instance, several commentators have faulted Kant for never having explained how a revolution in one's cast of mind, where one turns from evil to good, is possible. Michalson, for instance, complains that,

> Kant's solution . . . leaves basically unaddressed the problem causing all the difficulty in the first place--the problem, that is, of how the fallen agent is to will its way upwards again. . . . He has concluded by emphasizing self-reliance above belief in outside aid, whereas the difficulty posed by the second part of the antinomy concerns the efficacy of self-reliance if the moral agent still stands in the power of the evil principle and finds in himself no capacity adequate for future improvement.[14]

Noting that according to Kant we must become *worthy* to receive grace, and that this worthiness already presupposes a revolution in one's cast of mind, he makes the pithy statement that "the element of grace here is thus not only beside the point-it is, as it were, after the fact."[15] Similarly, Phil Quinn observes that according to Kant "we can become morally better persons only if we receive divine assistance, and we will receive divine assistance only we make ourselves worthy of it."[16] If this is Kant's position, it no doubt involves agents in a practical regress, one that makes it impossible for our whole project of becoming morally better to get off the ground. Since we can only make ourselves worthy of divine assistance by becoming morally better, while we cannot become morally better without divine assistance, we would never be able to begin a journey in virtue.

An explanation of the very change in the fundamental disposition itself in terms of divine activity implies that God's action affects the most fundamental desires of the

person, including the person's desires about the kinds of desires he or she wants to have. This means nothing less than God changing the whole character of the person. Kant does not deny that God may have such an effect on persons, and he even tells us that this kind of action on God's part, may, for all we know, be able to coexist side by side with freedom.[17] Yet he correctly insists that we cannot make any practical use of such an idea. We cannot, because this kind of action of God bypasses the personhood of the agent. It is not done in response to anything the agent wants or does. If it were, then one might say that the agent already had the appropriate sorts of desires about the kind of person he or she wanted to become. One could then argue that the fundamental maxim had already been changed, and that divine aid is, as Michalson puts it, is after the fact. So if we want to explain the fundamental change at the level that Michalson wants it to be explained--the level at which a change in one's most basic desires concerning the very kind of person one desires to become is effected--we would then have to say that God's action precedes every decision on our part. Note this means that for all practical purposes there is no principle of personal identity between the old individual and the new one whose desires have been altered. Nothing--no desire of the individual before conversion--plays a role in the new person he is to become. On this understanding there is nothing at all the individual does, for this concept of God's action upon us is not presented in such a way that we may *respond* to it. It completely bypasses the individual as a locus of action and response. Kant then, has very good reasons for noting that we cannot really *do* anything with such an understanding of grace--that from a practical and existential standpoint, it is as were, beside the point.

Kant tells us not only that we can have no insight into the possibility of God's role in restoring the disposition (R 46), but that further, the answer to such a question cannot be of any practical use, "for the employment of this idea would presuppose a rule concerning the good which (for a particular end) we ourselves must *do* in order to accomplish something, whereas to await a work of grace means exactly the opposite,

namely, that the good (the morally good) is not our deed but the deed of another being, and that we therefore can *achieve* it only by *doing nothing,* which contradicts itself" (R 48-49). In other words, in order for the idea of *this* understanding of grace (that of God's supernatural action on the soul) to be of any practical use, we would have to able to incorporate it into a rule of conduct. However, since the very notion of grace concerns God's action and not our own, there is no way that we could possibly incorporate this concept into our practical maxims. Even the maxim of doing nothing (for instance, as recommended by quietism) cannot in any wise affect God's action upon us, and to think that it might is a contradiction, since then it is no longer God's grace of which we speak, but of our own methods for being receptive to God's favor. Moreover, as Kant notes, it is impossible to define works of grace theoretically. We have no way of distinguishing between works of God's grace and inner natural effects, for our "concept of cause and effect cannot be extended beyond matters of experience, and hence beyond nature" (R 48).

On the other hand Kant works with yet another understanding of grace and divine aid which does not bypass the individual as a locus of action and response. Kant notes that a person

> becomes good or evil, according to whether he adopts or does not adopt into his maxim the incentives which this predisposition carries with it ([an act] which must be left wholly to his own free choice). Granted that some supernatural cooperation may be necessary to his becoming good, or to his becoming better, yet, whether this cooperation consists merely in the abatement of hindrances or indeed in positive assistance, man must first make himself worthy to receive it, and must *lay hold* of this aid (which is no small matter)--that is, he must adopt his positive increase of power into

> his maxim, for only thus can good be imputed to him and he be known as a good man. (R 40)

