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Translated into English by Claude from the Google Books scan of the original German (Fraktur) edition, Peter Beer, Handbuch der mosaischen Religion, für Studierende oder sonst höhere Bildung genießende Jünglinge, Zweyter Curs, Erste Abtheilung (Prag: Scholl, 1818). Numbers in grey brackets mark the beginning of each printed page of the original. Footnotes are Beer's own unless they begin "Translator:", which marks the translator's notes (identifications, corrected Scripture references, misprints). Scripture references are given in modern form; Beer's own (sometimes misprinted or Vulgate-numbered) references are kept and flagged in notes.

[p. —] Handbook of the Mosaic Religion,

for students, or other youths enjoying a higher education.

By

Peter Beer,

public teacher of morals to the Israelite youth of the Gymnasium and the Hauptschule in Prague.

Second Course. First Part.

Prague, 1818

Printed at the Scholl printing house, Old Town, Kettengasse No. 224.

[p. —] Religion is the cognition (and fulfilment) of our duties as divine commands.

Kant.[1]

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[1]Translator: Cf. Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), Part IV, Section 1: "Religion is (subjectively considered) the cognition of all our duties as divine commands." Beer's parenthetical "and fulfilment" is his own addition.

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[p. —] Preface

The destiny which God has given to man's existence in this world and the next is happiness. The means of attaining this destiny he has already laid down in the totality of all created beings (nature); and in order to make them comprehensible and agreeable to man, he has given him head and heart (understanding and will).

The advantage of man consists in a *free*, non-compelling will. Now, in order not to restrict this free will, and yet to come to its aid and steer it toward the good without prejudice to its freedom, it pleased the All-good Being to instruct man in a manner sufficient even for the weak

understanding, namely through an *immediate* Revelation, and to make his will known to him with greater emphasis through definite laws (commandments and prohibitions): partly in order to make easier for man the choice and application of the means that nature already offers him; partly in order to give these means more sanction through the highest authority, and hence to make him all the more inclined to take hold of them; and partly in order to place in his hands such means as limited human under- [p. IV] standing is either wholly unable to divine, or can divine only very faintly.

The chief motive for a thinking and free being to observe a given law lies, properly speaking, in the insight of the one who observes it: namely, whether, and with what consequences, the neglect or the practice of this law is connected. For this reason God, in this Revelation, has also indicated the consequences of his laws. He has, namely, partly expressly stated and partly merely intimated punishments for neglect, as well as reward for observance, according as his all-wisdom saw fit.

For a freely acting being, deciding about the consequences arising from the observance or neglect of the laws also, and especially, requires acquaintance with the attributes of the lawgiver: namely, whether he has the will to promote the welfare of the one who observes his laws; whether he is wise enough to discover a definite good end and to apply the fittest means to it; and finally, whether he also possesses the power to bring the appointed consequences into exact proportion with the conduct of the one who observes or transgresses. For this reason God has also made known, in this immediate Revelation, those attributes of his which answer to this expectation, partly through words and partly through deeds.

From what has been said it results that man, in order to attain his destiny, a) must know God and follow his will, and b) that God has placed the means for this in man's hands through nature and Revelation. — In a word: that Religion is the sole means of attaining man's destiny in this world and the next.

[p. V] An exact knowledge of nature, and especially of nature in its interconnection, is, as is well known, by no means everyone's affair; still less is everyone in a position to abstract his religion and his means of salvation from it by himself. Revelation does indeed come to his aid; but this too — however clear and intelligible its content was to those individuals to whom it was immediately given — is all the more difficult for us to explain, who live in an entirely different climate, under entirely different circumstances and conditions than our ancestors of that time. Hence several of these laws have become antiquated through time and through circumstances and conditions that have since arisen — all of which is, after all, unfailingly also a means of education in the hand of all-guiding Providence, to bring man nearer to his destiny — just as many of them, for this very reason, had to be modified for application to the present world.

Add to this that the documents in which this Revelation is preserved for us are composed in the Hebrew language, which ceased several thousand years ago to be a spoken language, and which

therefore contains a great many obscurities, all the more so for us who live at so great a distance in time and place from their authors; and that the authors also speak in images, conceptions and modes of expression wholly foreign to us. It is thus plain as day that drawing conclusions from them for human conduct is a very difficult matter, requiring much preliminary knowledge, and for the common man an impossible one. The proof is supplied by the so widely differing interpretations and sects.

What has been said here is so evident that all Israel- [p. VI] ite theologians — whether they otherwise adhere to Mosaism, Talmudism or the Cabbala, and however differently they may think about the application of the means given in the Holy Scriptures — agree on this point.

All the more striking, all the more astonishing must it be to everyone, but above all to the Israelite who reflects on his religion, that among his coreligionists — who, for their steadfastness in their faith, endured so many persecutions in ancient and medieval times, and countless numbers of whom did not shrink even from a martyr's death — there exists not a single textbook of religion in which the dogmas and morals derived from Holy Scripture, as the sole and original source of the religion of Israel, are set out definitely, without admixture of the judicial and ceremonial matters which have for the most part become antiquated through the circumstances that have arisen, and in which these fundamental concepts are presented in a manner comprehensible to every confessor of Judaism, especially to the common man, and indeed even to the young. Rather, even now the commonest man is supposed to, or must, form and order his doctrines of faith and morals for himself out of the Pentateuch — which he has learned, without context, without the slightest application to practical life, indeed without the least grammatical preparation, from teachers just as little prepared, to render word for word from the Hebrew into his mother tongue, and that scarcely half of it; or, what is far worse, he must accept them as chaotically and confusedly as chance may happen to arrange them, and regulate his faith and his actions accordingly. It thus lies entirely in the nature of the case that the common people degenerate into extremes, and incline either to the crassest superstition or to the most extravagant un- [p. VII] belief, since the middle way is not shown to them and they are unable to find it themselves.

To be sure, several great scholars and venerable men of the Israelite nation, especially in the Middle Ages, wrote various works on the Mosaic religion and particularly on its dogmas[3]; but however excellent these works are in themselves, however much fame these worthy men earned not only among their coreligionists but in the learned world generally, and however much gratitude the nation owes them — since their praiseworthy endeavour was directed at uprooting the abuses that had crept into Judaism and the prejudices deeply rooted through authority, at presenting the

[3]Such as R. Saadia, Bechay, Maimonides, Albo, Chisday, etc.[*]

Divine in its bright splendour, untroubled by arbitrary additions and quibbling interpretations, and at leading religion back to its original purity[4] —

[p. VIII] nevertheless their efforts were not suited to the purpose stated. For a) they did not exhaust this subject in its entirety, but treated it only fragmentarily; b) this treatment is, as at that time could not have been otherwise, entirely in the spirit of scholastic philosophy[5], and moreover intermixed with explanations of individual Bible passages in that same spirit. And c) their works are not calculated for the capacity of the common man and of the young[6].

[p. IX] Countless works, to be sure, have been composed with much wit and acumen, with enormous diligence and great learning in the Talmud, on ceremonies and customs, whose name is Legion; and more of them appear every day. But no one, as has been said, has yet undertaken to excerpt the doctrines of faith and of morals, whether purely Mosaic or Talmudic, to arrange them in a scientific system, or even merely to present them comprehensibly for the common man and the young, although several great men have spoken in favour of this[7].

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[4]Thus, for example, the chief aim of R. Bechay in his book *Chobath Halebaboth*[*], especially in its very readable and most noteworthy preface, is to prove that the essence of Judaism consists more in the knowledge of the divine attributes and in practical, beneficent actions that enter into human life, than in brooding over the dead letter of the Law and the micrological word-splitting that proceeds from it, or in blind attachment to ceremonial matters and observances. — Maimonides, in his estimable work* More Nebuchim*, has the beneficent aim of driving out, by fitting explanations of many passages of Holy Scripture that are evident to sound reason, the anthropomorphism which had crept into religion through obscurantists. By way of thanks for this, a certain* Abraham ben David*[*]*, one of his most furious enemies — for whoever sees beyond the crass opinions of the rabble [p. VIII] is not plagued by this vermin — says that he deserves *to have molten gold poured down his throat*; and in another place: *Many better and greater men than he believed that God is corporeal.* — Can indolence be carried further than when a man exposes himself to the suspicion of idolatry — and what else is anthropomorphism, gross or refined? — merely in order to degrade his fellow man, however groundlessly? So it was, and — so, alas, it still is. *Exempla sunt odiosa.*[*]

[5]See Sal. Maimon's commentary on the *More Nebuchim*, Berlin 1791; especially his history of philosophy appended to that work.[*]

[6]On this point Maimonides, in the preface to his *More Nebuchim*, expresses himself in the following words: "My intention is by no means to explain everything contained in this book to the rabble or to the beginner in thinking, nor to one who occupies himself merely with the study of the Law (Talmud); rather, this work is intended only for him who, besides this, is at the same time initiated into the (philosophical) sciences, and who, since the mere literal sense of the Bible with regard to anthropopathy and anthropomorphism does not seem to him to agree with the principles of philosophy, falls into doubt whether he should hold to the literal expressions of Scripture or to the laws of pure reason." — This great and worthy man, of whom a later writer could rightly say: [p. IX] "From Moses (the lawgiver) to Moses (Maimonides) there arose in Israel no man like Moses," has solved this extremely difficult exegetical problem to the satisfaction of everyone whose brain is not entirely covered over with the impenetrable iron lid of obscurantism. Truly! how could pure reason contradict genuine religion, since both are emanations of the Divine? How should the Divine collide with the Divine? — Both are there to offer each other their hands and to support one another. Should reason, through hyper-rationalism, presume to climb into the regions of chimerical unbelief, then divine religion, the daughter of heaven, stands at her side to lead her back with gentleness and love into the arms of truth. Should overstrained fancy, enthusiasm and mysticism attempt to plunge into the swamp of superstition, at once the divine light in man (reason) blazes up, illuminates like a pillar of fire the abyss that leads to ruin, and scatters these poisonous mists, so that they are chased back into the caves of darkness where they were hatched. Thus does the loving Father of all men care for his children, so very subject to error and to missteps, by appointing for them these two heavenly guardian angels as watchmen and guides on the path of virtue and truth.

[7]Thus R. Bechay, who is usually called *Hachassid* (the Pious), relates: One of the sages was once asked (by a Talmudist) about a casuistic case, [p. X] concerning the ceremonial for issuing a bill of divorce, and answered him with the following words: "You who ask me about a matter which does you no harm if you do not know it! Are all those teachings already known to you which you are indispensably obliged to know, and from which you may by no means withdraw, that you busy yourself with such questions, which bring you no benefit in religion, and still less can contribute anything to the improvement of your moral conduct?"[*]

[p. X] Mendelssohn does say:[8] "Ancient Judaism has no symbolic books, no articles of faith. No one had to swear to symbols, no one was put on oath to articles of faith; indeed, we have no concept at all of what are called articles of faith, and must consider them inadmissible according to the spirit of genuine Judaism. For" — he said a few lines earlier — "belief and doubt, assent and contradiction, are governed by our faculty of desire,[9] not by wish and longing, not by fearing and hoping, but by knowledge and truth."

Granted! But what follows from this, other than one more proof of the necessity, stated above, of composing a book of religion?

For, *first*, since Mendelssohn, and everyone with him, assumes two kinds of truths, especially in religion — namely *eternal truths*, that is, truths that are not subject to time and remain the same for eternity; and then *historical truths*, that is, things of former ages which once took place somewhere and are narrated to us, but which we can never again perceive for ourselves — the proposition that no *articles of faith* exist in Judaism can be correct only insofar [p. XI] as it refers to the eternal truths. *Historical truths*, on the other hand, cannot be accepted otherwise than on faith, according to the testimony of witnesses; and accordingly there must *absolutely* be *articles of faith* in Judaism, as a revealed religion and thus one resting on history[10].

Secondly, even the *eternal truths* in religion — however superabundantly rich the means for discovering them are spread everywhere in nature, and although man can perceive the Deity, or rather the divine attributes, as Mendelssohn says, "in every pulse-beat, in every rising sun, in every rain that falls, in every flower that blossoms, in every lamb that grazes in the meadow and rejoices in its existence" — these truths must nevertheless be brought home often and emphatically to the understanding and the heart of the greater part of mankind, and man must be led to pay attention to them: partly because, out of habit, man leaves all this unheeded, since he sees, hears and feels it for a long time before his spirit of observation has developed in him; and partly because uncultivated man is too much occupied with satisfying his needs for reflections of this kind to be able to affect him. Hence Mendelssohn also says, as beautifully as truly: "As often as it was necessary, [p. XII] Providence has caused wise men to arise among every nation, and has granted them the gift of looking with clearer eyes into themselves and around them, of contemplating the *works of God*, and of communicating their insights to others"[11].

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[8] *Jerusalem, or on Religious Power and Judaism*, Section 2, p. 55.

[9] Translator: So Beer's text. Mendelssohn's original reads that belief and doubt "are governed *not* by our faculty of desire, not by wish and longing …"; a "not" has dropped out of the quotation.

[10] Or does Herr Mendelssohn perhaps mean by the expression *ancient Judaism* the Jewish religion as it was in the age of Moses? — Then, to be sure, there was no need of *articles of faith* in the historical respect, since everything that Holy Scripture narrates to us as history from those times, and that we believe on the authority of the narrator, happened before the eyes of those then living and present. They convinced themselves by their senses, and thus had no need of faith.

[11] *Jerusalem*, Section 2, p. 42.

From all this it follows that the greater part of mankind, and especially the young, must be instructed in both the eternal and the historical truths[12] — if not as articles of faith, then at least in a manner comprehensible to them — since their unregulated reason presents even what is clear to them in a troubled light and leads them into errors. Their thinking must therefore be done for them in advance; both sources, namely reason and Revelation, must be used, and what is most indispensable for them to know from these must be made as clearly comprehensible as possible. — But until now it has not been so in Israel.

The hitherto prevailing method of religious instruction, as unsuited to its purpose as it is harmful, can truly not be grounded in the essence of Judaism. The cause is, to all appearances, to be sought in the political oppression that has weighed upon these coreligionists until now, and in the lack, flowing from it, of public and well-organized school institutions. For it has always been, and still is, open to every father to have his child instructed in religion by whomever he pleases, in whatever subjects, from whatever books, by whatever method, or — as for the most part happens — entirely without plan, as much or as little as he likes. — But it cannot, it may not, remain so any longer, if the coming generation of Israelites is not to degenerate into total unbelief, or, what amounts to the same thing, into stupid indifferentism. [p. XIII] The reason lies in the spirit of the age and the changed political circumstances of the Israelites that have arisen from it, and this as follows.

Joseph, the unforgettable, Emperor of Austria,[13] gave the impulse to the regeneration of the Israelites in his states; and most Christian governments within and outside Europe followed his humane example by striving to loosen the political fetters which pressed this nation so sore for centuries. Now since it did not escape this monarch, as noble as he was wise, that the unfettering of the spirit must precede receptivity to civic freedom, then — in order to achieve this, and to bring his Israelite subjects into a harmonious whole with the rest of the population — German schools were established by his command in all Jewish communities in the Austrian states, according to the general *Normal* [standard curriculum], in which their youth are instructed in everything that every human being and citizen needs to know. And in order to lead them on to the higher sciences as well, all institutions of higher education were at the same time opened to them and free access granted them. This example too was followed by many governments, and several communities abroad, recognizing the necessity, established such schools on their own initiative[14].

The acquaintance of the Israelite youth with the sciences, as well as the higher standing in civil society which the humane spirit of the governments has assigned to this nation in recent times, necessarily had to bring about the need for a reform — not in the *essence of the Mo-* [p. XIV] *saic religion*, but indeed in the religious instruction, as planless as it is contrary to its purpose. And this

[12]Translator: Printed "Geschlechtswahrheiten" ("truths of descent"), evidently a misprint for "Geschichtswahrheiten," historical truths.

[13]Translator: Joseph II (reigned 1780–1790), whose Edicts of Toleration (1781–1782) and subsequent decrees, among them the requirement of German-language Jewish schools, began the legal emancipation of the Jews of the Habsburg lands.

[14]Praiseworthy examples are: Berlin, Breslau, Brody, Dessau, Frankfurt, Seesen, Tarnopol and several others.

for a twofold reason. For, *first*, since these youths are guided in the German and higher schools to knowledge and sciences of every kind according to pedagogical principles and rules, the instruction is made as pleasant for them as possible, and they thereby acquire more love and attraction for it than for the so-called religious instruction hitherto delivered to them so drily, the greater part of them have been entirely put off this would-be instruction in religion, and — since they do not know how to distinguish the kernel from the shell — *religion itself*. *Secondly*, the necessity of the state demands that a dam be set against the separatism which divides the body of the state and which has arisen, in civic respect, from the previous religious instruction of the Israelite youth[15]; and that the maxim essentially grounded in the Mosaic religion be realized: *Render unto the emperor* (civil society) *the things that are the emperor's, and unto God the things that are God's*[16].

[p. XV] To that end, in recent times several scholars and well-meaning men of the Mosaic faith — to whom the pure religion that binds man to man, humanity, the state and the welfare of their coreligionists lie equally close to heart — have undertaken to sift what is essential in the Mosaic religion from what is non-essential, to loosen the kernel from the shell, and to present comprehensibly what every Israelite needs to know of his religion before he enters civil society[17]. It is to these noble men that the Israelite nation owes the fact that there already exist several writings, in both catechetical and acroamatic form, from which its male and female[18] youth can easily be instructed in the essentials of their religion, as well as in the duties arising from it for a member of civil society, comprehensibly for a child's understanding and in the German language, which is generally intelligible to them.

For these same important reasons, and to realize this purpose that leads straight to the goal, by command of His Majesty the now reigning Emperor of Austria,[19] who cares [p. XVI] so paternally for the welfare, in this world and the next, of all his subjects, a dedicated religious-moral textbook for the Jewish youth was prepared, and in the year 1812, under the title *Bnezion*,[20] introduced as the legally prescribed textbook in all German schools of the Israelites in the Austrian states; and

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[15]On which the will of the monarch of Austria, as great as he was wise, is expressed so clearly in the Jewish ordinance for Bohemia of 3 August 1787, in the following words: "*So that legislation may finally be enabled to abolish entirely the distinction which it has hitherto been compelled to observe between Christian and Jewish subjects.*"

[16]Or, in other words: the duties toward God can no more stand in the way of the duties of the citizen than the latter are able to stand in the way of the former, because *both are at the same time duties toward God*. But if anyone nevertheless ventures to represent them as heterogeneous, this very attempt is the most evident proof that he wishes here to pass off a human work as a divine command.[*]

[17]To which my humble self has also contributed its mite through the work *Das Judenthum* etc., 2 small volumes, Prague 1809 and 1810.

[18]The latter, as is well known, has until now received no instruction at all in religion. As if this great, important and beautiful part of mankind did not likewise enjoy the benefactions of God and of civil society, and therefore had no duties to fulfil toward both and toward itself as well! Or as if the female sex perhaps made no claim to happiness in the world beyond, and therefore had no need to prepare itself for it here below! —

[19]Translator: Francis I (as Holy Roman Emperor Francis II), reigned 1792–1835.

[20]Translator: Herz Homberg, *Bne-Zion: Ein religiös-moralisches Lehrbuch für die Jugend israelitischer Nation* (Vienna, 1812).

this book, when delivered by a skilful teacher — for in the hands of an unskilful one every textbook is like a torch in the hand of a blind man — answers its purpose.

His paternal care went still further. In the consciousness that the usefulness of a *scientifically educated* man is attained only when the true cultivation of the understanding stands in adequate proportion to the cultivation of the heart, and that the firm bond between them can consist solely in genuine religious and moral principles, the religious-moral instruction according to the book *Bnezion* was introduced, by court decree of 22 January 1813, as a compulsory subject also for those pupils of the Mosaic faith who attend the Gymnasia. In consequence of this supreme ordinance I was appointed teacher of this subject for the Israelites studying at the three Imperial-Royal Gymnasia in Prague.

Now since the textbook *Bnezion*, according to its original purpose, is calculated merely for pupils of the *German school*, thus for children from six to twelve years of age, this subject — whose foundation and content still remain the same — necessarily had to be altered for pupils of the Gymnasia, partly because they have already heard this subject in the German schools[21], and partly because in the [p. XVII] Gymnasia their concepts are broadened and multiplied; it had to be altered, broadened, and worked out more *scientifically and systematically* with respect to both its logical and its didactic form. This need became all the more urgent as the existing supreme Instruction for teachers of religion at Gymnasia expressly stipulates the following:[22]

"His Imperial-Royal Majesty," says this Instruction, "has most graciously deigned to appoint special Catechists at all Gymnasia of the hereditary lands, in order to bring it about through them that in future the youths studying there should continually progress in religious knowledge, and in the religiosity springing from it, in the same degree in which they increase in their other knowledge through Gymnasium instruction and other means of education."

"It is therefore made the duty of the Catechist, in order to attain this most exalted purpose of His Majesty, to [p. XVIII] inviolable duty — —[23] to lead the pupils of every class from stage to stage, in proportion to their age and to the other knowledge they have acquired, ever further in the knowledge of Religion as well, and to ground religious dispositions in them."

"In order to arrange his instruction in accordance with this purpose, he will: 1) constantly keep in mind that a) he has before him pupils who have indeed received the school instruction prescribed

[21] For by law no one can be admitted to a Gymnasium before he has produced a certificate of his good progress in all the subjects prescribed for the third class of the Hauptschule — to which, for Israelite pupils, the *Bnezion* also belongs.

[22] I do not find it superfluous to cite this supreme ordinance here, insofar as it also concerns teachers and pupils of the Mosaic religion: partly in order to display the loving care of our monarch, as wise as he is kind, for the intellectual and especially the genuinely religious education of all his subjects, and in particular for those of my coreligionists who are accustomed to view everything that happens in recent times with regard to the instruction of youth — and all the more with regard to instruction in religion — and that must happen in accordance with the spirit of the age, from a distorted point of view, and who zealously take it upon themselves to communicate their views to others by this same route; and partly as a justification against any objections to the plan I have followed in this work.

[23] The signs — — indicate that what has been omitted at this point is what relates solely to the Christian religion.

for the German Hauptschulen, but received it at an age whose flightiness and lesser power of judgment did not yet allow one to expect from it an impression sufficiently deep and lasting for their present occupation and their future calling; b) pupils who, apart from this religious instruction — especially in the higher and humanities classes, and in the capital cities — have, by other ways too, either already imbibed or may soon imbibe various ideas of Religion, and not always the most correct and desirable ones, inasmuch as they live among people whose false notions and unfavorable judgments about Religion — — become known to them,[24] or inasmuch as they come to know many books not intended for them, the reading of which, alongside the correct ideas they still retain from their first instruction, also instills in them many a false view of the most important [p. XIX] matters of Religion, acquaints them with many a specious objection, etc. etc.; pupils who are all being educated for the higher estates — for whom a trivial knowledge of Religion cannot suffice — and for whom nevertheless, after they leave the Gymnasia, no proper religious instruction is any longer provided." — —

"From this character of the Gymnasium pupils the Catechist will derive both the content and the manner of the religious instruction to be imparted to his pupils, and therefore" ...

12) "Conscientiously see to it that all the knowledge of Religion which one may expect to find in a layman of good upbringing and higher calling is imparted in the whole course of Gymnasium instruction. Even what might be presupposed from the instruction in the German schools, according to their legal constitution, must here — — apart from the elementary concepts — — be repeated and brought into connection with all the religious knowledge that a future man of affairs needs; thus knowledge of the history of the Old Covenant, of God's purpose in establishing it, — — the purposeful choice of a people for it, the history of its principal fortunes, the office and vocation of the Prophets, the occasion, content and preservation of their holy writings. — — This is the outline of the subjects of instruction which religious teaching in the Gymnasia must contain." — —

This task I have endeavored to solve; according to this plan I have endeavored to work. I have therefore not confined myself solely and exclusively to knowledge of Religion — that is, to a higher presentation and more luminous explanation of religious concepts, as well as to an insight into the necessary connection which must obtain between these concepts — but have also, and [p. XX] chiefly, directed my attention to the development of the religious sense and to the warming of the heart for God and the welfare of mankind. Whether, and how far, these lectures of mine have given satisfaction to my high superiors at the examinations held with my pupils up to now — to

[24] This circumstance deserves to be taken to heart, in more than one respect and regard, in the case of the Israelite youth. Anyone who knows the spirit concerning Religion that prevails among these co-religionists at the present time, and expresses itself so extremely heterogeneously among the parties, will surely see what an indispensable need a serious taking to heart of this matter is.

state that here would be, on the one hand, to overstep modesty and, on the other, to anticipate public opinion.