This understanding of grace is one that can play a role in an individual's practical and existential situation. Note that right before Kant introduces the concept of divine aid he makes mention of the free choice of the individual. This free choice must be presupposed if the concept of grace is not to be one that ignores the agent *qua* agent. For practical purposes we must think of the revolution in our cast of mind as something that we must *ourselves* effect. Yet the fact that on such a practical level it is the individual who must *do* something, i.e., reverse the fundamental ground of his or her maxims, in no way vitiates the need for divine aid. As Allen Wood so aptly notes, "a good disposition . . . is the subjective condition for the possibility of the *pursuit* of moral perfection. [. . .] when Kant speaks of the good man's highest maxim as 'the maxim of holiness of disposition,' he is not referring to the maxim of a will which is itself holy, but to a maxim of 'incessant counteraction' against man's propensity to evil.'[18] In exchanging the evil disposition for a good one, the individual has merely begun the journey towards holiness. The residual consequences of the propensity to evil will still haunt the person, and growth in virtue will only be achieved through an incessant counteracting of these effects. In the context of such a battle, in particular one in which the human will has been weakened through the effects of the propensity to evil, divine aid becomes a crucial component enabling the agent to gain the upper hand in his or her struggle towards virtue.

The concept of divine aid can be practically useful only to a person in which such a revolution has already taken place, for only the individual who is fully aware of the *worth* of a good will, and who thereby actively seeks to conform his own will to such an idea, can *value* the reassurance that God will strengthen and help her in her efforts to attain this goal, and as such, *lay hold* of this aid. As Kant notes, this is no small matter. For to lay hold of this aid we must really want to become better persons, and this in turn

means that we want the moral law to be the supreme incentive to our will. However, in order for us to *really* want this, we must have already, in some sense, adopted the maxim of a good will. Whatever grace may help us to *become* better must be adopted by us into our maxim, that is, we must be receptive to it, but such receptivity is our own free action. The ability to be receptive to grace already presupposes that it is valued, for only when it is valued will a person *want to lay hold of it.* Thus, from a practical point of view, Kant's insistence that a change in cast of mind must precede the hope of supernatural assistance makes sense.

a. Kant's Remarkable Antinomy

With this in mind, we are in a better position to understand Kant's resolution of the "remarkable antinomy of human reason" respecting the conditions of our salvation. Kant describes this antinomy in the following way:

> Saving faith involves two elements, upon which hope of salvation is conditioned, the one having reference to what man himself cannot accomplish, namely, undoing lawfully (before a divine judge) actions which he has performed, the other to what he himself can and ought to do, that is, leading a new life conformable to his duty. The first is the faith in an atonement (reparation for his debt, redemption, reconciliation with God); the second, the faith that we can become well-pleasing to God through a good course of life in the future. Both conditions constitute one faith and necessarily belong together. Yet we can comprehend the necessity of their union only by assuming that one can be derived from the other, that is, either that the faith in the absolution from the debt resting upon us will bring forth good-life conduct, or else that the genuine and active disposition ever to pursue a good course of life will engender the

> faith in such absolution according to the law of morally operating causes. (R 106-107)

The antinomy is constructed in accordance with Kant's familiar pattern: both the thesis and the antithesis are shown to provide valid arguments leading to contradictory conclusions, and the antinomy is resolved by distinguishing between transcendent and immanent spheres of applicability. The thesis that moral faith must take precedence over the historical knowledge of the atonement emphasizes that which is in our power. As such it relates to what is immanent and understandable by us. On the other hand, the antithesis that "faith in a merit not his own, whereby he is reconciled with God, must precede every effort to good works" (R 108), has to do with the speculative issue of God's relation to human beings. Insofar as the first term of this relation transcends all concepts applicable to possible experience, the speculative question of this relation is beyond the capacity of our reason.

It is important to note that Kant does not deny the *possible* validity of that part of the antinomy which calls for a transcendent resolution. The antithesis is connected with the problem of the need for a vicarious atonement for our transgressions. Such an atonement is necessary because we cannot possibly repay the debt of sins; even if we adopt a good disposition and persevere in it, this does not change the fact that we started from evil. As Kant notes, we cannot regard the fact the we incur no new debts subsequent to our change of heart as equivalent to our having discharged our old ones. Furthermore, we cannot think of ourselves as acquiring surplus merit though our subsequent good behavior, since it is always our duty "to do all the good that lies within [our] power" (R 66).

As Kant presents it, the antithesis of the antinomy contains the idea that if divine justice is not satisfied, an individual will be unable to change his or her fundamental disposition. He asks, if a person "cannot regard justice, which he has provoked against