To further the will of my God and of my King, to do justice to my office, and to spread the good in my surroundings according to my insight and my powers — this, my conscience tells me, is the purpose of the present work. I hand it over to publicity partly in order to spare my pupils the time-wasting copying out of the lessons; partly at the request of several fathers who, though they do not devote their children to public studies, nevertheless give them a higher domestic education and wish to have a guide by which their religious instruction might keep pace with the rest of their education; but chiefly in order to learn the public's judgment of it, and, if need be, to make such alterations in it as lead to the goal. For which reason, too, the present edition, being a mere essay, consists of only a small number of copies.

No one who has correct notions of pedagogy and didactics will — so I believe I may presume — look in this work either for new ideas or for hyper-metaphysical views: for about this most important of subjects (Religion), about which since time immemorial so much — one might almost say all too much — has been thought and written, nothing new, at bottom, *can* be said, and with respect to youth nothing new *should* be said, and all the less anything speculative. [p. XXI] Clarity and precision, joined with system, brevity[25] and force for the heart, is what is needed in this respect, and in this alone consists the merit that may perhaps be ascribed to the author of a work of this kind.

The judgment as to *whether* anything, and *what*, has been accomplished here on my part should and must be left free to the competence of expert and impartial men. Their instruction and correction, in whatever form it might be given me, shall not only be exceedingly dear and welcome to me; rather, I desire nothing more ardently than that in this regard, whether publicly or privately, a great many corrections *grounded in truth* — or, it may be, — expressions of agreement may reach me. It is truly high time that on this subject [p. XXII] opinions be voiced openly and aloud, the votes collected, a result built upon unshakable grounds drawn from them, and the files closed.

Only I ask that, in judging the present work, the point of view not be lost sight of that, with regard to the *system* for youth of the Mosaic faith who enjoy a higher education, I have entered upon an entirely untrodden path, and one therefore so very liable to give offense. In the treatment of so

[25] Perhaps some will find too much brevity in this work. Quite possibly. But let it be considered that this work is meant to be only a guide — a skeleton, as it were, which the teacher must first clothe with flesh. For to work everything out at full length and breadth in a work of this kind, so that nothing would be left for the teacher to add, is in no way feasible. Because 1) the bulk of such a work would have to run to a great many volumes. 2) The teacher must maintain in his pupil's eyes the standing of one who is superior to him in knowledge; which would not be achieved if the pupil found everything in the book. 3) The teacher, especially in private instruction, must take account of the individuality of his pupils, and often expand or concentrate according to the subjects he has before him. Thus only indications could be given here; the working out must be left to the lecturing teacher. A teacher who cannot do this, who has not studied his subject from the sources, has not made himself thoroughly acquainted with it, and wishes merely to read off the present work, like any other, would do better to busy himself with the spade, the plane, or — what might perhaps suit him better — with the yardstick and the scales.

delicate an object as Religion, a great deal of caution and circumspection is needed in general. In order not to lose one's balance, this circumspection is all the more requisite in the present state of religious views in Israel, since some wish to retain everything — even what directly contradicts the times and circumstances, what has been driven into Religion as it were with clubs, what runs counter to, or even undermines, the political standpoint on which this nation already stands and on which it is yet destined to be placed — while, on the contrary, others want to see much of what is *essential* to the Mosaic religion, and inseparable from it if it is not to degenerate into pure Deism or into something even worse, declared antiquated.[26] The truth lies in the middle, and this I have taken as the goal of my striving.

[p. XXIII] In order now to reach this goal according to my limited powers, I have made use of whatever was known to me and seemed serviceable to my purpose from famous Jewish and other theologians of older and more recent times, who, equipped with all the requisite preliminary knowledge, made Moses and the Prophets the principal object of their studies, and therefore penetrated into the very marrow of this Book of Books and drew its quintessence with as much diligence and zeal as with the noblest heart [p. XXIV] and purest will;[27] and I have quoted a good deal of it here in their own words, for the reason that I strove for clarity, as the *conditio sine qua non* of this work, and this would have been lost through any reworking.

This public confession shall at the same time serve as my excuse for not having indicated the sources from which I have drawn. The scholar will know how to find them without such indication, and to the non-scholar it can always be a matter of indifference who said this or that, provided only that what is said strikes him as illuminating and acceptable. Even those authors still living who may perhaps find their own thoughts and expressions here will, I believe, not be displeased that I

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[26]Spoken wholly from the soul, and from the sad experience of everyone to whom improvement is a matter of the heart, are the words of Mr. Joelson,[*] *who says, as aptly as truly, in the preface to his* Instruction in the Mosaic Religion*: "One does not venture too much in asserting that most of the present-day Israelites may be divided into three — almost equally unhappy — classes. The* first *consists of the ignorant, whose religion consists merely in ceremonies; who observe most scrupulously every usage (however unsuited to time and place, and however groundless in Moses and the Prophets it may be, merely because the caprice of a man wholly isolated from the world, shut up in his cell in some corner of Lithuania or Podolia, would have it so two or three hundred years ago, and because it pleased some gain-seeking printer to append these fancies as scholia to some older book, or to insert them into it), yet over this quite readily neglect a real law, even the holiest (especially those which David, Ps. 15, Isaiah 33:13–16, Micah 6:8, and elsewhere, set forth as the quintessence of the Mosaic religion, and that with full right), and live on in constant fear and anxiety. The* second *comprises those unhappy ones whom the Psalmist (17:14) aptly depicts. Because they imagine themselves bound in the fetters of countless laws (for so the Mosaic religion was presented to them in their youth), they seek (from ignorance of the true spirit of this religion) to free themselves from the yoke of a religion which, in their opinion, prescribes nothing but so many burdensome rules hampering every step (and isolating them from their present fellow citizens even in the smallest trifle); and not seldom they sacrifice their own and their family's temporal and eternal welfare to this unrestraint. The man of the* third *class, finally, the better instructed (who has taken pains to distinguish the shell from the kernel), does indeed enjoy peace* within*; the knowledge and rational practice of his religion grants his heart heavenly peace; he knows what God and what men prescribe for him — he knows and loves his religion and may rejoice in its comfort. But how greatly he also needs its support against the storms* from without*! His situation in political respects is precisely the most tormenting of all. To those of the first-mentioned class he is a heretic, because he perhaps goes about with uncovered head — while those of the second class shun him because he takes no part in their frivolity; in their eyes he is a hypocrite, because he — can still pray." In order to observe the* suum cuique* and not to compromise Mr. Joelsohn, it must be noted here that the explanations and additions inserted here in ( ) (not out of place here) are not his own words,

[27]With much gratitude I name here the celebrated names *Niemeyer*, *Reinhard* and *Frint*.[*]

have made use of them, but will rather perceive with all the more pleasure that their noble striving is to have its effect also on a class of men upon whom they least reckoned in composing their writings.

I also hold that in a work of the present kind, apart from the Bible passages cited, nothing ought to be accepted on the authority of any writer. [p. XXV] For pupils who are destined for the higher sciences must be guided to let neither head nor heart be bribed by any human authority, but rather to think for themselves on every subject, without being prepossessed by prejudice. For were this not so, Dialectic would still sit upon the throne of wisdom and would go on ruling the mind with its rusty scepter.

Truly! this scholastic spirit — or rather un-spirit — of the Middle Ages, which still carries on its mischief in Jewish theology, places no insignificant obstacles in the way of inquiry toward the improvement of this nation and its progress with the spirit of the age. For although it is not to be denied that Aristotle and his commentators Avicenna and Averroes gave the Jewish theologians, by way of the Arabic school, the impulse to scientific inquiry, it is equally true that the monstrous element of this doctrinal system has become so interwoven with Jewish theology, or properly with the exegesis of Scripture, that its weft threads are recognizable only to one who has made himself closely acquainted with the principles and the train of thought of this school. Indeed, it has claimed superiority for itself to such a degree that whoever should dare to attack even one of its propositions exposes himself among the zealots to the danger of being branded a heretic, just as if he wished to shake the foundations of the Mosaic religion.

I would indeed still have much to say about the plan, the arrangement, the division and the diction of this work; but I have already extended myself too far for a preface. Permit me only the following remark. According to my plan, I have divided the religious instruction for the whole six-year Gymnasium course into two sections or courses. [p. XXVI] For the first course, namely for the two lower Gymnasium classes, are intended the history of the Israelites from the Creation until after the destruction of the Second Temple, with moral remarks bearing on the present world; then the contents of the canonical and apocryphal books, as well as a concise doctrine of religion and of duties, designed for pupils of ten to twelve years who pass from the German into the Latin schools. The second course of this religious instruction consists of an expanded a) dogmatic and b) moral doctrine of religion, according to the needs of the upper Grammar and Humanities classes, and thus for youths of fourteen years and over; it is worked out chiefly with a view to the fact that, for students of the philosophical sciences who are of the Mosaic faith, no special religious instruction is any longer prescribed, and this subject is closed for them with the second Humanities class; and therefore it was also necessary to raise here many things which, with Gymnasium pupils of the Christian faith, could be saved up until their philosophical studies. According to this statement, the first course of this Handbook, as the preparation and introduction to the second, ought then to have preceded it in print as well. But circumstances whose enumeration would not be in the right

place here — and especially the fact that this second course, intended for the more mature youths, forms a self-contained whole — induced me to publish it first and to let the first course follow immediately afterwards.

[p. —]

Doctrine of Religion

Introduction

§. 1. Necessity of a thorough doctrine of religion for youths engaged in study

Although for by far the greater part of mankind Religion can be merely the object of a reassuring and consoling *faith*, and a motive to virtuous dispositions and actions, even with only a superficial knowledge of it, it nevertheless deserves, for those who belong to the educated class of society, and especially for *youths engaged in study*, to become the object of their further examining reflection just as much as many other objects of human knowledge. The true formation of the youth must in no respect be one-sided. In his school years he must acquire *general concepts* of everything worth knowing, of everything that has ever worthily occupied the minds of thinking men; and to this there certainly belong also a knowledge of various religions and, above all, pure and refined concepts of his *own* Religion. If he must be ashamed [p. 2] of perverse judgments about the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, if he must be ashamed of failing to distinguish what their sages thought about it from what the uncultivated populace thought, then he should rightly be ashamed of similar judgments when the subject is a religion lying far closer to him. Above all, a thorough knowledge of Religion will guard the educated youth, amid the great diversity of opinions about *right belief* (orthodoxy) and *false belief* (heterodoxy), against the dangers of *frivolity* and *unbelief* on the one side, as well as of *enthusiasm* and *superstition* on the other.

§. 2. What Religion is in general

Whoever acknowledges a highest Being, thinks of himself as standing in a connection with it, and seeks to worship it, is said to have *Religion*. Religion itself, therefore, considered as *a series of conceptions*, is the sum of what is held to be knowable of God and of the mutual relation between him and man. Considered as a *disposition*, however, it is the worship of God through the fulfillment of all duties *as divine commandments*. — As far back as our records of mankind reach, we find everywhere fainter or clearer traces of religious concepts. Everything leads man toward Religion, for it is a need of his understanding and of his feelings. Man's weakness, his dependence, his well-being, engender in him fear, hope, faith and gratitude toward an invisible ruler of all nature.

[p. 3] §. 3. Diversity of religious concepts

But out of the diversity of men's conceptions of God, and of the best manner of worshipping him, different religions have arisen. Insofar as man is led to the knowledge of God by his own moral feeling, or by his reflection on himself and on nature, the religion is called *natural* religion. The

history of ancient and modern peoples confirms in equal measure: 1) how far man strays from the truth on this path, but also 2) to what degree of conceptions of God and of his moral worship he can attain by it. Every religion, however, of which it is presupposed that it was communicated by God *immediately* to some man, is called a *Revelation* in the proper sense. A belief in revelation is found among all peoples. Since, however, many of these revelations rest on deceptions, the following may serve in general for testing the genuineness of a revealed religion. If a doctrine of religion agrees with the worthiest concepts of reason concerning God and our duties, and if its observance unfailingly results in the ennobling of our nature, then there is at least nothing in its *content* on account of which it could not be of immediately divine origin. But since this immediate divine origin is itself a *fact*, it can be confirmed only by a supernatural attestation, by *miracles* (§. 100).

[p. 4] §. 4. What the doctrine of religion is

The doctrine of religion instructs man concerning the relations in which he stands both to God and to created beings, so that, as a being that has free will and determines its own actions, he may attain the end of his existence. It further teaches him to derive from these relations the rules according to which he has to order his actions in order to attain his end, and at the same time furnishes him with the motives for following his reason rather than his inclinations. From this it follows that the doctrine of religion falls into two parts, namely 1) the doctrine of the things with which man stands in connection, together with the relations he has to them — with which *Dogmatics*, or the *doctrine of religion in the narrower sense*, is occupied, and this contains the *theoretical* doctrines; and 2) the doctrine of how, from these relations, the rules are derived according to which man is to use his powers in order to attain his destiny, and which at the same time furnishes him with the motives for acting thus and not otherwise — with which *ethics* (Sittenlehre), or *morals*, is occupied, and which contains the *practical* part of the doctrine of religion.

§. 5. Kind of proofs in the doctrine of religion

The relations in which man finds himself with God and with creation are of a twofold kind. Some are grounded in the essential properties and in [p. 5] the natural connection of things, and are demonstrable by mere reason; other relations, however, rest on positive connections added over and above the natural ones, which are grounded solely in the decrees of the Deity and can be known and proved not by reason, but solely by an immediate Revelation (§. 3). Hence there is also a Dogmatics of reason, which explains the natural relations of man, and a Dogmatics of Revelation, which is occupied with the positive relations. From this it follows that two kinds of proof are applicable in Dogmatics, namely those through mere reason, and then the supernatural ones through Revelation, which also give the former greater sanction through the authority of their origin.

§. 6. Documents of the biblical faith in Revelation

In the biblical religious writings both the *patriarchal* and the *Mosaic* religion appear as a divine Revelation. Both have in common the fundamental doctrines: 1) that there is only *one* God; and 2) that he is most worthily worshipped by a virtuous mind and conduct. Both, however, are also represented as immediate revelations, attested by *theophanies* (appearances of God) and miracles. The *biblical books*, as the written documents of these revelations, bear the stamp of truth both through the simplicity of their narrative and through the honesty of their authors' character (§. 113 and 121). The content of the religion contained in Holy Scripture [p. 6] remains for us the most evident proof of its worth. This it proves both through the reasonableness of its doctrines and precepts and through its power to improve and to tranquilize man. The more honestly one follows it, the more certain one becomes of its high worth (§. 129).

§. 7. Content of the Mosaic doctrine of religion

The doctrines of the Mosaic religion — by which are understood at the same time those of the later Prophets, as a further development and elucidation of the Mosaic ones — an exact knowledge and examination of which must be important to us above all for the very reason that we have been brought up from our youth to profess them, contain partly instruction concerning God, his attributes and his general operation (Chapter 1); partly instruction concerning man, his nature, destiny and moral condition (Chapter 2); and partly instruction concerning God's arrangements for the improvement and ennobling of man, concerning the laws he must follow and the aids he must employ in order to attain this end (Chapter 3); or, in the usual expression: instruction concerning the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and Revelation.

[p. 7] Chapter One. The Doctrine of God, His Attributes and His Operations

Section I. Of Faith in the Existence of God

§. 8. God exists. Conviction from grounds of reason

Faith in God as the author of all things precedes the *conviction* of his existence grounded on rational proofs, and is a need for rational man which he feels as soon as he has attained a certain degree of mental cultivation (§. 2). Countless men never get further than this *faith*, and, if it awakens virtuous dispositions in them, it is beneficial to them. Yet it is nonetheless very useful to become clearly conscious of the grounds on which it rests: partly in order to meet doubts that may easily arise, partly to convince oneself still more how much speaks for a doctrine from which all Religion proceeds and which stands in such close connection with virtue and peace of mind.

The *proofs* which older and more recent philosophers and divines have used are either wholly speculative — like the metaphysical [p. 8] ontological proof, taken from the concept of the most

perfect Being[28] — or they are derived from *experience*. To the latter belong the inference from the existence of the world to the existence of a Creator (cosmotheology),[29] from the wise connection of means and ends (teleology),[30] and from the admirable greatness and perfection of the world to the infinite perfection of its author (physicotheology). If, however, one infers from the moral law implanted in all men a lawgiver, from the necessity of a moral order of the world a moral ruler of the world, and from the disproportion of the happiness distributed in the world to virtue a requiter of good and evil, this is called the *moral proof*.

§. 9. Teachings of Holy Scripture concerning the existence of God

In the biblical books of religion the doctrine that there is a God is, to be sure, presupposed, but it is also often confirmed, now by one, now by several of the grounds adduced, and faith in him is represented as a *duty* for every rational man.

[p. 9] In the whole of Holy Scripture the knowledge of a highest Being is the prevailing doctrine. The creation of the whole universe, the formation and beneficent ordering of our earth, is his work; he is the Creator of the first human pair, to whom he also makes himself known immediately, and from whom this knowledge is propagated to their posterity, who worshipped him with sacrifices. This knowledge is preserved in especial purity in the family of Abraham, which in Egypt is still further strengthened in this knowledge through a series of wondrous appearances and extraordinary benefits. Moses made special arrangements to impress these truths very deeply upon the Hebrews; he founded the whole constitution of the state upon them, established a theocracy, set up Jehovah as the King of the nation, and made faith in him the fundamental law. Parents are directed to instruct their children in the Law, and every seventh year it had to be read out in full to the assembled people; and in it faith in Jehovah is the most important thing. The national festivals are means of remembering him and his benefits. After the building of the Temple, divine worship became still more solemn; many popular songs were composed in which Jehovah is praised throughout, and all the fortunes of the nation, happy or unhappy, are traced back to him. The Prophets speak in the name of Jehovah, legitimize themselves as his envoys, and insist upon a right knowledge of God.

[28] In the concept of the most perfect Being a principal mark would be lacking if existence did not belong to it.

[29] The world exists, but not necessarily; rather, contingently. It must therefore have its ground in a necessary cause, which must at the same time be conceived as the most perfect.

[30] In nature there are countless traces of certain arrangements according to definite purposes, which lead back to a highest and rational cause of the whole.

[p. 10] Section II. Of the Divine Attributes[31]

§. 10. God's nature is incomprehensible. Analogy with human nature

Man is far too weak and too finite to fathom the essence of God. God remains incomprehensible to him (Ps. 139:6; Isa. 40:13, 14, 18). But he is able, by various paths, to know as much of God as is a need and a benefit for him. For a pure moral worship can subsist even with the imperfection of his conceptions, just as childlike reverence, love and obedience can subsist with a child's feeble notions of his father. Now although human nature is the most perfect that we know, and we may therefore most readily infer from it, setting aside all weakness, to the divine nature, one must nonetheless beware lest human concepts degenerate into crude conceptions unworthy of God (anthropomorphisms)[32] and (anthropopathisms).[33]

[p. 11] Where such things are found in individual passages of the Bible, they must be corrected by others (Ps. 33:18; Jer. 2:15,[34] compared with Isa. 40:12–18; Gen. 6:6–7; Exod. 32:14; compare Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 50:8–13). When, for example, God is called a spirit, this is meant to guard against everything corporeal and sensuous, and consequently also against all worship under any image (image-worship, idolatry), without anyone thereby wishing to explain his essence or to set his nature on a level with the nature of a created spirit.

§. 11. Attributes of God in general

When one ascribes individual attributes or perfections to God, one thereby comes to the aid of the weakness of one's own understanding; but one may no more think of them as separated in God himself than one thinks of the qualities in the character of a perfect sage as separated. Above all, one must beware of ever holding it possible that one of these perfections could be in contradiction with another, or of believing that one may expect from the one what the other denies. This ought not to be so even in the perfect man, and still less can it be conceivable in God.

We think of the attributes of God either in relation to the creation of the universe — these are known chiefly through theoretical reason and are called *physical* attributes; or they relate to the moral government of the world, are known chiefly with the help of practical reason, and are called *moral* attributes. [p. 12] These latter are all the more important for us because they contain the highest ideal of moral goodness, which we are to strive after (Deut. 10:20). Of the first kind are, e.g., God's eternity, omnipotence, unity, etc.; of the second kind, God's all-goodness, holiness, justice, and so forth.

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[31] Translator: Beer heads this division "II. Abtheilung", whereas the first was "I. Abschnitt"; both are rendered "Section".

[32] When, on account of the similarity of certain effects, something borrowed from corporeal nature is ascribed to God, Jer. 27:5; Isa. 37:17; Ps. 33:18.

[33] When, likewise on account of the similarity of certain effects, something taken from man's *sensuously feeling* nature is ascribed to God, e.g. human inclinations, changes of mood, passions (Exod. 32:14; Job 9:13; Ps. 50:16; Isa. 26:20; Jer. 31:20).

[34] Translator: so printed ("Jer. 215"); probably a misprint for Jer. 27:5, cited in note l above alongside Ps. 33:18.

§. 12. God's omnipotence. Teachings of Revelation

Among the perfections ascribed to God, what first strikes the eye even of the untrained understanding is the greatness of the universe and the infinite *might* and *power* which its production presupposes, and which, since nothing may be impossible to it, is called *omnipotence*. With our growing knowledge of nature and its astonishing powers and products on the one hand, and of the limitation and weakness of human activity on the other, the impression of this perfection must grow stronger daily.

In Holy Scripture we find the most correct conceptions of God's omnipotence. Moses traces the creation of the whole universe back to the divine power (Gen. 1:1). Abraham always calls God the God of heaven and earth (14:3).[35] Jacob trusts wholly in God's power, which is able to save him (32:9 ff.). In the time of Moses the Israelites beheld God's boundless power in the miracles by which he led them out of Egypt. The most magnificent descriptions of the divine power occur in the Book of Job (38:4 ff.). Likewise in the Prophets (Isa. 40:12–31; Ps. 23, 32, 102 and 135).

[p. 13] §. 13. Practical consequences[36]

The firm conviction of God's unlimited power, and a constant looking up to it, must keep up our courage and secure us against despair or faint-hearted despondency when, beset by sufferings, we see no rescue either in ourselves or in our fellow creatures. Reason plainly demands that we always place our highest trust in the mightiest Being, and by no means in the unstable and changeable things of the world of sense (Ps. 117:7).[37] But this trust would be foolish if something immoral lay at its ground, or if this trust stifled our own activity.

Often, in honestly striving after morality, we feel our own inability. Here too we must strengthen ourselves by looking up to God's power; he will surely supply what we cannot do of ourselves, if only we do what we really can. No less must the thought of God's omnipotence support us when, in the practice of virtue here below, we do not enjoy that well-being which the friend of virtue deserves: our courage must not slacken; for we know a Being who possesses power sufficient to grant one day to every ennobled man that bliss of which he has made himself worthy by his conduct. In the same way, however, there is no possible means by which the wicked man could withdraw himself from the punishing arm of God.

§. 14. Omniscience. Teaching of Revelation

This highest power must, in order to produce such effects as the world presents to us, be joined [p. 14] with the highest understanding. This highest understanding appears to us in the most universal

[35] Translator: so printed; the phrase occurs at Gen. 14:22 and 24:3.

[36] Translator: this page is misprinted "15" in the original; it falls between pp. 12 and 14.

[37] Translator: so printed; Ps. 117 has only two verses. Probably Ps. 118:8 ("It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man") is meant.

knowledge, independent of every weakness and limitation, of all that is, that was, and that will be. For since everything that exists can have its origin only in God's omnipotence, nothing that has existence can be unknown to him either. Consequently there can be nothing of which he does not have the most perfect knowledge. He is *omniscient*.