himself, as satisfied through atonement by another, and cannot regard himself reborn, so to speak, through this faith and so for the first time able to enter upon a new course of life--and this would follow from his union with the good principle--upon what is he to base his hope of becoming a man pleasing to God?" (R 108). If our freedom has been compromised through our adoption of a fundamentally evil maxim, how can the bonds of the evil principle reigning over us be broken, so that we can thereupon enter upon a good course of life? This part of the antinomy concerns the conditions of the possibility of our *turning* from evil to good, or of the revolution in our cast of character. Insofar as these conditions of possibility *precede* all our own activity, they go beyond the limits of possible experience. Moreover, issues respecting the relationship between God and creatures transcend the speculative use of our powers. The problem of whether a merit not our own must be accredited to us before we can undertake the journey towards holiness is a speculative and theoretical issue, one that is beyond the purview of what reason can tell us, that is, it transcends all our concepts. It has to do with the divine supplementation of our powers of freedom through such a merit, one which allows us to turn from evil to good. Thus Kant notes that the contradiction generated by this antinomy "cannot be resolved through insight into the causal determination of the freedom of the human being, i.e., into the causes which bring it about that a man become good or bad; hence, it cannot be resolved theoretically, for it is a question wholly transcending the speculative use of our powers" (R 108). As such, Kant seems to remain *agnostic* regarding the need for a vicarious atonement.[19] This leaves him free to concentrate on those features of the antinomy having to do with the practical and existential, that is, on what we ourselves must do to undertake the journey towards holiness. This way of approaching the problem amounts to "cutting the knot (by means of a practical maxim) instead of disentangling it (theoretically). . . " (R 109).[20]

It is important to get straight on the exact nature of the antinomy if we are going to correctly understand Kant's argument for the thesis. Phil Quinn, for instance, describes

Kant's antinomy as consisting of "an argument for the conclusion that faith in divine atonement must precede good works and another argument, which is supposed to be equally strong, for the conclusion that good works must precede faith in divine atonement."[21] This is a misleading presentation of the antinomy, one which loses sight of the upshot of Kant's argument. Kant's question is not whether *good works* must precede faith, but rather, whether a *revolution* in one's cast of character must be the ground of a moral faith in what God has done for us. Does one's character ground a moral faith, or does faith in what God has done for us produce a good disposition and the good life conduct that follows from it? He answers that while all persons would gladly have such an atonement applied to themselves, no reasonable person can believe that the mere acceptance of a theoretical article of faith will annihilate guilt at its very root and produce good life conduct in the future. The mere *wish* to become a better person, manifesting itself in the acceptance of this theoretical article of faith, remains but empty longing unless it is accompanied by a *practical maxim of action*.

Such a practical maxim of action should not be confused with "good works," since good works are, rather, its effects. Just as to attempt to extirpate vices one by one while leaving undisturbed their common root is not the same as effecting a *revolution* in one's cast of character, "good works" without a thoroughgoing reversal of one's fundamental maxim merely amount to conforming to the letter of the law, and not to its spirit, leaving the heart unchanged. To think that one can go about reforming the fundamental ground of the will through singular actions is a confusion of cause and effect. Particular actions, being the fruit of a will that is either good or evil, are always merely its concrete expressions, and it is a misunderstanding to believe that by merely changing *particular actions,* the fundamental maxim of the will will itself be changed.[22] Rather, in order for one to become a good person the root of the will must itself become good, that is, it must adopt good principles, and from them good actions will follow. These principles are themselves expressive of that which is *valued* by a person; this

concept will become important if we are to understand Kant's resolution of the antinomy. This resolution is closely bound up with Kant's insight that the good disposition must *precede both a genuine faith and good works*: lying at the ground of both, it is a condition of their possibility.

According to Kant, the necessity of the union between good life conduct and a faith in an "absolution according to the law of morally operating causes" (R 107) must be thought of in such a way that the change in disposition will bring with it the faith in such absolution, and not the other way around, i.e., that faith in absolution will henceforth bring forth good life conduct. Thus, ". . .the maxim of *action,* which in religious faith (being practical) is the condition, must take the lead, and the maxim of *knowledge,* or theoretical faith, must merely bring about the strengthening and consummation of the maxim of action" (R 109). From a strictly practical but rational perspective, Kant has very good grounds for coming to such a conclusion. No historical revelation concerning what God has done for us can be the *first* direct cause of an individual's salvation, if by this salvation we mean her having become a good person. For it is only the good person that can really wish to be a better one, and for whom a revelation concerning salvation (when this salvation concerns her moral quality of life), can have any meaning whatsoever. Hence Kant notes that "a morally-believing acceptance of [a vicarious atonement] is a determination of the will toward good that already presupposes in man a disposition which is pleasing to God" (R 134). We must therefore already presuppose the desire, even if only in nascent form, to change from an evil course of life to a good one, if the historical revelation concerning what God has done for us (so that we may thereupon enter upon a course of life pleasing to Him) is to have any significance for us whatsoever. Thus the revelation, which must in any case be understood through a priori moral categories, can only strengthen the resolve to become a better person, providing us with the reassurance that if we are serious about our endeavor, God will supply whatever help we need to enter and to persevere in it. Kant notes that to start off with moral knowledge,

> and to let the historical faith which harmonizes with it follow, is not only an act of prudence; it is also our duty to make such knowledge the supreme condition under which alone we can hope to become participants in whatever salvation a religious faith may promise. So true is this that only as warranted by the interpretation which pure religious faith gives to the historical can we hold the latter to be universally binding or are we entitled to allow its validity (for it does contain universally valid teaching); meanwhile the moral believer is ever open to historical faith so far as he finds it furthering the vitality of his pure religious disposition. Only thus does historical faith possess a pure moral worth, because here it is free and not coerced through any threat (for then it can never be honest). (R 170)

Thus the practical maxim henceforth to enter into good life-conduct must come first, for its very adoption is expressive of the desire to enter upon the journey to freedom, and thus to become well-pleasing to God. Only a practical maxim, and not good works (which are its fruits) can fully embody and be expressive of a genuine *desire* to become a better person, a desire that must be presupposed if an individual is to be able to *appropriate* a historical revelation.