In the Holy Scriptures God appears everywhere as the one to whom nothing is unknown, who knows the future too, both in the world of sense and in the world of spirits. God foretells definitely to Abraham his own fate and the fate of his descendants (Gen. 15:13); he knows that Pharaoh will harden his heart and will let the Israelites go only when compelled by punishment (Exod. 3:19); he knows that the Israelites, after he has given them the land of Canaan, will be faithless to him (Deut. 31:20). Job confesses that nothing on earth is unknown to God (21:1–28; 31:4; 42:2). The Prophets rebuke those who believe that they can hide their thoughts from God and conceal their works from him (Isa. 39:15 f.; Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 11:15).[38] Omniscience is set forth very definitely in the Psalms (Ps. 32:13 f.; 93 and 138).[39]

§. 15. Practical consequences

The right knowledge of God's omniscience has a manifold influence on our practical life. For if God is omniscient, and knows even [p. 15] our thoughts, then all our thoughts and dispositions must also be such as to make us worthy of God's approval. It is likewise folly to let oneself be led into immoral actions on the ground that they remain hidden from the eyes of men, since there is after all an all-seeing Being above us, whose approval must matter more to us than the judgments of all mortals. — Just as God's omniscience is to hold us back from evil, so it is to spur us on to do as much good as lies within our powers, even in secret, even unrecognized by men. If God is omniscient, then we must not pray as though we first wished to inform God of our needs, but rather in order to strengthen ourselves in virtue through the remembrance of God. Finally, if we recognize omniscience too in God as the model for our imitation, then we too must strive unceasingly to grow ever more in knowledge and learning, above all in what is connected with our calling or with the general destiny of man.

§. 16. The Omnipresence of God. Teaching of Revelation and Practical Consequences.

If God is omniscient, it follows that everything is also present to him, or, in common parlance, God is omnipresent. Already in the Book of Job (11:7–9) God's omnipresence is clearly set forth. Solomon, too, expressed himself very clearly on this in his prayer after the completion of the

[38] Translator: so printed; Isa. 29:15 f. and Ezek. 11:5 are evidently meant.

[39] Translator: so printed; probably Ps. 33:13 f. and Ps. 139 are meant.

building of the Temple (2 Chron. 6:10).[40] This [p. 16] conception is also found in the Psalms (138:7, 10; 139) as well as in the Prophets (Isa. 44:7; 66:1; Jer. 33:2–3).[41]

All the practical consequences that we draw for ourselves from God's omniscience can also be derived from his omnipresence. To this it may be added that, if God is omnipresent, we can lay our concerns before him in every place, pour out our hearts before him, and calm ourselves through the living remembrance of him when we are seized by suffering. It is also a great thought, one that inspires reverence, that the whole universe is God's temple, which he fills with his presence.

§. 17. The All-Wisdom of God. Teachings of Revelation.

In God's omniscience there also lies his most perfect knowledge of the best means, at every moment, to the best ends, that is, all-wisdom. Of this divine attribute we are convinced both by the whole universe in its interconnection and by every individual, indeed by every single part of each in particular. For happiness is the final end of creation, and everywhere we discover whole series [of means] for the realization of this great end. But not only the physical, but also the moral order of the world bears witness to this attribute of God. For the conduct of free beings must necessarily accord with their condition one day to come. The Ruler of the world must therefore possess the highest wisdom in order to be able to guide the physical and moral world in such a way that this accord emerges in the end.

[p. 17] Holy Scripture displays the wisdom of God in a sublime manner, both from the wise ordering of the universe and from God's moral government of the world. Moses observes right at the account of creation that, after God had created all things, he found everything good, that is, fit for its purpose (Gen. 1:31). Particularly worth reading here is Ps. 104:11–24, where the beautiful ordering of the world is described and concluded with the exclamation: *How great, how many are thy works, O Lord! All of them hast thou ordered with wisdom.* David also expresses himself especially beautifully and rightly on the ordering of the moral world (Ps. 1; 18; 118:97 ff.).[42] Altogether, the whole of Holy Scripture is a historical presentation of the wisdom of God in the government of the world, particularly with respect to human beings; for it emerges from the history of the Israelites that he guided this people, without prejudice to human freedom, in such a way that, for all its inclination toward idolatry and polytheism, and notwithstanding the powerfully influential examples of the other peoples, it nevertheless preserved faith in the one God and through it spread that faith to other nations (Ps. 147; 148[?]).[43]

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[40] Translator: So printed; the reference to God's presence filling heaven and earth in Solomon's prayer is 2 Chron. 6:18.

[41] Translator: Printed "Jer. 33, 2, 3"; the classic omnipresence text is Jer. 23:23–24, which is probably meant. Likewise "Ps. 138:7, 10" presumably intends Ps. 139:7–10.

[42] Translator: Beer's Psalm numbers here and below sometimes follow the Septuagint/Vulgate numbering (one lower than the Hebrew for most of Pss. 10–147): his "Ps. 118:97 ff." is Hebrew/English Ps. 119:97 ff., and "Ps. 18" is probably Ps. 19.

[43] Translator: The reference is badly smudged in the print; "Ps. 147" is legible, the rest (apparently "148") is uncertain. Ps. 147:19–20 (God's statutes given to Israel) fits the context.

§. 18. Practical Consequences.

Since we are free beings, and choose ends and means for ourselves, both must be in keeping with our true destiny (§. 62 ff.). We should therefore strive unceasingly to keep the end of our existence here rightly in view, and never to lose sight of it. Everything that we [p. 18] choose must therefore be chosen with regard to this end, and be a means to its realization. Now in order to attain true wisdom one must cultivate one's powers of soul as much as is at all possible, and neglect no opportunity for their development. This work must begin above all in youth and be pursued without interruption throughout one's whole life. It must also be one of our most pleasant occupations carefully to search out the traces of divine wisdom in creation and in its guidance, for which nature and the history of the world, as well as the history of our own life and Holy Scripture, offer ample material. The more we endeavor to come to know the wisdom of God in its individual features, the more we find composure amid the manifold accidents of human life, because we gain the conviction that under the hand of the wise Creator beneficial effects arise out of circumstances where we least believed it; we become practically convinced that, under the guidance of the highest wisdom, all things work together for good to the good.

§. 19. The Free Will of God. Teachings of Revelation.

Every accomplished work of a free being leads back to the will of the one who accomplished it; the world, to the will of its Creator. Since everything exists through him alone, and has received its ordering from him, this will cannot be thought of otherwise than as utterly independent and unlimited, although we are too finite to know exactly the nature of this attribute, as of the other attributes of God that we ascribe to him by analogy [p. 19] with our own nature, and the manner in which he acts. Only *what God wills* do we infer from what he has wrought, and this we learn partly from the contemplation of nature in general, partly from the particular constitution of our moral nature. The more familiar we become with both, the more worthy our conceptions of God become in this respect as well.

The holy Scriptures always represent God as a freely acting Being. In the writings of Moses creation is ascribed solely to the will of God, and even the most ancient patriarchs knew that all the events of the world are directed by the free will of God. When Jehovah is compared with the heathen idols, he is set as a freely acting Being over against deedless statues (Ps. 113:3; 134:5).[44] When expressions occur in Holy Scripture that seem to presuppose a deficient freedom such as ours is — for example, that he took counsel with himself, that he repented of certain things, and the like — these are sensory representations of divine operations for sensory human beings. Repentance is a sensory representation of the divine disapproval of immoral human beings, and "taking counsel" expresses in sensory terms that God orders everything according to the laws of the highest wisdom, and does not, as men often do, act according to chance.

[44]Translator: In Vulgate numbering; Hebrew/English Ps. 115:3 and 135:5–6.

§. 20. Practical Consequences.

If God is a freely acting Being, who in his actions determines himself wholly independently according to his [p. 20] unerring wisdom, then we are freed from that sad and disheartening doctrine which has invented an unconditional destiny, a necessity fixed without regard to the conduct of man (*Fatum*), to which not only everything earthly and spiritual but even God himself is supposed to be subject. Thus not in the hand of a blind fate, but in that of an omniscient, supremely wise Being, acting independently according to his insight, lie all our destinies.

God is the most sublime model for our imitation. His freedom is not arbitrariness and lawlessness, but the capacity to act independently and unhindered according to the laws of eternal right. Our freedom too should not be licence and lawlessness, but the capacity to determine ourselves in our actions everywhere according to the moral law. This freedom no one can take from us. This freedom is not only perfectly compatible with civil order; rather, in it lies the ground and the purpose of that order.

§. 21. The Holiness of God. Teachings of Revelation.

To God, as the most perfect Being, all moral attributes must also belong in the highest degree. He must be thought of as the ideal of goodness and justice. The God who planted the feeling for right and wrong in every human heart, and has declared his will so clearly through the voice of conscience, can only will the good and abhor evil. The former will be an object of his good pleasure, the latter an object [p. 21] of his displeasure. His will is therefore *holy*, and requires that man strive to become holy.

The documents of Revelation contain the clearest pronouncements on the holiness of God. "Ye shall be *holy*, for I the Eternal your God am *holy*," says Moses (Lev. 19:2; Deut. 32:4). So too *David* in Ps. 5:5–7; 14; Isa. 55:8–9. There do indeed occur in Holy Scripture some expressions that seem to stand in contradiction to his holiness, such as, for example, that he hardens the heart of men, as with Pharaoh (Ex. 4:21), and the like. But these expressions signify only that God withdraws his higher assistance from certain people who make themselves unworthy of it by their own conduct, that he abandons them to their own self-chosen wickedness, whereupon they go astray. But he never works evil. Nor does the mere permitting of it in any way contradict God's all-goodness: for were he to prevent this, or even make it impossible, he would have to transform human beings into mere machines that do not determine themselves.

§. 22. Practical Consequences.

Since God, as the supremely holy Being, can approve only what is morally good, we can win his approval through nothing other than morality. As God's will is always and everywhere in harmony with the moral law, so our will and our striving must be directed toward regulating all expressions of our will according to the moral law; for in this very thing consists our highest dignity, [p. 22] when through morality we strive to become like the most holy Being.

Since God, as a holy Being, values and treats us only according to our moral goodness, we have reason to be entirely at peace about the accidental differences among men that rank, wealth, and so forth bring about. We have reason to be content with every station in which Providence has placed us, because in every station one can be moral and earn the approval of the most holy Being.

If we are obliged to become like God through holiness, then it must be one of our most earnest concerns to come to know this law ever better. For it contains wise and beneficial directions toward moral goodness, through which we make ourselves worthy of a pure blessedness.

§. 23. The Goodness of God. Teachings of Revelation.

The Author of the world has not only placed in all sentient beings drives and a receptivity for well-being and happiness, but has also provided for well-being and joys of every kind. Thinking creatures are capable of joys of the senses, joys of the mind, joys of the heart. He must therefore be as good as he is powerful and wise. In him all goodness must be united. This goodness, however, is far from every imperfection, weakness, and partiality, through which it would cease to be a moral attribute; rather, it is universal, unchangeable, wise, and holy.

Holy Scripture carefully brings out the divine goodness from the ordering of nature; this is done espe- [p. 23] cially in the Psalms (36:6; 103; 145). In the measure in which the Israelite nation advanced in culture under God's guidance, its knowledge of God's goodness was also further extended; the nation gradually obtained clearer insight into the great plan of the moral government of the world, which has as its aim the promotion of human morality and thereby also of man's true blessedness — a plan that reaches over into eternity, and at whose complete execution the divine goodness too will become fully visible.

§. 24. Practical Consequences.

Since God, the highest model for our imitation, is good toward all his creatures and spreads well-being over all of them in so far as they are receptive to it, so a universal benevolence should also animate us, one that should extend not only to all human beings but even to the animal kingdom.

If God already shows us his benevolent love on so many occasions through the ordering of nature, then we too should be content with God's creation; we should enjoy the good that he allots us with a grateful heart and with a constant looking up to him, and display our feelings of gratitude in word and deed.

If God has shown his love toward us above all in this, that through divine Revelation he has made the wisest provisions for the promotion of our virtue and blessedness, then we would not only be ungrateful toward him but would also be acting against our own welfare, if it were not our [p. 24] most important concern to come to know these provisions and to apply them conscientiously to the promotion of our lasting welfare.

If we already come to know God's goodness from earthly joys here below, if we are well in their enjoyment, then from God's eternal goodness we may infer eternal joys beyond this life — and indeed in the measure in which we make ourselves worthy of them here: a thought that lightens the struggle in our striving after virtue.

§. 25. The All-Justice of God. Teachings of Revelation.

The bringing about of the *highest good*, which consists in the approach of all rational beings to likeness with God, the All-Holy, is of all conceivable ends of the divine will the worthiest. This would not be attained if no proportion were to obtain between *well-being and moral worthiness*. He who maintains this proportion, and treats each according to his desert, is called *just*. God must therefore, as moral Ruler of the world, be *just*. Divine justice does *not* as a rule show itself in the distribution of physical goods or physical evils according to the degree of moral worth (Ps. 13:21–26),[45] although these too act differently upon a person according to his moral constitution (Jer. 21:10). But the constant connection of certain good and evil consequences with good and evil actions, and the sure reckoning that the virtuous man can make on increasing perfection and on approach to God, just as the [p. 25] vicious man can on diminishing perfection, on estrangement from God, and on the loss of true blessedness, proves all the more incontrovertibly that a just Being governs the world (Ps. 114:165;[46] Isa. 48:22).

Revelation has shown the justice of God in the clearest light. To keep the Israelites firm in the knowledge of this attribute, God so guided their destinies that good or ill fortune befell them according as they conducted themselves well or badly. Moses visibly worked toward fixing this knowledge in the composition of his history. The first human beings fared well so long as they lived blamelessly, and punishment followed upon their transgression. Cain is struck by punishment for his fratricide; Noah is saved from the Flood on account of his piety. Abraham's virtue is rewarded with prosperity. Joseph's misfortune develops, on account of his good conduct, into an entirely unexpected good fortune. Moses assures the Israelites that God will treat them according to their conduct with respect to virtue (Deut. 28). In the Psalms and later writings we find glimpses of retribution after death (Ps. 23[?]:25–27; 48:15).[47] More on the immortality of the soul in §. 75 ff.

§. 26. Practical Consequences.

Quite apart from the future retribution of human actions, clear traces of it are already evident in this life. Besides the inward peace and contentment that virtue grants its friends, the fulfilment of duty also produces manifold [p. 26] earthly advantages. Industry and temperance preserve strength

[45] Translator: So printed; Ps. 13 has only six verses. Perhaps Ps. 73 (on the prosperity of the wicked) is meant.

[46] Translator: Apparently a misprint for Ps. 118:165 (Vulgate) = Ps. 119:165, "Great peace have they which love thy law," paired with Isa. 48:22, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."

[47] Translator: The first number is poorly printed (it may read 23 or 73); Ps. 73:24–26 and Ps. 48:15 (Vulgate) = 49:16 (Hebrew) are the classic texts on reward after death.

and health; diligence and application produce respect and further one's advancement. In the same way vice already punishes itself to some extent here below, since bitter reproaches are in its train. Idleness, moreover, makes one ignorant and contemptible; intemperance and lust weaken the health; extravagance punishes itself through poverty, and so on.

If the present life is only a time of education, then neither the good fortune of the sinner nor the misfortune of the virtuous must deter us from advancing on the path of virtue.

Yet if we think of this life as standing in close connection with the life to come, we can by no means infer a person's vices from his misfortunes, or his virtue from his prosperity (§. 74 ff.).

§. 27. The Mercy of God.

According to the concept of God's goodness that has been given, nothing more can be demanded of him than what accords with his wisdom, holiness, and justice. But what is reason to expect for a free being that for some time had an evil will and followed it with deeds, but afterwards recognizes its wrong, has put off its evil habits, and has formed the best resolution to strive in all earnestness after its destiny? May it, on condition of amendment, hope for a real forgiveness of its immoral actions, if at the same time it employs every possible means [p. 27] to make good the harm occasioned by its faulty actions? Since an affirmative answer to this question is of such great importance to man, one finds among all nations the desire for means of expiation. People took refuge in prayers, in sacrifices of every kind, even the most gruesome human sacrifices, in gifts of every form, in fasting and the strangest self-mortifications.

§. 28. Teachings of Revelation.

In the holy Scriptures, however, we find the definite answer to this question, and the means necessary for its realization clearly set forth. Already the unhappy Cain was given the instruction that, since he could no longer undo the fratricide he had committed, he could find peace and hope for forgiveness of his crime only through an earnest resolution to amend and through the carrying out of this resolution (Gen. 4:7). When Moses handed over the book of the Law to the Israelites, he announced to them the punishment they would have to expect if they transgressed these precepts; but he also promises them the lifting of the punishments if they return to the Law they had forsaken and follow it with their whole heart (Deut. 30:1–10). This the Israelites also experienced at all times: whenever they transgressed against God's law, they were set right by threats and punishments; but they found deliverance only when they changed their dispositions and actions and amended themselves. God expresses himself quite definitely on this [p. 28] through the Prophets (Ps. 108[?];[48] Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 33:11). But that the forgiveness of sins is to be expected not through sacrifices, ceremonies, fasting, or mortifications of the body, but only through amendment of the will and of deeds and through compensation for the damage caused — on this

[48]Translator: So printed; perhaps Ps. 103 is meant.

too Holy Scripture clearly instructs us (Isa. 1:11–17; 58:2–13;[49] Amos 5:21–24; Mic. 6:6–8; Ps. 51:18–19; Lam. 3:39; Joel 32:1;[50] Ezek. 18:21; 33:15). (See §. 141 ff.)

§. 29. Practical Consequences.

Earnest amendment, complete transformation of evil dispositions, avoidance of every occasion for the arousal of these dispositions or for the deed, and compensation for the damage caused, is the most indispensable condition for making ourselves worthy of God's mercy; and for psychological reasons this becomes ever harder for us with every new transgression. This amendment therefore becomes the easier, the earlier one undertakes it.

If it is comforting for us to be assured that God is inclined to forgive us, then we too must have a like inclination with regard to our brethren, to forgive their offences against us and to hold out our hand for reconciliation. An excellent means of diminishing enmity among men, the richest source of our misery.

§. 30. The Unchangeableness of God. Instruction of Revelation.

Man often later disapproves of and abhors what he had previously approved, and often [p. 29] later finds good what he had earlier rejected. The occasion for this is partly the changeable state of our body, which has a strong influence on our will, partly our increasing or decreasing faculty of knowledge, and the experiences we have gathered. But this occurs only with human beings. God, as a pure spirit, can be subject to no bodily changes, just as little as his faculty of knowledge, in accordance with his omniscience, is subject to changeableness; he is therefore necessarily *unchangeable* in his essence as in his will.

Holy Scripture instructs us on this and at the same time gives us the direction that God's unchangeableness is to be sought not in a blind fate but in his omniscience and all-wisdom (Num. 23:19; Ps. 33:10–11; Prov. 19:21; Mal. 3:6).

§. 31. Practical Consequences.

If God is unchangeable, and if his will is determined only by his eternal omniscience and holiness, then we can rely on him with complete composure, for we are sure of his approval so long as we hold to the moral law.

In this too God should be a model for our striving, that we also accustom our minds to steadfastness. For fickleness and changeableness betray a lack of reflection or of proper knowledge, or else they are the consequence of unjust undertakings. Firmness of character,

[49] Translator: The chapter number is partly obscured in the print ("8," at the line's end); Isa. 58:2–13, on true fasting, is clearly meant.

[50] Translator: So printed; Joel has only four chapters. Joel 2:12–13 ("Rend your heart, and not your garments") is probably meant.

however, can only be won by diligently cultivating one's understanding, not rushing one's decisions, and always determining one's will according to the moral law.

[p. 30] §. 32. God Is Truthful and Faithful. Instruction of Revelation and Practical Consequences.

To speak and act otherwise than one thinks, to promise what one cannot or will not keep, to take back one's given word, is falsehood and deceit. In God, who is holy, almighty, and omniscient, neither untruth nor faithlessness can find place. Could he promise and not keep his promise, he would have to be limited either in power or in knowledge, or his will would have to be malicious — which can in no way be the case. This Revelation also assures us (Num. 23:19; Ps. 33:4).

If God is truthful and faithful in all his declarations, then we must give his declarations full assent and belief. As soon as it is proven that a teaching has been given under divine authority, it must be as reliable to us as if we could demonstrate it in the strictest sense.

Because God is supremely truthful, he must also love truth in us and disapprove of every untruth. It is therefore a duty to strive after truth and under no condition to violate it. Through knowledge of this truth we can also be certain that all the arduous struggles for virtue and the fulfilment of duty will surely be rewarded.

§. 33. God Is Independent. Instruction of Revelation and Practical Consequences.

When reason reflects on creation, in which it recognizes nothing but limited things dependent on time and space, it must in- [p. 31] escapably posit as their ground a Being that is unlimited and bound neither to space nor to time, but necessary. It must find the last point in which everything finite terminates in the Creator of the world, as the independent and necessary Being.

In Revelation too God is represented as the independent, self-subsistent Being that needs nothing (Ps. 49; 90:2; 144:13; Isa. 42:5 ff.; 43:10 f.; 44:6).

If God is the necessary Being on whom everything depends, then man too must acknowledge his dependence on God. This acknowledgment must dispose him to gratitude toward God just as much as it presents to him his own weakness and humbles his pride. It convinces him that God does not need our service, and that the knowledge and worship of God can by no means have God's own good as its end, but rather our own (Ps. 50). The knowledge of God also leads us to trust in him, the more it convinces us that no firm support is to be found in dependent creatures (Ps. 146).

§. 34. God Is Eternal. Instruction of Revelation and Practical Consequences.

If God is unconditionally necessary and independent, he can be limited neither in time nor in space, and is therefore eternal, that is, he has neither beginning nor end.

Revelation agrees with this. Already Abraham called the God whom he worshipped the Eternal [p. 32] (Gen. 21:33). To the Israelites he announced himself as *Jehovah*, as the one who always is (Ex.

3:14). The eternity of God is beautifully sung in the Psalms and set over against the limited existence of other things (Ps. 90; 102:25–28). Isaiah also called him the First and the Last (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:15; 57:7).[51]

The thought of God's eternity has an effective influence on our practical life. The world of spirits, to which we too in part belong, is the true kingdom of God, which is, like him, infinite. Pure, untroubled, and endless joys await us beyond, for which we must make ourselves receptive on this side through cultivation and ennoblement. Now since our existence here below is short and fleeting, every day of our life on this side must be sacred to us, and none of them may pass by unused for the attainment of our destiny.

§. 35. God Is a Spirit. Instruction of Revelation. Practical Consequences.

If God is unconditioned and eternal, he cannot be corporeal either, since otherwise he would be dependent on time and space. He is therefore a spirit, that is, a Being comprehensible not by the senses but by means of the understanding, which can be compared with the other created spirits in name only.

Holy Scripture too represents him to us as a spirit (Deut. 5:12),[52] and to this refers the so oft-repeated prohibition of image worship (Ex. 20:4; Lev. 4:3; 26:1; Deut. 5:8; Isa. 40:18 ff.).

[p. 33] The doctrine of the spirituality of God, too, is rich in consequences for our practical life. If God, the sublime model of our striving, is a pure spirit, then the cultivation and perfecting of *our spirit*, as the image of God in us, must also be our first and most important concern; only thereby can we become ever more like the highest Being and make ourselves worthy of his approval. This observation deserves to be taken to heart all the more strongly, the more man is inclined to let himself be so carried away by objects of sense that he often quite forgets the cultivation of the spirit. The correct knowledge of the spirituality of God also stands in close connection with the manner of his worship, which has a strong influence on a person's conduct. If one thinks of a corporeal deity, one necessarily falls also into a corporeal, merely sensuous, ceremonial worship of God, which has not only no promoting but even a harmful influence on morality. What can be shown very well on psychological grounds is also confirmed by the history of all ages: that the actual life of men is shaped according to the manner of their worship of God, and this in turn according to the knowledge they have of the highest Being.