In this regard it is significant that Kant dissolves the antinomy as one that is"only apparent" (R 110). He makes this assertion on the grounds that the antinomy is really generated by regarding "the self-same practical idea, taken merely in different references, as two different principles" (R 110). In other words, since the historical revelation must be interpreted in accordance with a priori moral categories, "in the appearance of the God-Man [on earth], it is not that in him which strikes the senses and can be known through experience, but rather the archetype, lying in our reason, that we attribute to him . . . which is really the object of saving faith. . ." (R 110). There is, then, an important

sense in which the archetype of the good lying in our reason precedes, and is a condition of the possibility of, any judgement that a particular historical individual exemplifies this archetype. As such, it is a condition of a genuine or moral faith. Further, since it is the very archetype of goodness lying in our reason which we attribute to this historical individual, a genuine desire to become a follower of such a one must be thought to presuppose a real desire to adhere to what practical reason demands. Insofar as a moral faith in this historical individual presupposes a moral disposition, there are not two different principles, but rather one principle lying at the ground of both good life conduct and a saving faith.

Yet, it is no doubt true that not withstanding the profundity of Kant's move here, the "dissolution" of the antinomy really rests on an equivocation. For the problem generating the antinomy is not simply the issue of whether faith in some historical occurrence must be postulated as a condition of our moral renewal. If the problem were *merely* this, Kant would be entitled to the move he does make: it is the very same predisposition towards good, actualized by a good disposition, which grounds a moral faith in an historical revelation. However, the problem is the question of whether a merit not one's own must precede every effort to good works--and certainly this issue does not concern the "self same practical idea" of the archetype of the good lying in our reason. Kant's first remarks on it, noted above, are more to the point: this problem transcends all possible experience, since it requires insight into the causality of freedom.

b. Historical Faith and Divine Agency in History

Notwithstanding this difficulty, the fact is that through this argument Kant has linked a *moral* faith in an historical revelation with a good disposition. This linkage allows us to ask two questions: first, is there a need in Kant's system for a divine intervention in history? And second, if we answer this question in the affirmative, how might such an intervention relate to the concept of grace we sketched above, namely, the

kind of divine aid which must be laid hold of by the individual, and which does not bypass the individual *qua* agent?

Kant stresses over and again that *faith* in such a historical intervention cannot be a necessary condition of moral worthiness since it is not available to everyone.[23] Yet he does hold that such an intervention is necessary for the human race's achievement of the highest good. Michalson correctly points out that the latter proposition does not contradict Kant's rationalism, since "the good principle may be present in all rational beings, but the possibility of its sovereignty may be dependent upon its appearance in the specific figure of Jesus."[24] In other words, the ultimate victory of the good principle, the establishment of the highest good as a social goal, may very well require the manifestation of the good principle in all its purity in a single individual.

According to Kant, faith "in the archetype of humanity well-pleasing to God (in the Son of God) . . . serves us not only as a guide-line but also as an *incentive*" (R 109). This archetype lies first and foremost in our reason. Through it, however, we can make the judgement that a particular historical individual manifests the good principle. Yet, Kant goes further than this. In a surprising passage he tells us that the historical moment of the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ opens the portals of freedom in that it is

> a manifestation of the good principle, that is, of humanity in its moral perfection, and an example for everyone to follow. The account of this death ought to have had, and could have had, the greatest influence upon human hearts and minds at that time, and indeed, at all times; for it exhibited the freedom of the children of heaven in most striking contrast to the bondage of a mere son of earth. . . . by example (in and through the moral idea) he opens the portals of freedom to all who, like him, choose to become dead to everything that holds them fettered to life on earth to the

> detriment of morality; and he gathers together, among them, "a people for his possession, zealous of good works" and under his sovereignty, and he abandons to their fate all those who prefer moral servitude. (R 77)

Note that here it is a *historical example,* and not merely the archetype of goodness lying in our reason, which is represented as paving the way to a life directed away from the satisfaction of ends having to do with merely subjectively conditioned desires. Here Kant moves away from the idea that the moral idea lying in our reason *alone* contains both the necessary and sufficient conditions for humanity's successful attainment of the moral goal. Certainly Kant does not repudiate the idea that the categorical imperative, itself deducible from the bare idea of morality alone, serves as both a guideline and an *incentive.* Both in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant had shown that the possibility of an a priori principle of moral discrimination was inexorably linked to the possibility of such a law itself also being an *incentive,* or a principle of execution. Briefly put, if the categorical imperative is to be binding upon us, the will must be free; yet if the will is free the thought of the moral law alone should be enough to determine the will in accordance with it. However, while Kant's understanding of radical evil did not lead him to deny these results, it yet qualified them in significant ways. Kant's postulation of radical evil and its results led him to posit the need for a *historical event* which would free the race from the self-incurred bondage of radical evil.