§. 36. God Is One. Instruction of Revelation. Practical Consequences.

On attentive contemplation of creation we observe everywhere *one plan*, a universal harmony of all parts into one whole. In [p. 34] ourselves, as in each of our fellow creatures, we see a co-operation

[51] Translator: The verse "I am the first, I also am the last" is Isa. 48:12; "57:7" is perhaps 57:15 ("that inhabiteth eternity").

[52] Translator: Probably Deut. 4:12, 15 ("ye saw no similitude") is meant; in the following list "Lev. 4:3" is likely an error for Lev. 19:4.

of all parts toward the formation and preservation of this very being. All the parts of ours, as of all the other planets, constitute precisely *one* planet, and all these planets together make up this *one* solar system, and all these solar systems belong to this *one* universe, as it is and has been for thousands of years. For a multiplication in the conception of the highest Being reason has not the slightest ground, either in itself or in the contemplation of the world; rather, multiplication is in itself groundless and superfluous.

Moses derives the origin of the universe from the mere will of *one* highest Being (Gen. 2:[?]).[53] Abraham is praised as the one who will seek constantly to preserve faith in a single God in his family. This fundamental law is constantly repeated in the Mosaic writings (Ex. 34:14; Deut. 4:39; 6:4; 32:39). Above all, the unity of God is very often and clearly set forth in the Psalms, and the folly of polytheism and idolatry is made palpable (Ps. 86:10; 115[?]:3–9).[54] The same language prevails also in the Prophets (Isa. 43:10–11; 44:6, 24; 22:22; 45:5; Jer. 10:6–16).

If there is only a single Being, then there is unity in our feelings and duties; there is only *one* object of our worship, our love, our gratitude, and our trust; we need not fear offending one god when we pay homage to another. If there is but *one* God, then we all together form but *one* family; we are all his [p. 35] children, brothers among one another, whom the bond should unite into a universal love, into one great whole. There is therefore no national God, no God of a particular people, of a particular land, but one God and Father *of all* men.

§. 37. The Blessedness of God. Instruction of Revelation. Practical Consequences.

There is a twofold well-being, a twofold blessedness. A *sensuous* one, which rests on agreeable sensations; this presupposes a faculty of feeling and organs; and then a blessedness of a *spiritual* kind, namely the pleasure that arises from consciousness of one's own perfection, of one's good qualities. To know the truth, to will the good, combined with the capacity also to realize it, is the source of the purest and most lasting joys of which a rational being is capable, exalted above every pleasure of the senses. Only blessedness of the latter kind can we ascribe to God.

Since the ancient peoples thought of their gods as corporeal, ascribed to them pleasures of the former kind and even passions, and imagined that they helped to promote these pleasures and passions through their worship, Holy Scripture represented God to us as an incorporeal Being, with whom corporeal pleasures are not in accord, and to the increase of whose blessedness human service can contribute nothing, nor is it able to detract from it (Job 35:6 ff.). Not for the increase of *his* blessedness has he commended virtue to us and forbidden vice, but only for the increase of the blessedness of man. If true blessedness rests only on the [p. 36] perfection of a being, then there can be no means for us of attaining blessedness other than our own perfecting.

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[53] Translator: The verse number is illegible in the print.

[54] Translator: The second Psalm number is partly obscured; Ps. 115:3–9 (Hebrew numbering), on the impotence of idols, fits.

§. 38. The Perfection of God. Instruction of Revelation. Practical Consequences.

If it is now proven that all the attributes enumerated here belong to God, and indeed in a surpassing degree, then it is also proven that he is the most perfect Being.

In an age in which even the greatest sages among the heathen ascribed desires and passions to their gods, and in general had very defective and dishonoring concepts of God, the most glorious descriptions of the perfection of God occur in Holy Scripture. Awe-inspiring are the descriptions of God's perfection in the books of Moses, in the Psalms and Prophets, and especially in the Book of Job (40:12–28).

Since it is a duty to become like God, we must also strive unceasingly to become as like this exemplar as possible. It is therefore never permissible to be satisfied with the stage of cultivation on which we stand, because we always see a higher one before us that we have yet to climb. Likewise every immoral action must appear to us all the more unworthy because it removes us from this goal of our striving. The living feeling that we can never wholly attain the archetype of perfection keeps us in a humble modesty, and puts down self-conceit and the pride that destroys one's own ennoblement and all human welfare.

[p. 37] Section III. Of the Works of God.

A. Of Creation and Created Beings.

§. 39. Concept of Creation, and the Necessity of Assuming It.

Everything that is must at some time have come into being, and at its first coming into being have proceeded out of nothing as the effect of an almighty will. This effect is called *creation*, just as the author of the universe is called the *Creator*. To assume this is incomparably more natural and appropriate to our reason than any other system into which the spirit of doubt has fallen in earlier and later times: whether one assumes the eternity of a primal matter, in which either God did nothing at all in creation, and the indivisible particles of this matter (atoms), having existed from eternity and being in motion, came together by chance into that combination which actually exists in the universe; or God merely gave it its present form; or [whether one assumes] the procession of creatures out of the Godhead (emanation), namely that the Godhead concentrated itself, and everything that is streamed forth from its essence as the primal source of all being, which is the system of the so-called [p. 38] of the Cabbalists; or who even regard the world itself as God: Pantheism or Spinozism.)

Revelation expresses itself very clearly on this subject. In order to instruct human beings in the ground of all truth, it begins with the words: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth* (Gen. 1:1). *God said, Let there be, and there was* (Gen. 1:3); and so it points to this

fundamental truth at every opportunity (Ex. 20:11; Ps. 88:12; 14:85; Isa. 44:24; 65:12; Jer. 32:17; Neh. 9:6).[55] So too in the later writings (Sirach 18:1; 2 Macc. 7:28).

§. 40. The Manner and the Temporal Origin of Creation

The manner of creation remains incomprehensible to the human understanding. For were we to take the account of it, as Moses gives it to us, literally, as a *doing* through an expenditure of strength and a resting after fatigue, this would stand in open contradiction both with the attributes of God explained in the previous section and with the concepts of the Deity which the Holy Scriptures give in other places. Compare Gen. 2:2 with Ps. 3:3, 6; Isa. 40:28.[56] Enough: we know that the world has its existence through God; the *how* remains unsearchable. The endeavor to search it out was the ground of the errors touched upon in the previous §. After all, even with many objects that lie before our eyes, such as the action of the magnet and the like, we cannot explain the *how*.

The temporal origin of creation, too, remains uncertain to the human understanding. That the earth is older [p. 39] than our chronology is proved, among other things, by the investigations of naturalists into its inner constitution. Moses describes the formation of the earth as it would have had to appear to a human being had he been present as a spectator. He describes this formation according to six periods, which he calls days; yet it is not necessary that these six periods must have been equal to our present days, because the revolutions of the earth before its formation may well have been different from what they now are.

§. 41. A Survey of Created Things in General, and of the Earth in Particular

However remote the manner and temporal origin of creation lie from our concepts, the more closely does that which has been created lie within our observation: that which, regarded as the sum of individual things and as a whole, is called the *world* or the *universe* (heaven and earth). The contemplation of it is as well suited to expand the understanding as to fill the heart with admiration, love and gratitude toward the Creator (Ps. 8:4–10; 111:2).

Were we to know nothing but our earth, it alone would already be a glorious theater of the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator (Job 36–41). On this earth we distinguish an innumerable multitude of creatures, partly lifeless and unorganized, partly living and organized. New discoveries every day allow us to conclude with certainty that this knowledge is capable of constant expansion. Even the mineral and vegetable kingdoms contain admirable arrangements. Still more striking [p. 40] are these in the animal kingdom, whether one considers the organization of the animal body or the manifoldness of animal species and their infinite varieties.

[55] Translator: The references are given as printed; "Ps. 88, 12" presumably means Ps. 89:12 (89:11 in English Bibles), "14, 85" is evidently garbled, and "65, 12" in Isaiah is probably an error for Isa. 45:12.

[56] Translator: As printed ("Ps. 3, 3, 6"); the intended passage on God's not slumbering or tiring is uncertain (perhaps Ps. 121:3–4).

Our planet is immensely large, inhabited by more than eleven hundred million human beings and by still more millions of animals, which people the air, the water, the surface and the interior of the earth, in gradations and intermediate creatures that are innumerable. Each of these creatures, even the smallest, has its own organs, its own instincts, and all are glad of their existence after their own kind.

§. 42. The Universe

If one looks upward from the earth, our dwelling place, the eye loses itself in an immeasurable space, traversed in regular orbits by an innumerable multitude of illuminated and illuminating heavenly bodies of enormous size. All this together gives us the idea of a *universe*, of which our earth is an insignificant part. It is, as the prophet expresses it, but a drop of a full bucket.[57] Our earth belongs, as merely one planet, to our solar system, and not even all the planets belonging to this system are yet known to us. Of such solar systems there are many millions. The so-called Milky Way consists of nothing but fixed stars, which are so many suns and which, like ours, form their own systems, all of which together make up one great whole, the universe. All these countless heavenly bodies are in all probability, like our earth, inhabited by living and rational [p. 41] beings, who enjoy good things in God's kingdom, rejoice in their existence, know their wise, mighty and good Creator, and under his government contribute to the realization of his purposes, to the accomplishment of his universal end.

§. 43. Man. Teaching of Revelation. Practical Consequences

In this immeasurable universe there exists, so far as we know, at least *one* species of beings exactly known to us, which raises itself through great powers and faculties above all other earthly beings, namely the *human race*. As to his visible part, man belongs in the series of animal creatures. But he is capable of something of which even the most perfect animal is not capable: he *thinks, judges and infers*. He is a rational being.

The Mosaic writings (Gen. 1:25, 26; 2:7, 18–24) concerning the origin of man (however one may wish to explain them in their individual parts) distinguish themselves in the most advantageous way above everything that all other nations have invented on this subject. According to some, human beings grew out of the earth like mushrooms, or came forth from the water; according to others they arose from stones, fishes or from sown teeth; some (Aristotle) believed that human beings, if they ever had a beginning at all, came forth like worms out of putrefaction, or out of eggs. But wholly worthy of God and of man is what Moses relates of it. There God is the immediate Creator of man; he formed him out of earthly parts, and [p. 42] animated him with a spirit created in his likeness, and from a single human pair the whole earth has been peopled.

[57] Translator: Isa. 40:15.

Man is therefore a moral being, the representative of God on earth, lord of all things that it contains. Yet this dominion is not arbitrary and unconditional, but determined by the moral law; only according to the direction of this law may he make use of all this for his development and ennoblement. This high dignity, to be God's representative on earth, which is common to all of us, teaches us to honor it in ourselves as in all human beings, and at the same time lays upon us the obligation never to grow weary in our striving to become ever more like God.

§. 44. The Realm of Spirits. Practical Consequences

That there are also *rational beings* besides man, reason makes highly probable to us, since it is scarcely conceivable that precisely one of the smallest planets in the immeasurable space of the universe should be inhabited by beings of a higher kind. With this the teaching of the Bible agrees. It speaks often of higher spirits (angels), regards them indeed as subordinate to God, yet raised above man, and as instruments which Providence has often used in the affairs of human beings (Gen. 16:7; Num. 22:22; Isa. 6:1–2; 1 Chron. 21:12).[58] Yet in the biblical teaching concerning these spirits or angels it is difficult to distinguish what is merely a notion of the time and the people from what is to be regarded as universally valid; all the more so, [p. 43] since in some passages there is talk of appearances of angels and even of the names of individual angels (Dan. 8:16; 10:13), while in others great or unknown forces of nature are called angels (2 Kings 19:35; Ps. 103:20; 104:4). The origin of the Jews' notions of good and evil spirits (demonology) is also, according to history, to be sought in their sojourn in Chaldea. The main thing in all this remains to guard oneself against the misuse that shows itself in superstitious fear and superstitious trust, and to preserve others from it as well.[59]

If, then, God is the Creator of the universe, we, as beings endowed with reason, must acknowledge him as our supreme Lord and render him the most unconditional obedience, all the more since reason at the same time presents him to us as the holiest and wisest Being. Since God, by virtue of his wisdom, created nothing without purpose, but gave to every being its end and destination, man, as a free being, must seek out this purpose of God, together with the means of attaining it, through reason and Revelation, and apply all his powers to the furtherance of these purposes. If God is the Creator of all beings, then we ourselves and all that we possess are a gift from him, and we are therefore obliged to unceasing gratitude, which we express best when we further his end, namely *universal happiness*.

[58] Translator: Printed "4, 22, 2" and "Jes. 6, 12"; evidently Num. 22:22 (Balaam's angel) and Isa. 6:1–2 (the seraphim).

[59] See Maimonides in the *Moreh Nevukhim*, Part 1, §. 49; Part 2, §. 6.

[p. 44] ## B. Of the Divine Government of the World, or Providence

§. 45. Concept of Providence

Just as the coming into being of the world leads back to an almighty *author* of the world, and its arrangement to an *intelligent* author of the world, so the *continuance* of the world, the constant connection of means and ends, and the uninterrupted regularity point to God as *Preserver* and *Governor* of the world. For of all things known to us, not a single one is so constituted that it would have to be necessary and unalterable. It is therefore necessary to seek the ground of its continuance precisely where the ground of its existence lies, namely in the *will of God*. It is true that the changes of the world take place according to fixed rules, in part recognizable by us, which we call *laws of nature* because they are grounded in the nature of things; but precisely thereby the will of him from whom these laws derive is accomplished. There is, therefore, a divine government of the world, or Providence.

In the doctrine of Providence one distinguishes *preservation* and *government*. The former we recognize in the uninterrupted continuance of the world in all its parts and in all the powers of the natures united in it, which would be inexplicable without a higher cooperation. The latter appears to us in the maintenance of the *order of the world* and in the direction of all changes toward the furtherance of the last and highest end of nature.

[p. 45] §. 46. The Object of Providence

God's preservation and government relate not merely to the *whole*, nor merely to *genera* and *species*, but also to the *individual*. Every creature, every power, every life is an object of God's preservation and government. For the *whole* is only an abstract concept of the understanding, and consists of *parts* and *individuals*. Divine Providence therefore watches over all the changes of living and lifeless things (Gen. 8:22; Job 38:22–38), over all the distributions of joy and happiness among sentient beings (Job 16:8–10).

God's Providence shows itself especially in the human race, both with respect to its preservation and to its gradual progress. Man is, among all living beings, the most helpless in his infancy, and with his weak body is exposed to the greatest dangers; and yet nothing has been able to prevent the multiplication of human beings and their spread over the whole earth, for he is made for every climate, which no animal body besides him is. In a similar way the culture of mankind, too, always moves forward, though in scarcely perceptible steps; the sum of knowledge is increased in itself and spread ever more widely among human beings.

§. 47. Teaching of Revelation

Revelation, too, teaches a special Providence of God for the human race in general [p. 46] and for each individual in particular. God willed that the human race should preserve and multiply itself (Gen. 1:28); to the very first human beings he pointed out their means of nourishment and warned

them against harm (Gen. 2:16). He brought about circumstances by which human beings were induced to separate from one another, and precisely thereby their preservation, multiplication and culture were facilitated (Gen. 9). The great as well as the small events of the world, the fates of peoples and of states, the elevation and abasement of whole nations through increasing or decreasing culture and enlightenment: all is God's ordering (Gen. 50:20; Prov. 21:1; Isa. 45:6–13; Jer. 18:6–9). The proportion of those born and those dying, as well as of the two sexes to each other (Ps. 127:3); every individual human being, every individual event of his life, the hour of his birth (Job 38:21; Ps. 139:15–16), as the hour of his death (Ps. 90:3, 5–10; 91:3, 7; 139:16); the measure of his powers, his education, his place in the world, his activity and his influence on others, his advantages and joys, his sufferings and griefs, his rescue from dangers (Ps. 92:2); his succeeding or failing hopes (1 Sam. 2:3–8; Ps. 37:12–14; 127:1, 2; Prov. 16:33; Jer. 10:23): all is the determination of the wisest and most gracious will.

§. 48. Practical Consequences

If God not only gave existence to all beings in nature but also preserves them through his Providence, then nothing [p. 47] in the whole of creation may seem unimportant to us; nothing may we use purposelessly, wantonly damage or even destroy, except for our own advantage or the averting of harm; for every being is a herald of God's power, wisdom and goodness. If God cares even for the least creature, then we, as moral beings created in God's image, have all the more cause to trust in his Providence. But though God does care for our preservation, we must nonetheless seek out and use our own powers and all the means of preservation offered us by him. In the divine provision for man, in that he made him ruler over all earthly creatures and endowed him with a rational and immortal soul, lies the ground of his highest dignity; but in this very provision lies also a ground for the humbling of our pride. We see from it how little even the mightiest of human beings is able to do for our preservation, and how that preservation depends solely on God's will.

§. 49. Intermediate Causes. Miracles

Divine Providence, however, by no means excludes intermediate causes; and only the unpracticed understanding, still too unacquainted with the laws and ordinances of nature, believes it sees everywhere an *immediate*, and consequently supernatural, working of God wherever it cannot at once discover the proximate cause. To this weakness of man Holy Scripture, too, has condescended, when it says: God thunders (2 Sam. 22:14), moves the earth (Ps. 40:4), kills and makes alive, makes rich and poor (1 Sam. 6:7),[60] [p. 48] where the middle term, namely "through the movement of the physical forces necessary for it," is left out. Many such passages are also written in poetic language, in which such metonymies are customary. Expressions of this kind are to be taken as when one says: the king builds fortresses, repairs the roads, opens the granaries, and

[60]Translator: The passage meant is 1 Sam. 2:6–7; "Ps. 40, 4" is likewise doubtful (perhaps Ps. 104:32).

the like. The common man perhaps also imagines that the Deity appears more glorious through miracles, and forgets that the preservation of the eternal order in the whole and in the particular is a continually ongoing and wholly incomprehensible working of omnipotence.

That miracles, however, that is, effects which could not be explained from the forces of nature (even supposing we knew them all), are possible to the author of the whole of nature, and that he has actually wrought such to accredit his messengers, admits of no doubt. Only the proof of them is extremely difficult, because we are far from knowing all the forces of nature, and are therefore not in a position to state precisely the point of division where their power ends and a supernatural influence begins (see §. 100 ff., especially §. 106).

§. 50. Objections against Providence

Among the objections against an all-governing Providence, those are unquestionably the weakest which 1) find it unseemly to keep cooperating in a work once produced, and to keep improving it; this rests merely on a perverse notion of this cooperation. 2) Which fear that a care for the individual and the small would be [p. 49] degrading for the Deity. This rests on an unfortunate comparison with human rulers and with what is called great and seemly in them. One forgets that the restriction of human attention to what is called great among men is a necessary consequence of man's limited understanding, and that beneath the luster of human greatness there merely hides weakness. Still others claim to observe too much that is purposeless or contrary to purpose in the world, and thereby often betray a high degree of ignorance, and always a high degree of self-conceit.

§. 51. Evil in the World. a) Physical

With more show of reason one appeals to the manifold evils, whether they arise from physical or moral causes, which seem to make a wise, good and just government of the world doubtful: the imperfections of all human joys; the countless multitude of sufferings through war, pestilence, diseases, etc.; the power of error and of vice; the might of evil in hindering and suppressing the good (Eccl. 1:8, 14; 2:11–17; 4:1–3; Ps. 3:14;[61] Hab. 1:4, 13).

Unquestionably much in this is greatly exaggerated. Far from everything is misery, not everything is undeserved that seems so to us. Pity is inclined to magnify; it overlooks the good that is mingled even with the greatest suffering. Moreover, a part of these evils is inseparable from the nature of finite and limited beings. Others are means for the attainment of very important ends. Out of pain and destruction come life and joy; [p. 50] what is an evil for the individual can be the highest benefit for the whole.

[61] Translator: So printed; perhaps Ps. 73:3–14 is meant.

§. 52. b) Moral Evil

Moral evil was unavoidable if there were to be free beings, who had to have it in their power to apply their powers to evil as well as to good. As soon as we assume that moral evil, too, ultimately leads to good, this doubt about the wisdom and goodness of divine Providence is also resolved. If there is a continuance of the soul after death, then not only may an equalization of the fates of the wicked and the good, which here seem so disproportionate, be expected, but every suffering, even the most undeserved, that befalls the virtuous may be regarded as a means of perfecting spiritual and moral powers. It would accordingly be presumptuous to find fault with a plan of which we here see only the beginning, and whose execution loses itself in a distant future still unknown to us.

§. 53. Teaching of Revelation

Revelation, in its entire content, is a proof of God's moral government of the world: namely, that God wills, and actually makes all the arrangements for it which can be made without violating human freedom, that we should attain to morality and through it to blessedness. Most clearly of all, the moral government of the world shows itself in the people of Israel, whom God had chosen in order, [p. 51] amid the moral decay of the human race, nonetheless to preserve the most necessary moral knowledge, and through this people to work beneficently upon the other nations as well and to spread blessing over all mankind. To this people the moral law, which at that time was for the most part misunderstood, was made known under solemn circumstances and in an extraordinary manner, and was also furnished with a special sanction. In worse times God sent extraordinary men, who legitimated themselves as his messengers through supernatural deeds, reminded the people again of the Law, and threatened punishments, which ensued when no amendment followed. From this it shone forth clearly how much God wills that human beings should live morally and make themselves worthy of his approval and of a pure blessedness.

§. 54. Practical Consequences

If God is the moral Governor of the world, and directs even the world of the senses for the sake of the end of rational beings, then in our striving, too, morality must be the highest thing. Everything that lies within our powers and means can and may never be regarded and used by us otherwise than as a means to this end; and it can never be permitted us to strive for the possession of an earthly good at the expense of the moral law, never to seek or enjoy a pleasure in violation of our duty. If God is the moral Governor of the world, we need not be cast down over our felt inability in striving after knowledge and virtue; if we honestly do what we can, God will surely through his government [p. 52] make up for our inability. But since the moral government of the world is essentially different from the physical, since here there can be no talk of a positive guidance, but only of arrangements, opportunities and occasions which must be used through our own activity if they are to bring about the intended end, we may not idly expect to be led to our destination by the

moral government of the world without our own cooperation; rather we must honestly use our powers and make use of the opportunities offered for our ennoblement. When we observe that despite our sincere striving after virtue we cannot attain such well-being as we wish, which is nonetheless a necessary part of our highest good; when we must bring many and painful sacrifices to virtue and duty, and find ourselves in unfortunate circumstances for virtue's sake, while crime meanwhile enjoys great earthly fortune, we need by no means be cast down over it. The blessedness of which we make ourselves worthy through virtue will surely fall to our share in its time, since precisely this is the end of the moral government of the world: to bring the condition of every rational being into proportion with its conduct. Finally, if the present period does not yet contain the complete unfolding of the divine plan, then we may never determine a person's worth or unworth from his fortune or misfortune; for misfortune can strike even the noblest of human beings, not as punishment, but as a means to higher ennoblement.

[p. 53] Second Main Part. Of the Nature, the Destination and the Moral Constitution of Man

Section I. Constitution of Human Nature

§. 55. What Is Distinctive in Human Nature. Necessary Knowledge of It

The nature of man is distinguished from all natures known to us by the union of bodily properties and powers with a capacity to think rationally, to desire, and to be conscious of this (§. 42).[62] A correct knowledge of man according to his nature, his aptitudes, his powers, the laws of change of his soul and of its capacity for representation, is, for everyone to whom it matters to develop his nature in accordance with its destination, or to fulfill the purpose of its author, the most important of all knowledge. He who is unacquainted with what he is, and what he *should* and *can* become, is also incapable of any cultivation, follows for the most part his sensual drives, and is, as it were, a being more animal-like than human. *Learn to know thyself* is one of the most important rules of life, and especially for those who [p. 54] wish to lay claim to cultivation, because in this alone consists the foundation of cultivation upon which the rest is built.