It should first be noted that the propensity to evil is the result, and *not* the ground, of our having adopted a fundamentally evil maxim.[25] These results impair the will *even after* the individual has turned a new leaf and adopted a fundamentally good disposition. Hence, the first, and mildest degree of radical evil is one in which the *vestiges* of the individual's prior adoption of a fundamentally evil maxim spoil his or her ability to carry through the willing of good maxims, even when these have a fundamentally good

disposition as their ground. It is significant that at this point Kant quotes Paul, "What I would, that I do not!" and interprets his claim to mean: " I adopt the good (the law) into the maxim of my will, but this good, which objectively, in its ideal conception (*in thesi*) is an irresistible incentive, is subjectively (*in hypothesi*), when the maxim is to be followed, the weaker (in comparison with inclination)" (R 25). The problem here is that of the akratic will, and the individual afflicted by it has two conflicting sorts of desires.

At this point it will be helpful to bring up a distinction introduced by Harry Frankfurt between first and second order desires, since it is a conflict between these two kinds of desires which are operative in the akratic will.[26] First order desires are desires directly involving some *action* which an agent wishes to realize. Insofar as they have not been reflected upon and either appropriated or transformed by the self they are immediately *given*, that is, the agent simply finds himself having them. As Kant would put it, they originate in sensibility, and thereby in causes lying outside the will. Second order desires, on the other hand, are desires concerning the sorts of desires I want to have; they involve reflection concerning the state of the self and whether it measures up to the kind of self I want to be. If I find myself unhappy with the kind of person that I am, I may wish that I were different in my preferences and purposes. If, for instance, I am addicted to some kind of substance, for instance, nicotine, I may have overwhelming sorts of first order desires that make it almost inevitable that I act on them. Yet I may also have the desire not to be addicted in such way, that is, I might genuinely desire not to be the kind of person having these desires, and this would be a desire of the second order. Such a second order desire can lead me to take steps to transform my first order desires; I may for instance, join a program to help me to stop smoking and to cultivate habits towards a healthy life style.

Now it is just these first order desires which remain affected by the propensity to evil, even *after* an individual may have reversed the fundamental ground of his maxims for the good. Let us recall that according to Kant an individual who has an evil

disposition subordinates the incentive of the moral law to the incentive of inclination, that is he "makes the incentive of self-love and its inclinations the condition of obedience to the moral law" (R 32). Now, it is enough that an individual have valued such an incentive to self love over the moral law *once* for it to have a subsequent debilitating effect on the will. For this reason Kant defines a *propensity* as a "a predisposition to crave delight which, when once experienced, arouses in the subject an inclination to it" (R 25). Kant's example of an intoxicant is to the point here. The propensity to evil functions in much the same way as an addiction: one can, through a free act, incapacitate the freedom of the will through the affection of one's sensibilities; henceforth one craves a particular substance. Analogously, once the incentive of self love has been valued over the moral law, this produces a structuring of desire in the self resulting in the tendency towards a self-love that is difficult to hold in check. While Kant does not probe the psychological dynamics of this structuring of desire too deeply, we may think of it in the following way. In valuing the incentive to self-love over the moral law, that is, in freely identifying myself with *incentives having their origin in causes lying outside the will* (Kant defines these as incentives having to do with one's sensuous nature; we may think of these as connected with the body and everything having to do with it) I grant these a *weight* they otherwise would not have had. Because I have thrown my lot in with the body, the demands of my sensuous nature (which are in any case part of what constitutes my nature as a human being) acquire more power. And as these kinds of desires clamor for attention along with the demands of the moral law, the latter is the worsted party.

Two things should be noted. First, a disposition, or fundamental subjective ground of maxim-making may *itself* be evil when an individual has made it his or her policy to act in accordance with the moral law only when it furthers the interests of the self. We may think of such a fundamentally evil maxim in terms of a second order desire to give priority to those desires connected with the body, that is, with desires having their origin in *receptivity*. Such an individual *actively* attributes more *worth* to the demands

of his or her sensuous nature. Second, should an individual *reverse* "by a single unchangeable decision, that highest ground of his maxims whereby he was an evil man" (R 43), s/he will still have the residual effects of his or her prior decision to deal with. Hence Kant notes that "the distance separating the good we ought to effect in ourselves from the evil whence we advance is infinite" (R 60), and that "only in continuous labor and growth" (R 43) are we good.

If we translate this into terms of first and second order desires, this implies that having second order desires concerning the kind of person one wants to be may not actually translate into one's actually having the kinds of desires one wants. There may, in fact, be a great gulf separating one's second order desires from one's actual first order desires, and this gulf may be the result of one's prior second order desires. At *this* moment the nicotine addict may genuinely not want to have the sorts of cravings that he does, but this desire concerning his own desires may not be realized immediately as a result of his prior decision to start smoking as a teen. In the case of radical evil, one's first order desires will still remain affected by one's prior evil disposition even after it has been changed to a good fundamental maxim. Desires connected with one's sensuous nature will still have a certain *weight* or *reality* attached to them which incline the subject to act on these kinds of desires in opposition to the moral law, a weight attached to them by the previous evil disposition. Only through progress will the subject be able to detach him or herself from the reality which s/he had previously attributed to them.

This distinction between first and second order desires, implicit both in Kant's understanding of the disposition and in his analysis of the first degree of radical evil, goes a long way to showing how it is that Kant can maintain that the *a priori* principle of morality should itself be able to serve as both a *guideline* and an *incentive*, while at the same time acknowledging the need for a divine intervention in history. At first blush, the two propositions seem to contradict one another. For if the archetype of morality lying in our reason not only suffices to allow us to judge between right and wrong, but also serves

to *move* us to do the right thing, then there does not seem to be any need for an empirically given historical occurrence to help us achieve what we ought. If, however, due to the radical evil plaguing the race, the having of a second order desire does not automatically translate into one's actually having the kinds of desires one wants to have, then it may be the case that something given in experience can indeed strengthen one's maxim of action, helping one to bring one's first order desires in line with one's second order desires.

We had noted above that for Kant divine aid is something that must be laid hold of, and that in order for one to do this, one must already possess the kind of disposition which *values* this help in becoming a better person. The distinction between first and second order desires once again helps us to see how it is that one can both already possess a good disposition, while at the same time standing in need of divine aid in order for one to become a better person. As we noted above, the kind of divine aid that *transforms* one's second order desires themselves bypasses the agent *qua* agent. As such, this concept transcends all possible experience. On the other hand Kant admits that there is kind of divine aid *given in experience* which *can* be taken into one's practical maxim. Such aid can be made use of by the individual who is actively seeking to transform his or her first order desires. The example of an individual who manifests the good principle in its perfection by dying in order to uphold the purity of the moral disposition can serve to have an enormous influence on persons. Such an example enforces the incentive of the moral disposition in us by making it *objective* for us. If we move beyond Kant and borrow from Hegel, we might say that through such an historical example the moral disposition ceases to be merely *in itself,* and becomes *for itself.* In presenting the moral disposition as an objectively given empirical reality, instead of simply as an a priori principle structuring desire, such an historical moment highlights the *force* of its influence upon us. Through it we can indeed count our natural needs as nothing when it is a question of either upholding the law or catering to needs connected

with our earthly welfare. In the *strengthening* of the moral disposition, the force of those desires connected with our sensuous nature is simultaneously weakened. This means that by "furthering the vitality of the pure religious disposition" (R 170), a historical faith can, indeed, strengthen the maxim of action by helping us to transform our first order desires.

Grace and Second Order Desires

Notwithstanding the reservations mentioned in the previous section, on occasion Kant speculated on the nature of the kind of grace which affects our second order desires themselves. On this he says two things. First, he does not deny that God may indeed in some way influence the causality of human freedom, but this is a mystery which borders on the religion of reason. The third of the mysteries which he touches upon in his General Observation to Book Three of the *Religion* concerns the mystery of election. He affirms that

> man, by reason of his natural depravity, cannot produce this [a disposition which is pleasing to God] within himself through his own efforts. But that a heavenly *grace* should work in man and should accord this assistance to one and not to another, and this not according to the merit of works but by an unconditioned *decree;* and that one portion of our race should be destined for salvation, the other for eternal reprobation--this again yields no concept of divine justice but must be referred to a wisdom whose rule for us is an absolute mystery. (R 134)

God cannot reveal *how* this kind of assistance is accorded to us, since we would not understand it. We cannot understand how God might affect our second order desires themselves through grace because 1) the moral law implies that we are free; 2) this concept of grace implies some kind of affection by God on the will but 3) we cannot conceive of how freedom and this kind of grace can coexist; Kant explains further that

"we cannot without contradiction even think of wishing to understand theoretically the causality of freedom (or its nature)" (R 135, n.).