§. 56. Bodily Nature

The body of man does indeed resemble that of the animal in many respects in its structure, its organization, its coming into being and its passing away (Eccl. 3:19, 20). Yet it is distinguished from it to its advantage, besides its beautiful upright form, the arrangement of its limbs, and especially of the hands for the making of the finest and most ingenious works, and besides the nobler formation of its countenance, the mirror of its spirit (Prov. 15:13), also by the fact that man need not, like the animals, restrict himself to one kind of nourishment, but can make use of the

[62] Translator: The reference is presumably to §. 43, where man is treated.

most various kinds, thereby multiplying the kinds of sensual enjoyment, and precisely thereby being able to maintain himself under all climes; that through articulate sounds he is able to communicate all his thoughts to others; and that, being receptive to countless remedies scattered through nature, he can preserve his life, if not forever, yet for a longer time than most animals.

§. 57. Spiritual Nature

Both consciousness of ourselves and the observation of other human beings acquaint us with certain powers in us which cannot be present in the body. We are conscious [p. 55] that we possess a capacity to *know* ourselves and at the same time things outside us; through the action of external objects upon us to feel *pleasure and displeasure*, and therefore to *desire* or to abhor them. We therefore distinguish in ourselves understanding, feeling and will. All this together is called the *soul*. The activity of the human soul shows itself first of all in the power to know itself, to form representations of the things outside us, to become conscious of them, and to connect them with one another. The understanding acquaints us with the world and its parts, with ourselves and with everything that concerns us. It is true that it receives all its representations through the organs of sensation of the body, or the *senses*, and hence the constitution of the former depends on the constitution of the latter; but it can not only retain these representations received through the body, even when the external impression is past, by virtue of *memory*, so that it can recall them at any time in the very same order in which it received them, and, by virtue of the *imagination*, call them up again in any order it pleases and even with additions and enlargements; but it can also compare, connect and separate them, that is, *judge and infer*. These judgments and inferences follow according to unchangeable universal laws, which are grounded in the essence of *reason*, and according to which it is the supreme judge in the *realm of truth* and the supreme lawgiver in the realm of *morality*.

[p. 56] §. 58. The Faculty of Desire. Will

With our representations there is very often joined a feeling, now pleasant, now unpleasant. The eye of our mind, like the eye of the body, looks upon some objects of knowledge with pleasure, upon others with displeasure. Reason discovers here perfection, there imperfection, here a good and there an evil. Through this faculty of knowledge a new power of the soul now manifests itself: it *desires* and *abhors*. Willing and not willing follow according to an unalterable law. Man desires only what reason represents to itself as a *good*, and abhors only what it represents to itself as an *evil* or as something bad. He never desires evil because it is evil, but because he represents it to himself as good; nor does he ever abhor the good because it is good, but because he thinks of it as bad.

§. 59. Good. Evil

What, however, is good or evil, most people judge partly by a sensual feeling, partly by the instruction they have received in divine as well as human laws, or by what they have come to know

from their own experience as useful or harmful. But there must unquestionably be a sure criterion by which those concepts are to be determined, one that cannot be exposed to mere chance. This sure criterion can lie in nothing other than *perfecting*. Whatever furthers our greatest possible [p. 57] perfecting must be good, and whatever hinders it must be evil. Where objects of sensual feeling are concerned, this is also beyond doubt. Everyone calls pains, diseases, in general everything that weakens the body, an evil, and everything that strengthens the body and perfects it, a good. But concerning what pertains to the mind, too, it appears that the more a man develops his reason, the more he perceives that only a certain kind of dispositions and actions is suited to this reason of his and to what it presents to him as his end and destination, is fitted for its perfecting, and is therefore alone worthy of his approval and esteem, just as the contrary is unworthy of it.

§. 60. Happiness. Of a Lower Kind. Of a Higher Kind

From the perception of the perfection of our condition arises a sense of *well-being*; from lasting well-being, *happiness*. Since, therefore, the human will strives after perfection, it strives at the same time after happiness. The drive toward it lies deep within him, and guides him even where it appears as though he acted directly against it. The more developed, therefore, a man's reason is, or the more he increases in knowledge, the worthier also become his notions of happiness.

It is true that everything which produces any perfection in man is in this respect a *good*, as its contrary is an *evil*; and the former makes *happy* in a certain degree, the latter *unhappy*. But man receives only gradually [p. 58] representations of what makes him lastingly perfect and therefore happy. In this he first notices what makes an *immediate* pleasant or unpleasant impression on his senses, what produces pleasure or displeasure, delight or pain; later, what is conducive or detrimental to the duration and serviceability of the body and its parts. He therefore follows first his sensations, or *sensuality*, and, so long as he has no representations of a higher perfection, can consider himself happy as soon as his sensuality is satisfied.

But there are also perfections of another kind which, independent of the sensual nature or the body, are more peculiar to the rational nature or the soul. We feel ourselves, namely, the more perfect the more extensive our faculty of knowledge is; the freer and more independent our will is, whenever it desires or abhors, to be able to follow solely what reason declares to be good; the more we contribute to the furtherance of the common weal, or of the happiness of others, and can ascribe to ourselves the worthiness of being esteemed and loved by all. *Wisdom, virtue and love* are therefore conditions of *inner* or *spiritual* perfection.

§. 61. Natural Drives and Inclinations

Toward the perfections both of the first and of the second kind man is himself led by certain *drives and inclinations* lying in his nature. He has *sensual* drives, such as the drive to self-preservation, to nourishment, to sensual [p. 59] pleasure, to rest and comfort, and for that very reason also an aversion to everything that hinders these drives. But he also has drives and inclinations which are

grounded more in his *rational* nature: a natural inclination to perfect his representations, or *love of knowledge*; a striving after truth; a natural drive to freedom and independence; a natural inclination to esteem highly what is morally good, or worthy of the respect of reason; a drive of conscience (moral feeling); finally, *sympathetic drives*, or fellow-feeling for other sentient beings and an inclination to unite with them in society.

§. 62. Freedom of the Human Will

These drives, however, are not compelling for man, like *instinct* in animals. Their satisfaction, moreover, depends not merely on external circumstances, but in very many cases also on his own *free will*. This freedom of man, however, is not *lawless caprice*; for man, by virtue of his natural constitution, can desire nothing and abhor nothing except what in the first case agrees with his natural aptitudes, or in the second contradicts them. Nor is human freedom *unlimited*; for experience teaches 1) that man sometimes finds himself in situations in which he is not at all master of his reason, but only his sensuality is active, as happens not only with children and wholly uncultivated persons, but [p. 60] also in illnesses, in sleep and similar conditions; it teaches also 2) that the will is indeed determined by the representations of the understanding, but error and truth in the understanding very often depend partly on the constitution of the faculty of sensation, partly on other circumstances, on bodily constitution, temperament, upbringing, habits and other things which are not always in a person's power. From this it follows, therefore, that not all human actions are free, and that even the free ones are often only partly so.

§. 63. Continuation

Nonetheless we can on the whole be certain of human freedom. For as certain as it is to every person who reflects on his actions that in some cases he could not have acted otherwise than he did, so certain is it to him in most cases that it was entirely in his power; that he must ascribe his actions to his will, and that he must impute the consequences of his actions to himself. 1) Because he was often able to compare carefully with one another several mutually opposed representations, and to determine himself according to those which had the most reasons on their side, without surrendering himself to his first sensations and first impression. 2) He is conscious that the improvement of his understanding, the production of a certain train of ideas, the more or less frequent repetition of the same representations, the imagination, and finally even the external situation itself, by which his sensations are modified, very often by him [p. 61] depends, and hence that the reason why things make this or that impression upon him is to be sought not merely outside him, but frequently also within him.

§. 64. Continuation. Teaching of Revelation.

From this very fact, however, that man has a free will, it also follows that by nature, or as he comes from the hand of the Creator, he can be neither perfectly morally *good* nor *evil*; for as soon as the one or the other were *natural* to him, it would no longer be his *free choice* to fulfil his vocation or

to neglect it. He does the one or the other because he follows his reason or does not follow it. When Holy Scripture says that God created man good, this can have no other sense than that in which everything that comes from God must be called *good*, i.e. fit, serviceable and suited to its purpose; and this also seems to lie in the concept of the image of God, namely, that man is not, like the animals, determined by instinct, but has the capacity to determine himself to actions according to insight and free choice. For it is precisely by this that his nature rises above that of the animal, which is driven to act by instinct, but for that very reason admits of the concept neither of merit nor of guilt.

The Revelation presupposes the freedom of the human will, and also teaches it in clear words. Already the malicious Cain was reminded by God of the freedom of his will (Gen. 4:7), as was likewise done by Moses when he delivered the book of the law to the Israelites [p. 62] and exhorted them to observe it exactly (Deut. 20:19).[63] Especially remarkable on this subject are the words of Sirach (15:14 ff.).

§. 65. Practical Consequences.

On this freedom of the human will it is founded: 1) that something can be *imputed* to man, or that he can be regarded as the free author of certain actions, from which there arises, in the case of good actions, the concept of merit, and in the case of evil actions, the concept of guilt. 2) That for this very reason he can also regard the good consequences of his actions as rewards, and the evil consequences as punishments. 3) That it is possible to act upon his will through convictions and determinations of the understanding, and through the stirring of the drives by which the faculty of desire is chiefly guided; to give him motives, and thereby to obligate him; that he is therefore receptive to education, instruction and ennoblement, and that a guidance of his will is possible. 4) That man, just as he is capable of a great perfection of the understanding, is likewise capable of a great perfection of the will.

§. 66. Apparent Contradiction between Human Freedom and Divine Providence.

If a supreme power governs the world (§. 45), how can the freedom of rational beings be reconciled with it? Is this freedom not abolished as soon as the purposes of God must be regarded as being carried out not merely in the corporeal world but also in the world of spirits, and his [p. 63] decrees, from eternity, as final decisions about what is to happen? — This doubt would strike only the assertion of a wholly unlimited freedom of man. But as soon as we enclose this freedom within certain bounds — bounds which, moreover, are wide enough to develop and exercise human powers, and in this way to educate man in every state of his existence in the manner appropriate to him; when we remember that the Omniscient could indeed foresee, timelessly, the use or misuse of freedom, and order the arrangement of the world accordingly; and finally, that through the

[63] Translator: Beer's reference is misprinted; the passage meant is Deut. 30:19 ("I have set before you life and death … therefore choose life").

arrangement of the world and the whole connection of things it is not so much the capacity to will good and evil — in which freedom properly consists — as rather the consequences of this willing, namely action, that is restricted: then here too we shall no longer find any true contradiction. In this sense Holy Scripture also says: Man resolves, God executes; man thinks to do evil, and God turns it to good; the thoughts of man are not the thoughts of God, and the like (Prov. 16:1; Job 5:12–14; Isa. 8:9, 10; 54:16).

[p. 64] Section II. The Vocation of Man.

§. 67. Vocation. Different Kinds of Purposes.

When a thinking, rational being uses its powers, undertakes something, produces something, it also has in its thoughts a reason why it becomes active, why it applies its powers; it wishes, namely, to attain something by its effort. That which the rationally acting being wishes to attain by its work is called its *intention*, and this very intention, in relation to the work produced, is its *purpose*, its *vocation* (Bestimmung).

When a work is composed of several parts, all the parts taken together are indeed to effect something, and this is the *total purpose*; but each individual part, taken by itself, is also to attain something, and in this consists the *partial purpose*. Sometimes several purposes are attained by one and the same thing, of which, however, one is the most important; this is then called the *chief purpose*, and the rest *subordinate purposes*.

§. 68. How One Can Find the Purpose of a Thing.

One cannot make proper use of a thing if one does not know its purpose. There must therefore also be ways by which one can discover the purpose of things. These [p. 65] are: 1) *The declaration of the author of the thing.* The rational being that has produced a work must surely know best why and to what end it produced its work. Since, then, the intention of the author is the purpose of the thing (§. 66),[64] this purpose can no longer be doubtful for us. 2) *Our own investigation of the work.* Even if the author of a work does not himself communicate to us the intention for which he produced it, we can nevertheless find it by our own effort. We must, namely, examine closely all the parts, dispositions, in general the whole arrangement of the thing, in order to be able to judge from this for what it is suited according to its whole arrangement; and this we rightly take to be the intention of the author, and thus the purpose of his work: for according to the difference of intention, the rational author must also give his work different parts, or at least an altered arrangement.

[64] Translator: The definition of purpose referred to is in §. 67; Beer's cross-reference to §. 66 appears to be a misprint.

§. 69. Rules in the Investigation of Purposes.

When the author of a thing himself communicates to us the intention for which he made it, we are in no danger of erring, provided only that he tells us the truth and we understand him correctly. But we can err more easily when we wish to discover the purpose of a thing through our own investigation. Here only the following two rules can secure us against error. 1) In investigating a thing, one must not be content with taking only some of its parts into consideration, because in that case one would find not the total purpose of the whole [p. 66] thing, but only a partial purpose, only the purpose of one part. One must therefore take into consideration the parts and their connection with one another, the arrangement of the whole work. 2) Since a thing may also be destined for several purposes, in such a way that its author held one of them to be more important than the others, one must not invert this order, nor take the subordinate purpose for the chief purpose, or even for the only one: because otherwise one would not have found the true intention of the author of the thing, and thus not its proper purpose either.

§. 70. Failed Attempts to Find the Vocation of Man.

Man belongs to the free, moral beings; he determines himself in the use of his powers; he himself chooses the ends and the means to them (§. 63). It is therefore also necessary for man to know his vocation, because otherwise he cannot arrange his actions in accordance with it, and consequently will not attain it.

This truth has been recognized at all times, and for that very reason men have always endeavoured to discover the true vocation of man, the proper purpose of his existence here. But very many who occupied themselves with the investigation of this important subject went far astray, because they did not pay due regard to the rules given in the preceding §. Some looked in man merely at the animal part, at his sensual drives and inclinations; but of the nobler [p. 67] spirit, of his higher dispositions and needs, they took no account at all. These dragged man down to the animal, and gave him a vocation like the animal's, and for that very reason unworthy of his higher nature. They believed that man was created merely for agreeable enjoyment, for joyful sensations, for well-being, for happiness (the Epicureans).

Others, however, held the animal in man to be worthy of no attention at all, but looked solely at the nobler spirit and its higher dispositions. These lifted man above himself into a higher order of beings, and in his vocation made him into an angel, which he is not, and here below cannot become either. They believed that man was called only to do what is right, to fulfil the law which reason proclaims, and in doing so to take no account at all of his well-being in this world, of his happiness (the Stoics).

§. 71. Closer Determination of the Vocation of Man.

From these mistakes, and from the rules laid down in §. 68,[65] it clearly follows that if one wishes to discover the true vocation of man, one must take into consideration all his constituent parts, dispositions and powers. We may regard him neither as a mere animal nor as a pure spirit, but we must take him as he is, as a rational-sensuous being, composed of body and spirit, endowed with animal and spiritual dispositions and powers. So too Holy Scripture presents him to us (Gen. 2:7). His vocation must therefore be so constituted that it is appropriate to human [p. 68] nature in all its constituent parts. — If this is actually done, if one takes into account all the dispositions and powers of man, one sees clearly that man is called to become virtuous and blessed. Holiness and well-being, virtue and blessedness, thus constitute the vocation of man. Insofar as he is a rational being, he is to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, to love and do the first, to abhor and avoid the second, i.e. to observe the moral law, to become virtuous, and thereby he is to make himself worthy of well-being, of blessedness.

§. 72. This Vocation Harmonizes with God's Attributes.

Reason cannot conceive of God otherwise than as good and just (§. 23 and 25). Now if God is good, he must will the welfare of all his creatures, and especially of the rational ones; and this all the more, since he himself has placed in the hearts of men an ineradicable drive toward true and lasting blessedness. If God is just, he can approve and will only what is morally good, and must on the other hand abhor what is morally evil: he must will, and so direct things, that the good man shall one day fare well, and the wicked, on the contrary, fare ill. He can therefore grant blessedness to his rational creatures only on the condition that they make themselves worthy of his good pleasure through virtue.

§. 73. Attainment of This Vocation in the Earthly State.

We see from the foregoing that man [p. 69] finds the occasion for this vocation first of all in this world, i.e. in his present state on earth. As long as he lives in this world, therefore, he is destined for this world. All his needs and drives, bodily and spiritual, can find satisfaction in this state; all his dispositions can find at least some means of their development; all his powers can find a thousandfold opportunity to express themselves, to exercise themselves, and to perfect themselves. Every neglect of those means and opportunities is therefore a neglect of his vocation. This world is arranged so as to be for man, from the moment he enters it until the moment he leaves it again, a school, an education and a strict time of training. Whoever does not use it for this according to the measure of his powers, or forgets its purpose over the expectation of a future world, neglects himself and misjudges the will of God, who created him to be a citizen of this world (Sir. 11:17). It is therefore an error to believe that the future world alone is the vocation of man, and that everything must be referred to it without regard to man's vocation in this world. From this has

[65] Translator: The rules are actually given in §. 69 (as the preceding § says, "the rules given in the preceding §").

arisen the gloomy, incorrect notion of certain overwrought minds — a notion that crushes all the strength and activity of man and obstructs all the duties of civil society — that the world is a vale of tears, a prison of the soul, and so forth. Hence people of this kind set too little value on a man's making himself truly useful and serviceable to this world, on his learning and practising genuine wisdom of life here. Only in dealings with the world, not in total withdrawal from it, can man exercise the duties prescribed by reason and by Religion toward [p. 70] [God] and his fellow men;[66] to this alone does the knowledge and imitation of the divine attributes, or Religion in the true sense, relate.

§. 74. Immediate Consequences of Good and Evil.

At first sight, the fate of the virtuous and of the vicious in their present state is entirely the same (Eccl. 8:14; 9:2). The outward condition of man, the accidental goods of life, wealth, honour, uninterruptedly fortunate connections and circumstances — all this stands in no necessary connection with his moral character (§. 25). One can recognize with certainty neither the virtuous nor the vicious man. At times it even seems as though the former lacks many advantages which the latter enjoys, and his morally better way of thinking and acting exposes him precisely to many evils of which, without it, he would know nothing (Ps. 73:2–15). Certain natural consequences do indeed accompany good and evil even in this world, and stand in an exact proportion to their degree. The most important are growth in inner perfection; and the self-respect or self-contempt, contentment or discontent, peace or unrest of mind arising from the consciousness of it. Some of these evil consequences have their ground directly in the nature of the sin, as sickness in intemperance, discontent in envy, error in sloth and indifference toward the truth. Some arise from the relations in which we stand to others, whose judgment cannot be indifferent to us and who often [p. 71] do not treat us according to our moral worth. Still others arise from the consciousness of inner perfection, which is absent with every deterioration, or from the bad conscience, which expresses itself in ill humour, unrest and anxiety (Sir. 28:1; Wisd. 17:10–13). Finally, too, insofar as every sin must be regarded as an object of divine displeasure, anxious fear of God will be the companion of moral evil (Gen. 3:10; Isa. 48:22).

§. 75. Continuation.

Often, indeed, moral good grants already here below the very opposite of all this; it rewards even here with the most blissful consequences (Sir. 13:23; Isa. 3:10). These lie, just like the consequences of vice, partly in the nature of good dispositions and actions (Sir. 11:23; 12:16); partly in the respect which a man finds in society, and even with him who does not agree with him in his convictions (Ps. 37:25; Sir. 11:12); partly in the tranquillity of his good conscience (Job

[66] Translator: The word "God" (Gott) appears to have dropped out of the text at the page break ("Pflichten gegen / und seine Nebenmenschen"); it is supplied in brackets.

27:3–6; Ps. 7:4–6; 26:1–12); but especially also in the pleasant relation in which he may think of himself as standing toward God.

Yet all this comes to an end together with the cessation of human life, and in death all difference between men seems to cease; what of it falls under the senses is the same for the good and the evil man (Isa. 40:6; Eccl. 12:7; Sir. 14:18, 20). Even the state of the soul at the approach of the great change has nothing [p. 72] decisive about it. Its cheerfulness and calm depend just as often, and even more often, on the nature of the illness and on the bodily condition as on its moral condition. The ease or difficulty of the separation is as little the reward of a good life as the punishment of an ill-spent one. Often the greatest criminal dies most calmly. The grave at last claims the best as well as the worst as its prey, and decay dissolves the one as well as the other; their parts pass over into other bodies according to the constant cycle of nature.

§. 76. Continued Existence after Death.

These considerations have from time immemorial inclined man to extend his vocation beyond the limits of this life, and to hope for a life after death. The wish to continue to exist, and the horror of cessation and annihilation, have supported this hope not a little. The soul resists the thought that God, who gave it so high a dignity, should deny it the longing appropriate to this dignity — to perfect itself without end — and should decree annihilation for it instead of continued existence. Moreover, by no means all men on earth are in an equally advantageous position for exercising all the powers slumbering within them and heightening them by exercise. Countless numbers scarcely reach the first stage of the perfection of which their nature would be capable — much less through their own fault than through the fault of the circumstances under which, and of the place and the age in which, they were born. Some of them depart from the earth wholly undeveloped, before or [p. 73] soon after birth; another part remains in the state of savagery; another comes a few steps further; yet another is at most civilized by civil constitution and laws, and only the smallest part is raised to the stage of morality.

§. 77. Continuation.

In general, it is wholly contrary to divine wisdom to bestow such excellent dispositions and powers on a being, and to show it from afar so many objects for exercise and elevation, only to annihilate it after a brief existence in which these powers either could not yet come into activity at all, or at any rate fell far short of their goal. The plan begun in human nature would then remain unexecuted. Through reason man is connected with the universe, into which in this life he nevertheless casts only a feeble glance. Through it he rises to God; he has a presentiment of a perfect knowledge of the Infinite; he longs for a continuation of his purest feelings. Should these presentiments, this longing, this hoping have been awakened by the Creator only to be put to shame by non-fulfilment? Reason and Holy Scripture insist on privations and self-denials; if this life ended the duration of

man's whole being, would not those demands be unfair? Then earthly well-being alone would deserve to be our final goal. —

We also find very often that precisely those who lived most for their better part lived most [p. 74] unhappily. Only the continued existence of our soul after its departure from this present life is able to solve this riddle in a somewhat satisfying way. Our vocation therefore does not come to an end with this life, but extends also beyond this life.

§. 78. Doubts Arising from the Dependence of the Soul on the Body.

It is not, indeed, to be denied that the chief reason for the imperfect development of our powers of soul lies in the close connection of the spirit with the body; for experience teaches 1) that the spirit develops and is formed in proportion with the body; 2) that the changes taking place in the body also occasion changes in the soul; hence 3) when the body suffers, or disorders or disturbances have occurred in it, the soul suffers too, just as, conversely, 4) sufferings or disorders of the soul very often bring weakness and disorders in the body in their train. Even if, then, 5) our body — its preservation, strengthening and purposeful use of its powers — is within our power, it is nevertheless exposed to so many external and internal accidents that a complete independence of the spirit from it can either never occur, or only when the spirit is separated from it.

§. 79. Independence of the Soul from the Body.

We have, it is true, no clear notions of how a spirit separated from the body could [p. 75] think and act. Nevertheless, certain phenomena lead us to think that both are quite possible. We observe 1) that the human understanding can work upon the representations it first receives, to be sure, through the senses, can separate out what is sensuous in them, and through them can arrive at supersensible concepts, without needing its body and the senses thereof in the least for this. Why then should it lose, together with its body, the capacity to be active and effective? — We observe 2) that often, in the most extreme weakness and disruption of the body, the spirit still has all its powers together and retains them unweakened up to the moment of death; and it then becomes highly improbable to sound common sense that this thinking being, with all its powers — often wonderfully heightened, and effective to the last moment — should be annihilated all at once merely because somewhere in the body too much blood has accumulated, or some vessel has burst. We do indeed also see 3) the powers of the mind often decline with the body. Experience, however, gives us examples that a power may very well remain unchanged even when the instruments through which it acts enable it to express itself now more, now less. With the spoiled or broken instrument, therefore, the faculty and skill are not abolished at the same time. The power becomes effective as before as soon as it has again become master of another suitable instrument. The application is easy if one regards the body as the instrument and the soul as the acting power.