Second, Kant equates grace with the moral law and its effect upon us. Hence in the *Religion* he tells us that the "very incomprehensibility of this predisposition [i.e., to be moved to action by the moral law] announces a divine origin," and "acts perforce upon the spirit even to the point of exaltation, and strengthens it for whatever sacrifice a man's respect for his duty may demand of him" (R 45). And in the *Conflict of the Faculties* Kant notes:

> If by nature we mean the principle that impels us to promote our *happiness,* and by grace the incomprehensible moral disposition in us, that is, the principle of *pure morality*--then nature and grace not only differ from each other but often come into conflict. But if by nature (in the practical sense) we mean our ability to achieve certain ends by our own powers in general, then grace is none other than the nature of man in so far as he is determined to actions by a principle which is intrinsic to his own being, but supersensible (the thought of his duty). Since we want to explain this principle, although we know no further ground for it, we represent it as a stimulus to good produced in us by God, the predisposition to which we did not establish in ourselves, and so, as grace. . . . It has to be made clear from them that *we ourselves must work* at developing that moral predisposition, although this predisposition does point to a divine source that reason can never reach (in its theoretical search for causes), so that our possession of it is not meritorious, but rather the work of grace.[27]

The Augustinian character of such an understanding of grace was not lost on Barth, who paradoxically accused Kant of being both Augustinian and Pelagian in the same breath.[28] Note that Kant is both able to affirm the necessity of doing everything within one's power, as well to avoid professing the idea that whatever good one can do is meritorious. Because its ground (the predisposition to good) has a divine source, we cannot give ourselves credit for it; rather, the very possibility of our doing good rests on grace. Kant thereby comes very close to the Augustinian-scholastic position which attributes our ability to do good to actual grace. Other parallels exist as well: as Bruch has noted,[29] Kant's thinking on the matter is not far from Augustine's motto "Non Deus impossibilia jubet, sed jubendo admonet et facere quod possis et petere quod non possis;"[30] although Kant replaces Augustine's prayer with the "humble confidence" of the creature.

Given these considerations concerning Kant's three concepts of grace, it becomes increasingly difficult to fault Kant with a defective concept of grace, or to understand his *Religion* as laying down a system of rights and responsibilities of the creature vis à vis God, one in which the creature can stake certain claims against God. It is, however, no doubt true that insofar as Kant places the grounds of justification within the person, i.e., within the altered disposition, he strays far from the Reformation view which sought to comprehend justification in forensic terms. In his doctrine of grace he comes much closer to Rome. To those who insist that one cannot have a true conception of grace without such a forensic understanding of justification, Kant will, no doubt appear Pelagian. But from a broader perspective, one that does not reckon such a doctrine as the sole benchmark of an authentic discernment of grace, the verdict can be only one of acquittal. This judgment must be rendered on two counts: first, from a phenomenological perspective Kant's system does provide us with a convincing account of how a laying hold of God's unmerited favor is intrinsically tied to one's attitude toward the moral law; in this Kant is most original. Second, Kant's account of the predisposition to good and its

close ties to grace is not far from that of Augustine, which after all had a definitive hand in shaping the Christian doctrine of grace in the West.

ENDNOTES

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[1] Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought, from Rousseau to Ritschl,* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 187.

[2] Gordon E. Michalson, Jr., *Fallen Freedom: Kant on Radical Evil and Moral Regeneration,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 97.

[3] "Moral Regeneration and Divine Aid in Kant," *Religious Studies* 25, 259-270; 259. Numerous other scholars besides those mentioned in my text both here and below have also touched on the issue: I will only cite some of the more notable here. Remarking on Kant's idea that the individual must make herself *worthy* to receive supernatural aid Bohatec notes: "Man hat dieses durchgängige Vertrauen auf die menschliche sittliche Kraft mit Recht Pelagianismus genannt." Josef Bohatec, *Die Religionsphilosophie Kants in der "Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft"* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966) 337. Jean Louis Bruch makes a more balanced assessment in his *La Philosophie Religiouse de Kant*, (Aubier: Editions Montaigne, 1968) taking the position that Kant partially escapes the charge of Pelagianism since he seeks less to minimize grace than to preserves its inaccessibly mysterious character (104). However, Bruch also argues that insofar as Kant allows for sanctifying grace, but not for medicinal grace, "il incline au pélagianisme" (105).

[4] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered,* edited by Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen (Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1991) 44-45.

[5] Ibid., 41.

[6] Ibid., 50.

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[7]Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. by Lewis White Beck, (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 34-35; Prussian Academy edition will henceforth be noted in brackets: [IV, 413/414].

[8]Ibid., 53; [IV, 428].

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,* 28: 1085, quoted from *Religion and Rational Theology,* translated and edited by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 417.

[10] *Danziger Rationaltheologie,* AA XXVIII/2.2, 1292-1294. On this point see Michael Albrecht, *Kants Antinomie der Practischen Vernunft,* (Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim: 1978) 81, note.