[p. 76] **§. 80. State of the Soul after Death.**

The state of the soul after death is unknown as to its actual nature, since 1) we have no notion at all from experience of how a spirit separated from its body could nevertheless receive impressions and act without bodily instruments; and 2) we lack all reports from the departed, and everything that has been mentioned about them by individuals has, on closer examination, always dissolved into a delusion, an empty deception. Imagination has meanwhile sought to replace by conjectures what it was impossible for reason to know intuitively. Thus there arose partly the descriptions of future rewards and punishments found among all nations — everywhere different according to the difference of national character — and partly the ideas now of a transmigration of souls, now of a sleep of souls, now of an intermediate state for purification from sensuality. The religious books of almost all peoples who believe in retribution after death have represented it to themselves under manifold images and comparisons borrowed from sensuous pain and sensuous pleasure, from earthly goods and earthly evils. To the uncultivated understanding these images are appropriate, and for the merely sensuous man they have something reassuring or deterrent about them; they resemble in some measure the anthropomorphic expressions which Holy Scripture employs for the sake of overly sensuous men. The cultivated man separates out what is coarse and figurative in the latter as in the former. It is enough for him [p. 77] that he is convinced by reason and Revelation of the continued existence of the soul and of a retribution proportioned to his conduct in this world. The *How* he cannot search out, and he will not even *reflect* upon it.[67]

§. 81. Teaching of Revelation.

The belief in the continued existence of the soul after this present life has always lain in man, though more darkly or more brightly. It developed, together with the concepts of God and of the dignity and excellences of human nature, into definite notions. All ancient peoples without exception believed in it. This is proved by the reverence they showed to the dead, by their universal superstition of necromancy; [p. 78] even their idolatry had reference to it (theurgy).[68] Holy Scripture teaches us about it, both through the history of the first men, of the patriarchs and of the Israelite nation in general, and through individual clear passages in particular; but it forbids us, often and emphatically, all superstition having reference to it.

[67]Neither in the Mosaic nor in the later biblical writings do we find the place of reward or punishment (Heaven, Hell) indicated. The word *Ganeden*, by which in later times the place of reward came to be designated, and *Gehinom*, by which in later times the place of punishment began to be designated, are indeed borrowed from the holy Scriptures, but there they have an entirely different reference. *Ganeden*, that is, pleasant garden, or garden in Eden (Gen. 2:8), is the place where, according to Moses, the first parents of the human race dwelt before their fall into sin. *Gehinom*, properly *gehenhinom*, the Valley of Hinnom, lay on the south side of Jerusalem. In the times before the first destruction the idol Moloch or Saturn, to which children were sacrificed, stood there (Jeremiah 8:31).[*] After the return from the Babylonian captivity the Jews abhorred this notorious place, as they did idolatry in general, and even its name, so much that they applied this name to the place of punishment of souls that had acted wickedly.

[68]The pretended art or science of procuring intercourse with spirits through certain performances.

Thus, for example, it is said that God graciously accepted the offering of Abel, but rejected that of Cain, which was the cause of Cain's envy and of Abel's death (Gen. 4). Should an early and violent death have been the reward for God's pleasure in Abel? If a clear hint of the immortality of the soul were not given here, then Moses would have represented God here as the most unjust of judges, in letting the pious Abel die an early and violent death for his godliness, without his ever having received a reward for his piety. The same holds also of Enoch, who walked with God — i.e. according to His will — and nevertheless left the world younger than his other contemporaries (Gen. 5:24).

§. 82. Continuation.

Where the death of Abraham is spoken of, Moses says: He was gathered (taken in) to his people (ancestors), and his sons Isaac and Israel[69] [p. 79] "buried him in the cave of Machpelah," etc. (Gen. 25:8, 9). Being gathered to his people or ancestors cannot mean here that he was buried among his countrymen or ancestors, i.e. in his native land, since Abraham's actual native land was Chaldea, whereas he was buried in Canaan. So too Jacob says (Gen. 49:29): I shall be taken in to my people; bury me with my fathers. The expression "to be gathered or taken in to one's people or ancestors" cannot here be said of the body, but of the soul, which retains its existence even when stripped of the body.

In his grief over the supposed death of Joseph, Jacob cried out (Gen. 37:35):[70] "I will go down mourning to my son into the grave." By no means can he have meant here that he would one day be united with him in one grave, since he believed him torn apart and devoured by a wild beast. But the ancient Hebrews did understand by the expression *Sheol* (underworld) a union of departed souls.

When Jacob was near his death, had gathered his children about him and was giving them his last blessing, he said (Gen. 49:18): "For thy salvation, O God, do I hope." Here there can by no means be talk of a physical recovery, since he himself clearly says: "I die; bury me in the grave of Abraham," etc. Jacob's hope must therefore have referred solely to the justice of God as reward for his actions in this life.

Balaam said: "O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my end might be like theirs!" (Num. [p. 80] 23:10). To what else could this refer than to blessedness after death?

When God informed Moses of his death, He said to him: "Go up the mountain Nebo, and behold the land of Canaan, etc. On this mountain which thou ascendest thou shalt die, and be taken in to thy people, as thy brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was taken in to his people" (Deut. 32:49[–50]). In no case can it be meant here that Moses was to be buried with his relatives, for none of his

[69] Translator: So in Beer ("Isaak und Israel"); Gen. 25:9 reads "Isaac and Ishmael."

[70] Translator: Beer prints "57, 35"; correctly Gen. 37:35.

relatives had his burial-place on Mount Nebo; rather it is said afterwards that no one has known his grave. The expression "taken in to his people" can therefore be taken here not in the bodily, but in the spiritual sense.

Later prophets speak more clearly of the immortality of the soul: Ps. 16; Isaiah 57:1, 2; 58:10, 11; Eccl. 11:9; 12:7, 13, 14; Job 13:15, and many more of the like. Especially the Book of Wisdom and Sirach, in many passages.

The repeated prohibition by Moses against conjuring up the dead is a proof that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was generally known among the Israelites in the time of Moses. For how could anyone have hit upon the idea of consulting the dead if one did not believe that something of him existed which would answer the question put to him? Now since the body was at all times subject to decay, the question must have been put solely to the *soul* of the deceased, which was believed to exist.

[p. 81] **§. 83. Continuation.**

The reason why Moses neither expressly taught the immortality of the soul, nor made this doctrine the foundation of his laws, but set before the Israelites only temporal rewards and punishments, seems to lie in the following:

1) The chief intention of God in sending Moses was not to set before the Israelites all the doctrines which God has, as it were, already placed in the hearts of all men. These were known to them partly from reason and partly from the tradition of their fathers.[71] The chief purpose was to impress upon them such doctrines as were misunderstood by the peoples surrounding them, such as the unity of God, the universal divine providence, etc. But with regard to the immortality of the soul this was all the less necessary, since at that time no nation called it into doubt; rather, among the idolaters this belief had degenerated into superstition, and from it arose necromancy with all its abuses, [p. 82] which in time degenerated even into the most abominable cruelties;[72] so that Moses had rather to forestall this superstition vigorously through several prohibitions having reference to it. That

2) Moses did not make this principle the foundation of his laws proves precisely that this doctrine was accepted without doubt among the people, and that he had no need to mention it specially. For most of the laws of Moses were civil and national, that is, they concerned for the most part the

[71] Thus, for example, Moses gave the Israelites no special preliminary teaching about the existence of God when he said to them: I am the God who brought thee out of Egypt. He built on the foundation that the existence of God was known to them from nature, or from the tradition of their fathers, or from the tradition of the peoples surrounding them, and wished therefore only to teach them that this God is one, that he alone therefore created the world and also still alone directs the fate of all men — in opposition to the belief of other peoples in several gods. So, too, we do not find that Moses forbade the eating of human flesh, because this unnatural practice was not in use among any of the contemporary peoples surrounding them.

[72] For example, that at the death of a master many slaves were murdered on his grave to serve him after death; and that even in the present day the revolting custom persists among the heathen in India that for this purpose the most beloved wife of a husband, at his death, voluntarily lets herself be burned along with him on the very same pyre on which his corpse is burned.

people as a mass; and these could by no means be referred to fate in the future world, but had to be grounded on temporal reward and punishment. The security and tranquillity of a nation fall and rise in proportion to the morality of the greater part of its members. If this is as it should be, general prosperity follows, and even the evildoer enjoys security from the enemy without, and, as long as his evil deeds are not discovered, peace from the punishing hand of justice within. In the opposite case there follow war with the neighbours, civil war, decay of livelihood, acts of violence, etc., under which, as general evils, the one who acts better inevitably suffers as well. Had the belief in the immortality of the soul not been general among the Israelites [p. 83] in the time of Moses, the temporal punishments threatened against them by Moses would have been of no avail. For the wicked man would not have been deterred by them, because, if the other citizens acted well, he would have had nothing to fear either from enemies without, or from injustice within, or from crop failure, etc., as punishments threatened against the nation *in general*; and since he did not believe in immortality, he would also have had no punishment beyond the grave to apprehend. Conversely, if a great part of the nation degenerated, even the one who acted better would have been carried along into wickedness, since he could foresee that he must necessarily suffer along with the rest under the punishments threatened against the land in general, such as war, famine, pestilence and the like, and could hope for no compensation beyond the grave for his better conduct. From this it follows that only on the sure presupposition of the belief in the immortality of the soul could Moses set temporal rewards and punishments before the entire Israelite nation.

Section III. Original Moral Constitution of Man. Corruption. Moral Need.

§. 84. Original Moral Constitution of Human Nature.

To man, as a rational and *free* being (§. 62), the choice between the [p. 84] left to good and evil. It is precisely in the free use of his reason that his likeness to God consists. He was created originally good *in this sense*: that deviation from the moral law is not a *necessity* of sinning implanted in him, but his own fault. That by far not all human beings are what, according to their destiny, they ought to be, is taught by the experience of all ages. It also tells us that there have always been mighty obstacles to human virtue, perfection and happiness. These obstacles lie partly *within* and partly *outside* the human being.

§. 85. Cause of Moral Evil within Man

Moral evil does indeed lie within man, but not in the sense that by his original constitution he must be *morally* evil, which would contradict every worthy conception of his Author; but only insofar as he, as a morally *free* being, received the disposition as well as the capacity to employ his powers for evil as well as for good. It arises

1) from the earlier power of the sensual desires, before reason in man attains strength and self-activity. Not only does he at first receive all his ideas through sensation, but, especially in the years

of childhood and youth, the faculty of sensation is almost the only one active, whereas reason begins to become effective only in riper years. The will, therefore, left to itself for a time, desires merely that [p. 85] which pleases sensation, and shuns what displeases it, without being guided by the insight of reason, which alone is able to distinguish the pleasant from the useful and the useful from the good, to discover the good even in what is seemingly unpleasant and harmful, and to determine the limits within which the pleasant can at the same time remain good.

2) From the habit arising therefrom of preferring the pleasant, and what stimulates the senses, to what is truly good. The frequent gratification of sensual desires soon becomes a settled facility; evil habits arise, and these often become a second nature before reason attains any strength. For everywhere there are stimulations of the senses, which there is no other means of resisting than practised reason, or the awakening of opposing impulses through education or through one's outward circumstances, and many people lack both.

§. 86. Continuation

3) Sensually pleasant sensations afford an immediate pleasure. The happiness, however, which is the consequence of higher spiritual perfection is less conspicuous, since it lies more remote and must often be purchased by self-denials and privations. In order, for example, to cultivate the mind, to acquire knowledge whose benefit shows itself only later, one must exert oneself and forgo many a pleasure on the spot. In order to be virtuous, the suppression of the strongest passions is often the sole condition. [p. 86] Sensations, however, act far more strongly and immediately than ideas, whereby it then

4) becomes very understandable why even all natural impulses that are good in themselves, which have been given to man for the preservation and security of his life and for the enjoyment of his goods, so easily degenerate into abuse and excess: as, for example, firmness of character into inflexible obstinacy; activity into useless and ill-applied busyness; desire for knowledge into petty curiosity; love of justice into faulty outbursts of force, etc.

On these observations the observers of man in all ages agree, and they lament the propensity to evil as loudly as the biblical writings do. The narrative of the so-called Fall of man (Gen. 3), however it may be explained; then the assertion that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21), leads to the observation, so well suited to human nature, that a certain natural indolence and shrinking from exertion and sacrifice, and the overpowering force of sensual desire, which makes us confuse apparent goods with true goods and keeps us from hearing the voice of the Deity warning us through conscience, is the chief cause of all our missteps.

§. 87. Causes of Moral Evil outside Man

To these inclinations within man there are added many *external* means that promote moral corruption, which are just so many obstacles to the good. The outward situation of countless human

beings is the [p. 87] first, often the mightiest obstacle to their moral development. It makes it impossible for them to attain the degree of knowledge and freedom of will required for it. Entire nations therefore remain for centuries, and perhaps millennia, at the same stage of culture, and in some this is so low that one can scarcely apply the standard of morality to their actions. With some, and especially in ancient times, the reason lay in their rulers, who found it advantageous to themselves to keep them in this captivity of mind (slavery, despotism).[73] Why Providence permits the one and the other; why even a great part of the earth's inhabitants find themselves in a situation that makes their education to morality as good as impossible, however capable of it they might otherwise be, while others enjoy all the advantages of outward circumstances; why one part of mankind arrives earlier, the other later; why all arrive only by stages at knowledge — this is God's counsel, which we are unable to decipher (Isa. 55:8). To these external causes of moral evil belong:

1) Want of instruction and of a suitable education. Faulty education of youth, of the understanding as well as of the heart, is a very general obstacle to human perfection, since the instruction which most people receive in their youth

[p. 88] is very defective. It aims far too little at the awakening and exercise of the powers of the soul, at true enlightenment of the understanding by means of clear concepts — for which every human being nevertheless has the capacity and the right, even if not all may be destined to attain an equal degree of perfection. These shortcomings show themselves particularly in instruction in religion and virtue, in which a wise selection of doctrines, lucid presentation, engaging treatment, application to practical life, and the unfolding of the exact connection that exists between the fulfilment of duty and blessedness are often lacking.

Yet it belongs to the peculiar merits of our age that rulers as well as scholars have become attentive, partly in general to the importance of instruction and education, and partly in particular regard the instruction of the common people as more significant than formerly. Whoever is in a position to cooperate in this and does so, promotes for his part the moral good among his contemporaries, and at the same time sows good seed for the latest posterity.

§. 88. Continuation

2) The difficulty with which virtue has to struggle in certain situations. To this belongs a) *superfluity and penury* with respect to external goods. Both are dangerous to the direction of the will towards the true good. *Superfluity* of external goods (wealth) increases sensuality, makes one soft and indolent, diminishes, through care for ever-increasing external needs, care for the [p. 89] needs of the spirit, and heaps up temptations to every kind of vice. Hence, according to the teaching of the Bible as well, wealth is a great obstacle to virtue (Prov. 7:24; 28:20; Ecclus. 11:17–19; 27:1;

[73] When the Mytileneans had again overpowered those of their allies who had broken away from them, they forbade them to give their children the least instruction. To keep them in servitude, they found no better means than to leave them in ignorance.[*]

31:5–7).[74] *Penury or poverty* very often hinders the spiritual development of human beings through the incessant striving after the indispensable necessities of life, leads them to base means of acquiring those necessities, and reduces all the exertions of a person's powers to the single endeavour of improving his condition merely for the following hour. This explains why, according to a general observation, the most moral good, the greatest elevation of spiritual and moral powers, is found in the middle class, but diminishes the more this class yields to the urge to strive higher (Prov. 30:9); b) *the influence of the civil constitution*. For laws, constitutions of states and forms of government have always had a great share in the moral cultivation or the corruption of the common man. The more the government treats men as rational, free beings capable of every elevation of their powers; the more it places means for this in their hands through instruction, guidance and wise laws, the more they will rise to it. The more it fails to recognize human dignity in them, the more it crushes it down through despotism, the deeper they will sink. True Religion is the most powerful and yet the gentlest means of uniting true civil happiness with the authority of the laws; of reminding the one who holds power that he owes an [p. 90] account to the Almighty, and of convincing the citizen that obedience to the laws procures true freedom.

§. 89. Continuation

3) The multitude and power of bad examples, given the natural strength of the imitative impulse. The corruption prevailing in the world, or the greater number of those who are guided by sensual and self-interested impulses, usually exceeds the number of those in whom reason holds sway over their sensual inclinations. As a result, for those who still stand undecided at the parting of the ways, the choice of the better, the striving after virtue and perfection, is often made more difficult, often hindered. For a) the *imitative impulse* peculiar to man thereby receives a harmful direction, since the most frequently repeated impressions act upon him with all the greater force, the less this influence resembles force. Just as for these reasons we see, as a rule, the individual improve in good company and grow worse in bad company, so in general the rapid spread of moral evil, as of moral good, is explained by the multitude of bad or good examples. Virtue also b) finds less encouragement. Neither wealth nor good living nor outward honour are often its reward here below; it often goes without these, because it disdains the means which people of a perverse kind employ to attain them. Since now with the common man the present acts more strongly than the [p. 91] future, and advantages that touch all his sensations immediately attract him more strongly than those recognizable only mediately through reason, it is easy to explain why the great multitude so readily departs from the path of virtue.

[74] Translator: Prov. 7:24 does not concern wealth and may be a misprint. The Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) passages are cited by Beer's numbering, which follows the Vulgate/Luther versification.

§. 90. Continuation

4) The situation of individual human beings, often extremely dangerous to morality. In the individual human being, too, a host of external causes often combine to place obstacles in the way of his moral improvement. The weakness and irritability of his body, and the powerful sensuality arising from it, is often the consequence of those by whom he was begotten and born. The first impressions, even upon the as yet unborn human being, are in this respect just as little indifferent as the situation into which he first comes. The people by whom he is surrounded, the connections into which he enters at a later age, the favourable or adverse fortunes he experiences in the world, the temptations and encouragements his unconfirmed virtue meets with, and countless other things, as variously mixed as human beings themselves differ from one another.

Yet all these causes enumerated here, internal as well as external, are by no means *compelling* for man; this is proved partly by experience, partly by the justice of God, which can impute to man only such faults as he has committed through his own fault, and partly by all those passages of [p. 92] Holy Scripture which encourage him to apply his powers and to resist the enticements of vice. There are powers in man to overcome these obstacles, at least in most cases, if he summons them to this end as far as possible and employs all the aids known to him. Consequently we must reckon as the chief source of moral evil man's own fault: his indolence, which, though often hard, is not impossible to overcome; his indifference towards the means offered him; often, too, his inactive trust in God, and the inclination to misuse certain doctrines of religion.

Third Main Part. Instruction concerning the Arrangements of God for Guiding Man to His Destiny

Division I. Various Kinds of Divine Instruction for Bringing Man Nearer to His Destiny

§. 91. Education of Man through Nature

Since so many obstacles dam the way of man on the road to his destiny, God's [p. 93] goodness has made several arrangements to lead man nearer to his goal. At no time, and to no human being, has God entirely withheld means of education. Man in general is indeed endowed not only with dispositions and impulses towards perfection and happiness, but also with powers to attain them (§. 55 ff.). Already in this we can recognize the most universal arrangement of God for the good of man. Experience also teaches that very many people, without special guidance, without higher instruction, have been able to distinguish good and evil from one another and, when they acted according to this knowledge, to attain virtue and the happiness that accompanies it. Holy Scripture presents us with examples in several persons of the ancient world who had no revelation properly so called and were nevertheless pleasing to God: as, for example, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abimelech, and the like. Thus too God punished the human race by the Flood, and the inhabitants of Sodom

and their neighbourhood, although we nowhere find that God made any other provision for instructing them about their conduct than what they could discern with their reason.

Man's reason finds a very effective means of education in his own nature and in the nature surrounding him. Thus man learns to know a God who does him good, who cares for him and to whom he owes thanks. God has therefore revealed Himself through nature. Through this revelation religious ideas and sentiments have always been called forth, and among all the peoples known to us, which have always stood more or less in connection with their [p. 94] morality. Through it countless good feelings and sentiments are still awakened today. Thus man is led by God's revelation in nature not only to piety but also to virtue and happiness. Nature outside him, the moral feeling and conscience within him, make him attentive to God, to himself, to the difference between good and evil, and awaken in him better feelings and presentiments of a higher destiny (§. 55 ff.).

§. 92. Education of Man through His Fortunes, through the Moral Order of the World

Every event of human life, every benefit, every trial, every suffering that befalls a person, is a means of education in the hand of Providence. Through it slumbering powers are awakened, activity promoted, experiences gathered, convictions grounded, virtues occasioned or strengthened; faults are counteracted, and thus the individual is led ever a few steps nearer to his destiny.

God's Providence has also made the general arrangement that the moral good, of whatever kind it may be, often finds its reward already here, and moral evil often its punishment already here; and thereby God guides the will of man, like an educating father, without on that account robbing him of his freedom. Whoever does right according to the measure of his knowledge enjoys the fruits of it already *here*, through the peace of his conscience, through all the pleasant feelings which the consciousness of his heightened [p. 95] and well-applied powers gives; even through many a beneficial influence of the good upon his outward condition, upon health, prosperity, and esteem in society. Whoever does evil often deprives himself already *here* of those advantages, spoils for himself the enjoyment of those goods which are independent of moral character, exhausts his powers, and pays very dearly for the unlawful pleasure of a moment. This moral discipline can become highly educative for everyone who heeds it and is willing to profit by it, for it is the most unmistakable revelation of a holy and just will.

§. 93. Education of Mankind through Eminent Men

In particular, however, what has been accomplished from time to time by especially enlightened men, though under the most diverse circumstances and by diverse means, for the enlightenment of the understanding, the cultivation of morals, and the advancement of the well-being of human society — whether they did it through songs, through teachings, through laws, through institutions and reforms, or through their powerfully effective example — belongs to the general arrangements

of a Providence that cares for the good of mankind. For certainly very much has been accomplished for the perfecting of their contemporaries, and even of later generations, by the men through whom the commonwealth was ordered, who gave wise ordinances to suppress or diminish rudeness and immorality, and established good institutions to alleviate human misery; and this, however mixed it may have been with many defects and [p. 96] imperfections, has nevertheless always been an important contribution to the education and further development of mankind. What has been accomplished in this respect among individual peoples — for example, among the Persians by *Zoroaster*, among the Chinese by *Confucius*, among the Greeks by *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Socrates* and *Plato*, among the Romans by *Numa*, and later among these nations and very many other heathen peoples by the founder of the Christian religion and his followers, and among the Arabs by *Muhammad* — belongs to the special arrangements of God for the good of individual nations, and through them for the good of the whole.

§. 94. The Form of Religion among the Heathen Peoples

In the condition of religion among by far the greater part of the earth's inhabitants in earlier times, so far as they have become known, one beholds on the one hand everywhere a web of the greatest error, associated with the greatest depravity; superstition and crude sensuality in the most inseparable union; degradation of the conceptions of the Supreme Being through the basest comparisons with human imperfections and weaknesses; and forms of divine worship of which some outraged every feeling of virtue, and some even every feeling of humanity (Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Isa. 44; Jer. 32:35).

On the other hand, it is far from being the case that among the countless multitude of people who had or still have no conception of the true Religion, and who are called heathens, all true and effective conceptions should be lacking; rather one [p. 97] finds in the history of the ancient heathen peoples, and confirmed with respect to those still existing by travel accounts, that God, the Father of all, has given *every* human being capacities and means to know as much of Him as is necessary for his morality and his happiness, however different the degrees of morality and happiness may be. For exact knowledge of those peoples convinces us: 1) that the concept of God was in general not foreign to them, and that they endeavoured to render Him a service from which they hoped for advantages for themselves; 2) that everywhere there have been *wise men* who, through the fog of the sensual popular religion, discovered the light of pure truth, communicated it to their contemporaries, though with unequal success, and even used the cruder ideas as aids by which to lead the people to the better; 3) that even amid all the errors of idolatry and polytheism the truth could still endure, and actually did endure, that one must worship the Deity, and that virtue, love of mankind and piety are the most pleasing worship to it; 4) finally, that the history of all peoples, even the uncultivated, is full of the most moving and spirit-elevating examples of trust in God, self-mastery, temperance, magnanimity and all the domestic and social virtues, as well as of feeling for the true, the morally beautiful and the sublime (2 Kings 3:27; Mal. 1:11).