[11] The Menzer edition of the *Lectures on Ethics* records Kant as saying that ". . . God wants mankind to be happy. He wants men to be made happy by men, and if only all men united to promote their own happiness we could make a paradise of Novaya Zemlya. God has set us on the stage were we can make each other happy. It rests with us, and us alone, to do so. Wretchedness and misery are our own fault. If a man be in distress, as so many of us are, it is not because God wills it so. God does not wish any one of us to be wretched; His purpose that we should all unite in helping each other, and if a man is in distress, God leaves him in that state as a sign to his fellows who allow him to suffer though they could combine to help him." Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics,* trans. by Louis Infield, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1963) 54-55.

[12]According to the *Praktische Philosophie Powalski,* "Das Wörtchen würdig bedeutet hier keine Verdienste. . . Eine remuneration heißt eine Geschenksweise ertheilte Belohnung . . . ." [AA XXVII/1, S. 148f.]; quoted from Albrecht, 82.

[13] The same point is made by Kant in a footnote in the *Religion:* ". . . freedom consists not in the contingency of the act (that it is determined by no grounds whatever), *i.e.,* not in indeterminism (that God must be equally capable of doing good or evil, if His

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actions are to be called free), but rather in absolute spontaneity. Such spontaneity is endangered only by predeterminism, where the determining ground of the act is *in antecedent time,* . . . but since in God no temporal sequence is thinkable, this difficulty vanishes." Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* trans. by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 45. All future references to Kant's *Religion* will be cited in the body of the text itself and will refer to this translation. They will be indicated by an 'R' followed by the pagination.

[14] Michalson, *Fallen Freedom,* 102.

[15] Michalson, "Moral Regeneration and Divine Aid in Kant," 269.

[16] Philip Quinn, "Saving Faith from Kant's Remarkable Antinomy," in *Faith and Philosophy,* Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1990, 421.

[17] For instance, Kant tells us that even when we accept the idea of grace "in nothing but a practical context it is very hazardous, and hard to reconcile with reason, since that which is to be accredited to us as morally good conduct must take place not through foreign influence but solely through the best possible use of our own powers. And yet the impossibility thereof (*i.e.,* of both these things occurring side by side) cannot really be proved, because freedom itself, though containing nothing supernatural in its conception, remains, as regards its possibility, just as incomprehensible to us as the supernatural factor which we would like to regard as a supplement to the spontaneous but deficient determination of freedom." *Religion,* 179.

[18] Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 230.

[19] John Silber's statement that "Kant rejected the doctrine of vicarious atonement because it runs counter to the nature of freedom," is certainly too strong. (John Silber, "The Ethical Significance of Kant's *Religion,*" in the introduction to *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* cxxxi). Allen Wood is nearer to the truth when he notes that

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Kant was "nonetheless very far from rejecting the doctrine of vicarious atonement" (*Kant's Moral Religion,* 237).

[20] It is important to note, however, that Kant reintroduces the subject of the need for atonement in his general observation to section three, in which he discusses the three mysteries revealed to us through our reason. A mystery is something which "in a practical context, can be thoroughly understood and comprehended, but which, taken theoretically (for the determining of the nature of the object in itself) transcends all our concepts. . . ." (R 133) The idea of atonement is such a mystery, since "if the goodness of God has called him, as it were, into being, *i.e.,* to exist in a particular manner (as a member of the kingdom of heaven), He must also have a means of supplementing, out of the fullness of His own holiness, man's lack of requisite qualifications therefor" (R 134).

[21] Quinn, "Saving Faith from Kant's Remarkable Antinomy," 427.

[22] According to Kant a person's "moral growth of necessity begins not in the improvement of his practices but rather in the transforming of his cast of mind and in the grounding of character; though customarily man goes about the matter otherwise and fights against vices one by one, leaving undisturbed their common root" (R 43-44).

[23]For a development of this point, see Denis Savage's article, "Kant's Rejection of Divine Revelation and his Theory of Radical Evil," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered* 54-76.

[24] Michalson, *Fallen Freedom,* 121. Much the same point was made by Michel Despland: in his book, *Kant on History and Religion,* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), 223-224.

[25] Michalson is certainly mistaken when he thinks of the propensity to evil as itself grounding our adoption of a fundamentally evil maxim. This misunderstanding runs throughout the whole of chapter two of his book and is well summarized by his statement that "the notion that we are evil by nature due to a natural propensity to adopt

an evil disposition" is one of Kant's "key metaphysical points." *Fallen Freedom,* 63. As I argue below, the propensity to evil is the result, and *not* the ground of our having adopted a fundamentally evil maxim. Because the adoption of a disposition is an act of freedom, it is impossible to inquire into the grounds or causes leading to such an act.

[26] The distinction is introduced by Harry Frankfurt in his essay entitled "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." It can be found in his book *The Importance of What we Care About,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 11-25.

[27] Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties,* trans. by Mary Gregor, (University of Nebraska Press: 1979).

[28] Barth, *Protestant Thought,* 187.

[29] Bruch, *La Philosophie Religieuse de Kant,* 106-107.

[30] Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, 50.