§. 95. Origin of Those Religious Conceptions

To determine more precisely the manner in which all this religious knowledge arose is indeed just as [p. 98] impossible as to specify all the means which God's Providence has used to preserve, extend and spread it, or to discover the reasons why one people and one age has so greatly surpassed, and still surpasses, another in enlightenment. Only so much is evident: that the impression of the visible world, combined with man's natural capacity to reflect on his own nature and the nature of the things surrounding him, has had the greatest share in the discovery and acknowledgment of the truths whose sum we call *natural Religion and moral teaching*. Since, then, contemplation of nature and the exercise of our reflection can lead so far, there follows from this at the same time the duty to be untiring in both (Ps. 19:15[75]; 65; 92:5–7; 95; 104; 107; 148).

§. 96. Reason Is Not Sufficient

However beneficial the arrangements noted in the preceding sections are, which God has made to bring human beings nearer to the goal of their education, and however much God has revealed Himself in nature to all men, this is nevertheless not sufficient for all men, either to give such clear concepts of God's sublime attributes — as, for example, the simplicity and immensity of God, where one idea seems to contradict the other — that no doubt at all would remain; or to bring some of them — as, for example, His mercy with His perfect justice and with the free will of man — into complete harmony. The human understanding is too finite to [p. 99] comprehend the Infinite entirely. Only very few people, equipped with great gifts of mind, are capable, with extraordinary exertion, of procuring somewhat clearer concepts of it, and among hundreds of thousands there is scarcely one such. The rest of mankind, who lack cultivation of their understanding, remain, hindered by deep-rooted superstition, by ruling passions and by inveterate prejudices, far behind these men favoured by fortune in their conceptions of God.

Reason does indeed supply the insight, and also the means, to guard oneself against faults; but never yet has a human being brought it so far that he has *never* departed from the path of virtue, never transgressed against the law of reason as the law of God (Eccl. 7:20). According to the justice of God this fault would be unpardonable; and since, according to reason, the higher the being against whom one has offended, the harsher the punishment should be, an offence against the highest and eternal Being would have to be punished not only most harshly of all, but the punishment would also have to last eternally, in proportion to the eternal Being against whom one has sinned. To be sure, God is also gracious; but how that accords with the justice and immutability of God remains an insoluble riddle to human reason, and it gives us no means by which we might escape this universal evil.

When a man's blood is in tumult and the passions rage; when, as is often the case, joy, riches and posts of honour are certain to a person after a *vice* has been committed, and after virtue has been

[75] Translator: So printed; probably a misprint for Ps. 19:2 ("The heavens declare the glory of God").

practised, [p. 100] on the contrary, poverty, mockery, persecution, indeed often a shameful death, then bare reason is too weak a support to keep from wavering. Now, in order to come to the aid of man's limited knowledge of God's attributes by the highest authority, and to give virtue an unshakable support, the All-wise God saw fit to make use, besides reason, of yet another means — He *revealed* Himself.

§. 97. Revelation. Mediate. Immediate

To reveal means to make known to someone something that was not yet known to him. This can happen in a twofold manner, namely mediately or immediately. When, for example, an artisan constructs a machine, he already makes known, through the design and arrangement of his work, his intention — why — and the purpose for which he arranged it, to those who possess the ability to observe the work closely; and in the arrangement the thoughts and intentions of the artisan can, as it were, be read. This is called a *mediate* revelation, since by means of the work the purpose of the master becomes known. If, on the other hand, the work is so artfully arranged that not everyone has the knowledge, abilities and insight to recognize from the mere sight of the work the intention and purpose of the master, and it pleases the master to instruct someone about his intention and purpose through oral or written directions, then this is called an *immediate*, a *positive* revelation. [p. 101] If one now applies this consideration to man, his destiny and the guidance towards it — in general, to *Religion* — then man, through contemplation of the arrangement of the world, and especially through contemplation of the dispositions, constitution, relations and powers of man himself, can instruct himself by means of reason both about the intention and purpose of God in creation and about the means to be employed in order to attain this purpose. Hence this knowledge is called *the religion of reason*. But just as not everyone is able by himself, from the mere sight of an artful machine, to find out its purpose and the intention of the master, but needs immediate instruction for it, so one can conceive the case that — since man by himself and by the mere contemplation of nature cannot discover clearly enough God's intentions in its creation, and is not able to acquire clear concepts of his destiny and the means to it (§. 96) — God has condescended to instruct him immediately about all this by a far shorter way. In this case this is called an *immediate* Revelation, or *positive Religion*. It is in this same sense that the word *Revelation*, or positive Religion, is generally taken, in contrast to that communication of the divine intentions which takes place through contemplation of the natural arrangements of His works.

§. 98. Revelation according to Form or according to Matter

When God, through immediate instruction, communicates to man such truths as we [p. 102] could have developed from nature itself through a right use of our reason (as, for example, the creation, several attributes of God and the duties flowing from them), and He communicates these truths to us immediately only so that we may find them all the more easily, or so that, confirmed by His authority, we may hold to them more firmly and with greater confidence and follow them, then this is an instruction *according to form*, since these truths are already known, or at least can be

known, from the mere contemplation of nature, and thus lie in nature, and only the manner in which man has come to know them can be regarded as supernatural. But if God acquaints us with a truth which with our bare reason we could never have found in the nature of the matter (as, for example, the agreement of God's justice and grace, of His unity and omnipresence, of foreknowledge or omniscience and the freedom of the human will, and the like), then this is called a Revelation *according to matter*, because the knowledge of this truth lies outside the limits of human reason, and in order for us to come to know it, God Himself had to make known to us the matter or content of this truth. From the preceding § we see that the purpose of both kinds, of formal as well as material Revelation, is to lead man all the nearer to his destiny and to make it all the easier to find the means thereto. The formal, namely, in order to stir the less learned to knowledge of the Creator and of creation, and thereby to the fulfilment of their duties, and, for the learned, to make up by authority [p. 103] for what he lacks and to put all the more check upon the passions; the material, on the other hand, partly in order to give the formal more emphasis, and partly to place in his hands, when he has committed faults, the means of setting himself somewhat at rest.

§. 99. Duty to Seek Out and Accept Revelation. Indispensability of the Religion of Reason

Since it has been proved on the one hand that it is the highest duty of man, or rather the sum of all duties, that he must seek to attain his destiny according to the measure of his powers, and on the other hand that he is able to discover neither this destiny itself nor the means of attaining it by bare reason — partly not at all, and partly not in complete degree — and that for this he needs an immediate instruction from God, or Revelation in the narrower sense, there is no doubt that we are obliged to seek out this Revelation, indispensable to us, to accept it gratefully, and to apply it to the furtherance of our purpose, namely the attainment of our destiny.

Yet by setting forth the necessity of a positive Revelation it is by no means meant to say that the natural one is dispensable. It has great value and is entirely indispensable. For natural Religion is the foundation of the revealed; its teachings must precede the teachings of Revelation and must make us receptive to them. Before we can accept anything as true on the testimony of God, we must already know beforehand that there is a God who is omniscient, perfectly just, etc. [p. 104] Moreover, God indeed wishes through Revelation to come to the aid of human incapacity, to effect in us what we cannot effect in ourselves; but He by no means wishes to foster our indolence and by His intervention to make the use of our powers dispensable to us. For what else would the glorious dispositions of man be there, for what else his great advantage over the animals, *reason*? — What, therefore, is still explicable through the diligent use of our reason, Revelation presupposes from natural Religion, and only guards us against its going astray and degenerating. Moreover, natural Religion is indispensable to us for proving the genuineness of a Revelation and the integrity of those writings which preserve Revelation for us. For only through it are we able to distinguish the true from the false.

From the whole it is evident that we owe God the highest thanks for having deemed us worthy of coming to our aid by an immediate instruction — thanks which we can show Him by taking pains to come to know the content of Revelation ever more completely and clearly through the knowledge and sciences that prepare for it, and by conscientiously employing the precepts contained in it for the furtherance of our temporal and eternal destiny.

[p. 105] Section II. On the Proofs of a Revelation That Has Actually Taken Place

§. 100. In What the Proofs of a Revelation That Has Actually Taken Place Consist

If we are to accept any teaching as divine, then 1) the most essential and necessary thing we require of it is that its chief purpose consist in grounding the happiness, in this world and the next, of the human race in general as well as of the individual in particular. It must also correspond exactly to our physical and moral dispositions, and may by no means make demands on us that exceed our dispositions as human beings. If, on the other hand, its purpose is not happiness in this world and the next, or if, in order to attain this purpose, it prescribes to us such means as either stand in contradiction to our moral disposition or exceed our physical powers, then we cannot accept it as divine, because it would be in manifest contradiction to God's perfect goodness and omniscience, and would directly contradict our fundamental principles concerning the divine attributes. Yet the usefulness and general applicability of a teaching *alone* cannot confirm its *divinity* in the strictest sense, because human reason too, without the *immediate* cooperation of God, can discover truths that are useful and generally applicable. [p. 106] If, then, our reason is to recognize any teaching as actually revealed *immediately* by God, there must, besides its usefulness and general applicability, be connected with its promulgation such phenomena and facts as we perceive God alone can bring about. These extraordinary phenomena and facts are called *miracles*, because they cannot be produced by the ordinary forces of nature but only by God alone. A miracle, therefore, is the appearance of an event of which we can show that it could have been produced not by the forces of nature but only by God's immediate [action on behalf of the] revealed truth, and that only for this one moment.[76][77]

§. 101. Miracles of Two Kinds

There are two kinds of facts which can be used as proofs that it is God who reveals a teaching to us mediately.[78] The supernatural fact can, namely, be brought about by the *omnipotence* or by the *omniscience* of God. One [p. 107] phenomenon of which we can prove that it could not possibly

[76] Yet unusual phenomena alone accompanying a teaching, if that teaching does not aim at usefulness and general applicability, can all the less prove its divinity. "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass," but he says thereby: "Let us follow other gods, which ye know not, then thou shalt not hearken unto the words of this prophet or dreamer" (Deut. 15:5, 4).[*]

[77] Translator: The German here ("nur durch Gottes unmittelbare geoffenbarten Wahrheit") is evidently defective; the bracketed words supply the apparent sense.

[78] Translator: "mittelbar" (mediately) as printed; the sense of the argument requires "unmittelbar" (immediately).

have been brought about otherwise than by the omnipotence of God is called a *miracle* in the proper sense. But if a future event, which subsequently becomes actual, is foretold so definitely and clearly that we can prove that no finite power of thought, but only the All-knowing, could have foreseen it, then it is called a *prophecy*.

If, therefore, a doctrine is announced to man in fulfilment of all the conditions just mentioned, there can be no doubt that it is of immediate divine origin, a real Revelation of God, because bound up with its general usefulness there are also facts which God alone can bring about, and through which he announced himself to men as the author of these teachings.

§. 102. Difficulties in judging miracles

At first sight it seems not to be possible at all that we could assert with good grounds of any event whatever that it is a miracle, that is, supernatural. For we may regard a phenomenon as a miracle only when we can prove that the forces of nature are not sufficient to produce this event, so that for that very reason it had to be effected by God's omnipotence.

Here, now, the difficulty appears that we do not know all the forces of nature, and even those which we do know are still not perfectly known to us. [p. 108] How, then, are we to be able to assert that they are not sufficient to produce certain phenomena? Perhaps the forces of nature known to us, which we nevertheless do not know perfectly, can effect more than we believe; perhaps there are forces in nature which are unknown to us, and which may very well produce those effects which the forces known to us are not able to produce. Hence it seems that we are not at all entitled to declare any fact a miracle, however incomprehensible it may be to us.

§. 103. Resolution of this difficulty

It is true, to be sure, that we do not know all the forces of nature, and that even of those which we do know, there is much we do not know. No one knows all the properties, forces and effects of air, fire and water.

But neither do we need to know *all* the forces of nature in order to judge a miracle correctly. Even if we are not able to state a *positive* limit for the efficacy of natural forces, i.e. to enumerate all the individual phenomena which they can produce, we are nevertheless capable of stating a *negative* limit, i.e. of determining what phenomena the forces of nature can absolutely *not* produce. We have a threefold need to know this, namely:

1) With respect to our preservation. Since food and drink are indispensable to us for the preservation of our life and our strength, we must, if this function is not to be made wholly [p. 109] impossible for us, or at least bound up with a perpetual and inescapable fear and anxiety, know with certainty that nature is not able to turn our nourishment instantaneously into poison; for otherwise we would be exposed to the constant danger of destroying our existence, through no

fault of our own, at the very moment and by the very means through which we wish to preserve it, and through which we are also in duty bound to preserve it.

§. 104. Continuation

2) Another need which makes the knowledge of such a negative limit necessary to us lies in our faculty of cognition. Our empirical knowledge, the knowledge which we obtain through our senses, is indispensable; the preservation of our life and all our affairs depend upon it. This necessary knowledge would become utterly uncertain and doubtful, and every resolution would be hindered, if we did not know reliably that nature is not able to transform an object of our experience, a body, instantaneously into another. If it were possible, for example, that the forces of nature could instantaneously turn water into wine or bread into a stone, we would be in an enchanted world; we would no longer know at all what surrounds us. At the very moment when we meant to take hold of bread, we would have a stone; our representations would diverge from their objects, would be false, and we would find ourselves in the utmost confusion.

3) Finally, there lies even in the moral law itself a reason why we must know with certainty [p. 110] that the forces of nature cannot produce certain effects; otherwise we would often not be in a position at all to fulfil our duties and to satisfy the moral law. Thus, for example, it must be entirely certain that the mere forces of nature are not sufficient to bring a dead person back to life; for if this were possible, we would not be permitted to bury corpses, since we are not entitled to take from a human being the possibility of regaining life. We would therefore have to leave human corpses to themselves and wait continually to see whether the forces of nature might not perhaps restore life to them. But precisely thereby we would violate our duties towards ourselves and towards our fellow men, because the decaying corpses would generate contagious epidemics. In order, then, that we may fulfil our duty in this matter, it must be certain that nature cannot make one who is really dead alive again.

§. 105. Further grounding of our judgment concerning miracles

That we can and must declare certain phenomena to be miracles with certainty follows from the following observations. There are in nature certain rules and laws according to which the forces of nature act, in such a way that they can never deviate from them; a deviation from these rules, a violation of these laws, would abolish all rational thought and destroy all reason. Now if phenomena occur in which these laws would have to be violated if they were to have been effected by the mere forces of nature, then they must be supernatural [p. 111] facts, *miracles*; they cannot have been effected by the mere forces of nature, they must have been effected by God.

These laws are: 1) *There can be no effect without a cause.* For that very reason every effect must have a cause proportionate to it: for if the effect were greater than the cause, then that part of it by which it exceeds the cause would be without any cause at all, which is utterly impossible, since our reason could no longer think rationally at all if it had to assume effects without a cause.

As soon, therefore, as we notice a phenomenon in which this law would have to be violated if it had been produced by the mere forces of nature, it cannot be a mere natural phenomenon, but has been effected immediately by God. For example: if a man were in a single instant to become so familiar with all the languages of the world, which he had never learned, that he could speak them fluently, this phenomenon could not possibly be the effect of his own powers. One man may indeed have a stronger memory than others, and with it a great facility in learning foreign languages; but all the power possible to a human being is not sufficient to learn all languages perfectly in one instant.

§. 106. Continuation

2) Another law which is inviolable in the phenomena of the world of sense is this: *Every effect must have a cause suited to it.* For there are two kinds of forces in nature, [p. 112] namely *spiritual* and *material*, of which the former are the nobler. The less noble forces, the material ones, cannot possibly produce the effects of the nobler, because otherwise these effects would in fact be without causes, since the less noble forces do not possess the capacity for the effects of the nobler.

Thus thinking and the communication of thoughts is a specific effect of spiritual forces, of which the soulless animal is not capable. There are indeed some animals which can be trained to imitate a few human sounds; but it is not possible that any animal could be brought to actual speech, to thinking and to the communication of its thoughts, because it entirely lacks the particular power required for this, the proper capacity *to think*. Should such a phenomenon ever occur, therefore, it could not possibly be the effect of the animal; it could not be a natural phenomenon.

Now if certain doctrines are communicated to men for the furtherance of their destiny, with which such phenomena are connected as we can prove, according to the principles laid down, could not possibly have been produced by the mere forces of nature, but which the divine omnipotence alone is able to effect, then we must accept them as revealed, because God announces himself as the Revealer precisely through these miracles.

§. 107. Importance of the doctrine of prophecies

Although miracles, taken by themselves alone, are already sufficient to convince us that a doctrine communicated to us under their warrant [p. 113] is really a divine Revelation, it is nevertheless very important that there is yet a second kind of supernatural facts, which confirms us still further in this conviction.

1) The acceptance of Revelation is in several respects burdensome to man. He can, to be sure, easily convince himself of its necessity; he can easily see that, given the constitution of his nature, he stands in need of a higher help, and to that extent a Revelation must be most welcome to him. But on the other hand its acceptance is nonetheless also burdensome: for in a material Revelation we are to accept as true even such doctrines whose grounds we do not ourselves perceive, which

is bound up with the humiliating and, for that very reason, unpleasant feeling of our ignorance. Further, Revelation may also contain such moral precepts as restrict our sensual desires still more than mere rational morality does, which is naturally burdensome to human inclinations. Here, then, it is certainly important that we be moved by several grounds to this acceptance of Revelation, which is indeed necessary but also burdensome.

2) It is important in another respect as well that prophecies stand in connection with miracles. For the case sometimes arises that one cannot so easily prove of an event that it could not possibly have been effected by mere forces of nature, and thus is a real miracle; but it can be proved of it that it could not possibly have been foreseen by a human being, that it must therefore have been made known to him in advance immediately by God, [p. 114] i.e. that it is a *prophecy*. In this case the event nevertheless remains a proof of Revelation, since its prediction is a supernatural fact.

Thus, for example, there may well be difficulties in proving that the Flood in Noah's time could not have been effected by mere forces of nature; but it can very easily be proved that Noah could not possibly have known this extraordinary phenomenon, which was unique of its kind, a hundred years in advance of himself.

This can also be applied to the Egyptian plagues, which Moses could not possibly have foretold so definitely and certainly without higher instruction.

3) Finally, prophecies also afford the following advantages. Miracles make the strongest impression on those who see them with their own eyes. It is true, to be sure, that miracles once performed remain, through historical faith, through valid witnesses, a valid proof of a given Revelation for later generations as well; but the impression made by a narrated miracle is not so deep and vivid as when one sees it with one's own eyes.

With prophecies, however, it is possible that even the latest descendants see their fulfilment with their own eyes. Thus we do in fact see that the remarkable destruction of Babylon, of the Edomites and of other peoples, which the prophets had foretold, indeed even the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, has come to fulfilment. Thereby we are all the more readily moved to accept as really having happened, and as true, the miracles connected with these [p. 115] prophecies.

§. 108. What chiefly matters in a prophecy

A prophecy is the prediction of a future event which was possible in no other way than through an immediate divine influence. Whoever, therefore, wishes to show of a prediction of a future event that it is really a prophecy must prove that it could have been brought about not by a human power, but only by the divine omniscience.

For man himself has a faculty of foreseeing some future events. We cannot, of course, perceive future phenomena through the senses, because only what is present can act upon us. But we can know in advance, by inference, events that are yet to occur. For we learn from experience to know

many causes and their effects: thereby we are able to infer from our view of the causes the effects which they will produce only later.

Since, then, man can know some future events in advance through his own faculty of foresight, one must determine a boundary line beyond which neither the human nor any other finite faculty of foresight can reach; for this makes it possible for us to show of some prediction of a future event that it could not possibly have been foretold by a finite power, but precisely by [p. 116] the divine omniscience had to be announced in advance, and is therefore a real prophecy.

§. 109. Limit of the human faculty of foresight

Since we can have no empirical knowledge of future events, inasmuch as they are yet to happen, we can look into the future only insofar as we are able to draw inferences about future events from knowledge already gathered, from premises. God alone, to whom, because of his omniscience, the whole future is already present, knows all events without inferences.

As soon, therefore, as we do not have the necessary prior knowledge from which alone we can draw inferences about the future, we are entirely shut out from insight into the future.

The lack of the requisite premises is thus the limit which neither we nor any finite spirit can cross with our faculty of foresight. If, therefore, a clear and definite prediction of a future event is found, which has been precisely fulfilled, and of which it can be proved that the one who foretold it did not have the necessary premises, then it is a prophecy, a prediction of a future event brought about by the immediate influence of God.

§. 110. Application of this limit: 1) To external events of nature

If one applies this limit of the human faculty of foresight to actual phenomena of the [p. 117] future, one can distinguish four kinds of events.

1) Mere natural phenomena, or such changes in the world of sense as are produced by the mechanical forces of nature. Of these we can foresee many if we know the acting forces and the laws according to which they act: for these forces act necessarily; they cannot deviate from the laws prescribed to them.

Since, then, we know from experience many mechanical forces together with their laws of action, we are also able to determine in advance what effects they will produce.

The more men observe nature, the more mechanical forces, together with their laws of action, they come to know, and the more events they can foretell. Nor can it be determined at all how far men will yet advance in this with diligence and time.

But they will never come so far as to learn to know *all* the forces of nature and *all* the laws of action. If, therefore, it is a question of such natural events as presuppose a perfect, and for that reason to us impossible, knowledge of nature, they cannot be foretold by our faculty of foresight.

§. 111. 2) To free actions of individual men

It is far more difficult for us to be able to know anything definite in advance about the free actions of men. We do indeed know for the most part the [p. 118] dispositions and powers of human nature and the laws according to which we ought to act. But these laws are moral ones; we can, if we will, deviate from them.

Nevertheless, it is very important for us to know in advance how certain people will act, because we stand in countless connections with them; because their actions have a great influence on our weal and woe; because it often matters to us to move them to some actions and to hold them back from others.

Now there are certain things which have a great influence on a person's manner of acting; even though these things do not compel the human will, people nevertheless usually determine themselves according to them. These things are: temperament, inclination, climate, upbringing, company, habit, reading, religion, etc. If we know all these particulars in a person, we are also in many cases able to foresee how he will act in given circumstances.

But here the human faculty of foresight is confined within very narrow limits. From all these premises, which we do not know perfectly in any single person, we can never[79] infer the free actions of a human being with certainty, because man, as a free being, can act contrary to all these things.

It is plainly impossible for us to foresee beforehand the whole course of a person's life, all his free actions, because we would otherwise also have to know all the situations, relations and accidents that will befall him; and even if we [p. 119] really knew them, he is still a free being, who can deviate from all influences.

It is equally impossible to know in advance the free actions of a person whom we do not know at all, who does not yet exist, who will be born only after a series of years, because in this case we have no premises at all from which we could draw a conclusion.

§. 112. 3) To the fate of whole peoples

It is certainly a hard matter for our limited faculty of foresight to know anything definite in advance about the fate of whole peoples, because here very many and various things act together; for the fortunes of a people depend on its constitution, upbringing and way of life, on the situation of the country, on the character and occupations of the citizens, on the quality of its officials, on the influence of other peoples, and the like.

[79] Translator: The original prints "jemals" ("ever"), evidently a misprint for "niemals" ("never"), as the sense of the passage requires.

Nevertheless, it is possible for the human mind, when it considers these aforementioned things in a people and at the same time takes into account the history of other peoples of the present and the past, to attain some knowledge even of the future fate of whole nations.

But in this our faculty of foresight is very restricted; there are limits beyond which it absolutely cannot reach. 1) We can never foresee anything about the fate of peoples, especially in the distant future, with complete certainty and definitely in all its circumstances; for the number of things which [p. 120] have an influence on the fate of peoples is too great, too intricate; the change of a single circumstance, brought about by chance or by the free actions of men, which we cannot possibly foresee, alters the whole state of affairs, rescues a nation from the ruin towards which it was already hastening, or plunges a people that was just making the happiest progress into the deepest corruption. 2) It is impossible for us to know anything in advance about the fortunes of a people that does not yet exist at all, that will arise only after centuries: for here we have no premises at all on which we could base a conclusion.

§. 113. 4) To events which depend immediately on the counsels of God

Nothing is more easily comprehensible than that we are absolutely unable to know in advance what God will ordain through his counsels; for in order to know this, we would have to see through the wisdom of God completely, which is possible for no finite spirit. We know, of course, that God is holy, just, good, etc. But from this we can draw no definite conclusion about his future dispensations. We know well that he will never do anything unwise or unjust; but with this nothing is really yet determined for a future event depending on his counsels, because we cannot at all judge how the event will and must be constituted in order to accord with his wisdom, goodness, etc.

[p. 121] §. 114. Characteristics of a true prophecy

In order that any prediction of a future event may be accepted as a real prophecy, it must have the following characteristics.

1) One must be able to prove that the announcement of the event really came beforehand; for a deceiver might very well, after the matter had happened, produce such a description as no man was able to make in advance, and afterwards pretend that he had made this description of the event long before it.

2) The event which is foretold must be so constituted that it can be proved that it was impossible for the human faculty of foresight to know this phenomenon in advance of itself, without divine instruction. As long as this proof cannot be furnished, the prediction must be regarded merely as an effect of the *human* faculty of foresight.

3) The prediction must be unambiguous and clear; for if it is so constituted that it is fulfilled whatever may happen, then it is no prophecy but merely a play of human wit. Of this kind were

almost all the oracles of the heathens; they had been framed in such propositions that they remained true whatever might happen.

4) If the prediction of a future event is to count as a prophecy, it must be *definite*, i.e. not merely the event in general may be stated, but with so [p. 122] many circumstances that it is clearly evident from them that it could not have been guessed merely by chance.

5) Finally, the prediction must be fulfilled precisely and completely, not merely in the main point, but also in all the foretold circumstances; for God can err as little in the smallest circumstances as in the main point.

§. 115. Consequence of what has been said

From what has been said in the preceding, the consequence now follows that if a doctrine whose chief purpose is the happiness of the human race in general, as well as of the individual in particular, is announced to men under the warrant of supernatural facts, namely confirmed by miracles and prophecies, it must be accepted by them as a real Revelation, because God alone can work miracles and impart prophecies, and the doctrines founded upon them are of divine origin. These supernatural facts are precisely the means by which he announces himself to men as the one who really reveals. Whoever will not accept instruction confirmed by real miracles and prophecies obstinately refuses to be helped towards the furtherance of his highest good, his final destiny.

[p. 123] Section III. Authenticity and Integrity of the Holy Scriptures

§. 116. Importance of this inquiry

There exists, concerning the destiny of man and the means of attaining it, a particular body of instruction which the most cultivated nations of the earth regard as a real Revelation of God, namely the *Bible*. Its whole content, its theoretical and practical teachings, are so excellent and pure that they are in truth worthy of God and suited to instruct men, to improve them, and to make them worthy of a pure blessedness.

But these points are not yet sufficient to convince us that these writings are really of immediately divine origin, a real Revelation; there must be connected with them supernatural facts, miracles and prophecies, through which we are convinced that it is really God who has communicated to us this guidance towards our destiny. (§. 100 ff.) We must therefore examine closely the value and reliability of these writings, because only under this condition can we accept the facts contained in them as having truly happened and, if they are real miracles and prophecies, convince ourselves that their content is really a divine Revelation.

§. 117. What historical faith is

If we wish to preserve our life, develop our capacities, ennoble ourselves and [p. 124] attain our destiny, we need many kinds of knowledge, both of the world of sense and of the world of spirits.

In order to become properly acquainted with the world of sense, God has furnished us with organs of sense, with the lower faculty of cognition.

But it is not possible for every person to observe for himself, to see with his own eyes, all the events of the world of sense the knowledge of which nevertheless matters to him. Some objects, some events, are distant from us in space; we are not ourselves present at the place where they are or happen; others, however, are distant from us in time; they existed or happened long before us. In both cases we cannot observe them ourselves.

If, then, we nonetheless need knowledge of this kind, no other means remains to us than to take refuge in such persons as have themselves seen the objects distant from us in place or time, and have themselves observed the events that happened long before us.

Men on whose testimony we hold to be true events that happened far from us in time and place, whose experiences we accept in place of our own, are called *witnesses*; and holding such events to be true on the testimony of witnesses is called *historical faith*.

§. 118. Necessity of historical faith

We can very easily convince ourselves that with the knowledge alone which we gather through our *own* experience, observation and reflection, we do [p. 125] not suffice to ennoble our nature and attain the destiny assigned to us, but that we must also take refuge in historical faith, in the experiences and testimony of other people. Much knowledge, partly indispensable, partly rich in consequences, would be entirely lost to us without historical faith.

If we were to admit no testimony of witnesses whatever, to content ourselves only with our own experiences and accept none from others, then all history would fall away; we could know nothing of all the events that took place before us, because we could not observe them ourselves. Even of the events of our own days we could admit only those which we see with our own eyes. Thereby all the experiences which our predecessors gathered so laboriously, and often at great peril, would be lost to us.

§. 119. Continuation

The necessity of historical faith shows itself just as clearly in relation to Revelation, whose indispensability for the attainment of our destiny has already been proved.

If men are to accept a doctrine as revealed, it must be announced to them under the warrant of supernatural facts. (§. 100 ff.) Plainly, miracles cannot be repeated eternally and for every individual person, whereby their number would grow to infinity and would exceed even the natural phenomena; and yet Revelation is to be accepted by all men [p. 126] through all future ages, because it is a universal and abiding need. Here, then, there is no other means than that the truth of the miracles that took place at the announcement and first introduction of Revelation be transmitted to future generations through credible witnesses.

It is just the same with prophecies; their announcement often precedes their fulfilment by several generations. Those who heard the prophecy from the mouth of the prophets often do not live to see its fulfilment, and later descendants did not themselves hear the announcement, although they see the fulfilment; and yet prediction and fulfilment must be joined together. For this, again, there is no other means than historical faith: the contemporaries of the prophet must hand down the oral or written prophecy to the coming generations; they must testify that they really heard this prophecy in their days.

In any case, the doctrinal content of Revelation too must be transmitted to future generations through testimony, through historical faith.

§. 120. Characteristics of a credible witness, namely 1) Knowledge of the matter

Not every witness deserves our belief. If we are to accept another's experience in place of our own, i.e. if we are to accept some event which we have not ourselves seen as really having happened, on the testimony of another who has seen it, [p. 127] then we must be assured that the witness himself observed the matter correctly, that he possesses the requisite knowledge of it. For if he does not himself know the matter, if he is himself in error, if he was deceived, then he cannot tell us the truth, even though he have the best and most honest will to do so.

With regard to knowledge of the matter, one must distinguish two kinds of witnesses: 1) *Immediate* witnesses, who have themselves seen the event about which they give testimony. 2) *Mediate* witnesses, who have not themselves seen the event, but to whom it was communicated by eyewitnesses.

§. 121. Value of immediate and mediate witnesses with respect to knowledge of the matter

The immediate witness has the advantage over the mediate one, because he sees the event with his own eyes. The mediate witness, who receives his knowledge from the immediate one, takes his place; he is, as it were, the organ through which the immediate witness communicates his observations and experiences to us.

A witness becomes suspect with respect to knowledge of the matter if he is credulous and lets himself be carried away by his imagination; for such people deceive themselves, believe they see things which are not, are just as easily deceived by others, and accept every groundless rumour as truth. It is the same when a mediate witness draws from suspect sources, because with respect to knowledge of the matter he can deserve no more belief [p. 128] than his sources. Finally, it is suspect when a later witness reports things of importance of which the contemporaries of the event have left no account, unless sufficient reasons can be given from which it is evident that the people of the time would not or could not leave written testimony about this event; and even then the later witness must still show how he came by this knowledge.

It is self-evident that several immediate witnesses strengthen our confidence in their knowledge of the matter, because when several people perceive the same event, we need fear all the less that they may have been mistaken. With mediate witnesses, however, this is the case only when they draw from different sources, because only in this case do they take the place of several immediate witnesses; if, on the other hand, they all draw from the same source, we gain nothing through their number; they take the place only of a *single* immediate witness, from whom they have all drawn in common.

§. 122. 2) Honesty of the witnesses

Even when a witness's knowledge of the matter has been sufficiently proved, he is not on that account alone yet credible; for it is quite possible that a man who knows an event correctly does not have the will to communicate the pure truth to us, but rather to lead us into error. Honesty, or the sincere will to tell the truth, is the second necessary characteristic of a valid and credible witness.

[p. 129] The witness's knowledge of the matter must be proved; for this requires that the witness observed the event himself, or received it from an eyewitness; this cannot simply be presupposed, because it is itself a fact which requires proof.

But it is otherwise with the honesty of the witness. This need not be proved, but must be presupposed until one has reason to doubt the good and sincere will of the witness, because no one is malicious without any cause, and this cause must be demonstrated. Causes of this kind which render a witness's honesty suspect are: self-interest, when the witness derives an advantage from his testimony; enmity towards the person against whom a damaging testimony is given; partiality for or against a person; and finally, in general, an immoral character, but in particular a propensity to lying.

But one must place all the more confidence in the honesty of the witness if he was of unblemished repute among his contemporaries, even among his opponents; if he testifies impartially towards friend and foe, does not conceal his own faults and the faults of his nation, and not only derives no advantage from his testimony but rather suffers harm from it.

With regard to the truthfulness of witnesses, too, it is important when there are several of them and they agree in their testimony; for it is more easily possible that a single person should be led into dishonesty by one of his inclinations than that this should happen with several, because different people also [p. 130] have different inclinations, and because with several witnesses a deception is more easily discovered.

§. 123. Contradictory Testimonies

When several witnesses testify concerning the same event, it happens that one sometimes meets with contradictions, where it is then often difficult to distinguish whether one of them, and which

one, or none at all, deserves belief. It is natural that the one should have preference who surpasses the others in insight and honesty, because the credibility of witnesses rests precisely on these two qualities.

Hence, other circumstances being equal, the immediate witness has preference over the mediate one, the native over the foreigner; in matters that presuppose learning and knowledge, the learned over the unlearned; the many over the few; the one distinguished by his uprightness over the one less proven; as, finally, also the one who suffers some disadvantage from his testimony over him who suffers no harm from his statement, or who even gains some advantage from it in one respect or another.

§. 124. The Transmission of Testimony

The surest communication of a history is the oral one, i.e., he who has perceived a fact relates it to another by word of mouth, according to the faithful truth. These immediate testimonies could last only as long as the witness lived; in order to propagate them, one had to hand them on to [p. 131] another, and thus arose *mediate*[80] testimony. As long as perceptions were few, this was feasible enough; but when, with time and events, they accumulated, memory could no longer hold them, and certain tokens of remembrance had to be appointed, such as stones, groves, altars, cities and the like, which were given a name alluding to the event (Gen. 20:11; 21:33; 17:15; 4:17).[81]

Later this means also proved insufficient, because with the length of time people had forgotten the thing which this means was actually supposed to recall. Hence these monuments were given a certain form, which bore a resemblance to the event that was to be preserved, and thus arose *sculpture*.

But since these means were too laborious, too costly, and also not apt enough either to express everything one wished to call to remembrance or to multiply the monuments as the accumulating events required, people hit upon the idea of drawing the figures that were to recall an event upon flat surfaces, and thus arose *history painting*.

But this means too was still too inconvenient, because representing the person or thing in life size required much space. So, in order to bring several figures into a small space, people at first drew the objects on a reduced scale; and to make the matter still easier, they drew only half of the figures, or an even smaller part, or merely the [p. 132] bare outline of the figures, and thus arose *hieroglyphic or picture writing*.

But since these abbreviated pictures were hard to decipher, and certain people had to be appointed for this purpose, to practice in it and bring the deciphering to a skill (Gen. 41:8), and since much

[80] Translator: The print reads "unmittelbare" ("immediate"), evidently a misprint for "mittelbare" ("mediate"), as the argument requires.

[81] Translator: Of these references, Gen. 21:33 (the grove at Beersheba) and Gen. 4:17 (the city named Enoch) fit the sense; Gen. 20:11 and 17:15 do not, and are probably misprinted (cf. e.g. Gen. 28:18–19; 31:45–48; 33:20; 35:7).

fraud also crept into the deciphering, people finally came upon the thought of regarding the figures not as signs of events and things, but as signs of the various sounds of which a language consists, and thus arose *alphabetic writing*[82].

Alphabetic writing is therefore the most convenient means of propagating historical truth, because through it a man can express his experiences of a phenomenon that he sees, of an event that he perceives, and his thoughts, as clearly, precisely and with the smallest circumstances as he is ever able to do orally. But it also has this further convenience, that through it one can communicate to others not only *sensible* but also *supersensible* things, conclusions of reason, and so on. Through it, too, testimonies can always remain immediate, across distance both of space and of time.

[p. 133] §. 125. Properties of Written Testimony

If a written composition is to take the place of the witness and deserve our belief, it must be *authentic* and *unfalsified*. A writing is authentic if it really comes from the author to whom it is ascribed; for the written composition is to take the place of the witness: it is he himself we wish to hear speak when we read the composition; it must therefore really come from him.

It sometimes happens that an impostor composes a writing which he ascribes to a man who had not the slightest part in it; he makes him relate things which he never perceived, which perhaps never even took place; such a writing is called *spurious* [supposititious], and deserves no belief, because it obviously does not contain the testimony of the alleged witness.

A composition is unfalsified if it has come down to us unaltered, without addition or omission, just as the witness wrote it down. If alterations are made in the witness's original manuscript or in the copies made from it; if new events or circumstances are added, or those related are changed, then it is again no longer the witness who speaks to us, at least no longer as he experienced the matter.

§. 126. Criteria for the Authenticity of a Writing. Internal Criteria

Now in order to recognize whether a writing is authentic or spurious, falsified or unfalsified, [p. 134] certain marks or determinations are necessary, which are called *criteria*; and by the expression *criticism* is understood the science of stating these marks and determinations precisely. Of such marks or criteria there are two kinds, namely internal and external.

Internal criteria for the authenticity of a writing lie in the *content* and in the *form* of the writing itself. As to content, the subject that is set forth must fit the age from which the writing is supposed to come; it must agree with the circumstances of the place where it is supposed to have been

[82] Remnants of this we still have even in the Hebrew alphabet, since Aleph denotes an ox, Beth a house, Gimel a camel, Daleth a door, Waw a hook, Sain a weapon, Kaph a spoon, Lamed an ox-goad, Nun a fish, Samech a support, Ain an eye, Peh a mouth or opening, Kuph an ape, Schin a tooth, and the like.

composed, as well as with the political and religious constitution, then with the state of the culture of that time and with the circumstances of the author.

Likewise the form, the manner of presentation, must also be suited to the spirit of that age and of the author. If, therefore, things occur in a writing which happened only after the death of the alleged author, if the language does not fit the writer and his age, if newer words occur, then it cannot be authentic, or at least it would have to be falsified.

Yet it is to be well noted concerning these internal criteria that they must necessarily be present if we are to acknowledge a writing as authentic; their absence makes the writing reprehensible. But their presence, however indispensable, does not by itself alone yet constitute the proof of authenticity; for it is still possible that a contemporary or later impostor is skillful enough to relate just such things, and in such a manner, that everything is suited to the alleged witness, his age and [p. 135] all circumstances. Often the external marks must also be present.

§. 127. External Criteria for the Authenticity of a Writing

External criteria for the authenticity of a writing are: 1) When later writers through all ages, back up to the author, appeal to this writing and cite passages from it as the actual opinions and statements of the author, as from an authentic source. 2) When a writing is adduced through all ages, back up to the author, by friends and enemies of this author and of his writing, and both parties appeal to it in order to ground their opinions and refute their opponents. 3) When a writing belongs to the public acts of a people, contains its constitution, determines its rights and obligations, its religious and political institutions, then the existence of this people and its organization according to the prescription of the document is a proof of the document's authenticity. 4) When a writing has been publicly read by its author and handed over to the nation, then the nation itself is guarantor of its authenticity, and the writers of a later age are the organs through which the nation gives its testimony to the authenticity.

§. 128. Criteria for the Integrity of a Writing

That a writing has not been falsified, but has come down to us unaltered, can be proved: 1) When the original itself, or else copies [p. 136] from the age of the author, are extant and can be compared with the copy we have before us, which, however, is hardly possible with extraordinarily old writings. 2) When many copies of a document from different ages are extant which agree exactly with one another. 3) When old translations of this writing into various languages are extant which harmonize with our copies of the document. 4) When, soon after the publication of a writing, it was used for public instruction, expounded orally and in writing, and explanations of it were written in which the text was quoted and its sense explained. 5) When the writers immediately following cite many passages from this document, and the citations agree verbatim with the text. This is especially important when friends and enemies do not differ in these citations.

From these grounds it follows that this document was read at all times and in all places just as we read it, and has therefore come down to us unaltered and unfalsified.

§. 129. Proofs of the Authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. Utility

Since the divinity of a doctrine consists in its promoting the happiness, in this world and the next, of those to whom it is given (§. 91), it is very evident that the doctrines of the Mosaic Religion correspond exactly to this requirement. For 1) it forbids polytheism, which leads to vices of every kind, both directly through express laws and [p. 137] indirectly through the prohibition of over-familiar intercourse with heathen peoples, of image worship, of idolatrous customs, as well as of superstition of every kind, and above all through the doctrine of divine providence. 2) It promotes reflection on God and inward piety through several commandments in general, and especially through the celebration of the Sabbath and other festivals, but above all through the two fundamental commandments: to love God above all, and one's neighbor as oneself (Deut. 3:5; Lev. 18:19).[83] 3) Its aim is to promote humanity and purity of morals. With regard to humanity, particular attention is paid to duties toward those whom their low station, their foreign origin, their poverty and their natural needs make dependent on the good treatment and benefactions of others (Exod. 22:2, 22). It commands compassion toward animals (Deut. 25:4); indeed, it enjoins friendly conduct even toward enemies (Exod. 32:5).[84] On all this the other prophets express themselves very clearly in countless passages.

It is true that God did not have Moses say anything *explicit* in his writings about the immortality of the soul, just as little as he set forth the existence of God philosophically; he could give only hints about it, because here he intended to reveal historical truths rather than eternal fundamental truths, which are already grounded in the nature of man, are, as it were, innate concepts, and must be presupposed by the historical truths. Nonetheless he has given us in his writings several indications which leave no doubt about the belief [p. 138] of our forefathers in the immortality of the soul (§. 80 and 81).

§. 130. Internal Criteria of Holy Scripture

The oldest, most reliable and most complete history of the human race we owe to Moses. Without him we would know nothing at all reasonable about the origin of the earth and the primeval history of our race: for the reports of the other nations[85] furnish us in this field with nothing but palpable fables, absurdities and manifest ridiculousness, against which all reason rebels; whereas the account as Moses gives it to us is entirely in accordance with nature. The simple, extremely poor, wholly sensuous and image-rich language is the language of childhood and consequently also that

[83] Translator: Evidently misprints for Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18.

[84] Translator: For "Exod. 22:2, 22" read probably Exod. 22:21–22 (Hebrew 22:20–21; cf. 23:9); for "Exod. 32:5" read Exod. 23:4–5.

[85] Their oldest writer, Homer, lived only five hundred years after Moses.

of the primeval world; the few concepts of supersensible things, and their entirely sensuous clothing, thoughts and expressions, fit entirely the earliest age of the human race; the gradual, step-by-step course of development is perfectly in accordance with nature; the account given of the origin and formation of the earth, and of the origin and spread of our race, is so natural and rational that no people on earth can show anything better, more satisfying and more rational. That Moses does not conceal the faults of his people, nor even those of the men he holds up to us as models of excellence, nay, not even his own [p. 139] faults, is proved by countless passages, and these attest his honesty (cf. §. 122).

What has been said of the Mosaic writings applies also to all the other parts of the holy books. Neither in the matter, in the content, nor in the form and the presentation is anything to be found that would demonstrate a forgery. The style of these writings and their allusions are entirely suited to the age and the locality in which they were composed. All the events set forth in these writings hang closely together, are most intimately connected with one another and form a whole. The gradual progression of culture is so entirely in accordance with nature that it can only be truth. Each single book has a spirit of its own, a peculiar language; the language changes as it changed periodically in the nation itself; it takes up foreign words, idioms and images in the degree to which the Israelite nation became acquainted with other peoples. The images and allusions are drawn from those regions in which the books were written, and the more travelers in recent times investigate the localities in which these events took place, the more clearly the harmony is found. Matter and form thus clearly prove to us the authenticity of these writings (cf. §. 126).

§. 131. External Criteria of Holy Scripture

In the case of the holy writings of the Israelites it is plainly evident that one can demand external [p. 140] testimonies for their genuineness less than for any other document of antiquity. For 1) the connections among nations in the early period in which these writings arose were not so close and many-sided as in later or even modern times. 2) Little was written in those times, and even of this little the greater part has been lost. 3) The language of the Israelites was unknown to foreign peoples; their writings were of interest really only to them, because they concerned first of all only them and related only to their constitution. 4) Even if there really were foreign and contemporary writers who confirmed the authenticity of the holy writings of the Israelites, they would still be less decisive than the testimony of the Israelite nation itself, which must surely know best which writings among it are genuine and from whom it received its national writings.

The holy writings of the Israelites are their national acts, in the custody of the people, of which the later ones always vouch for the earlier. Moses, as head of the people, handed over his writings in its name to Joshua; Joshua wrote down the people's testimony to the genuineness of the Mosaic writings and handed this, together with the writings, again to the people, who preserved both, until another writer came who again wrote down this testimony of the nation, as for example Samuel. These writings were kept beside the greatest sanctuary of the nation, namely the Ark of the

Covenant. They contain the constitution of the nation and the rights and duties of the estates. Had even one of these books been of spurious origin, the oppressed party would surely have used the proof of this to its own [p. 141] advantage. Moreover, the later books very often appeal to the earlier ones, and by this very fact confirm that they were always regarded by the nation as genuine; and so the later writings are always a testimony to the authenticity of the earlier (cf. §. 127).

§. 132. A Forgery Was Not Possible

Since the Israelites have from of old set such great store by their national honor, they would never have accepted as genuine writings that portray all the crimes and excesses of the people with so striking a candor. — And who could have carried out such a deception? — An Israelite would have flattered his nation more and would not have portrayed its faults so glaringly. From a foreigner these writings would have been accepted all the less; besides, he would not have been so well acquainted with the manners and customs. Least of all would a non-Israelite of that time have insisted so strongly on belief in the *one only* God, and portrayed polytheism as the nation's gravest crime, as happens throughout these writings, since all the neighboring peoples whom the Israelites knew were at that time given over to polytheism. Further, a single impostor would by no means have been able to encompass so enormous a span of time, and to observe all the small circumstances of times, places and persons, of the rise and fall of the national culture in general, and in the language in particular. Several impostors, however, could never have produced so great, so comprehensive a whole, consisting of such numerous parts, [p. 142] without contradicting one another in many ways.

§. 133. Integrity of the Holy Scriptures

In the same way it can also be proved that the writings of Moses and the Prophets have come down to us without essential alteration, without falsification. For the various ancient manuscripts of them, which stem from the most varied centuries as well as from many different lands, agree with one another, apart from some involuntary errors of reading and writing, which are unavoidable in a work of so great a compass. Christians and Jews in different times and in different lands disputed with one another regarding the differences in their doctrines of faith, and both parties appealed to these writings and quoted several passages from them verbatim in support of their opposing opinions; but never did one reproach the other with these passages having been falsified.

Moreover, neither a time nor a person can be conceived who could have accomplished an actual falsification of these writings. Moses himself had already made special arrangements so that his writings would be preserved unfalsified for posterity. Before his death he read the book of the law to the assembled people and handed it over to them with the command to keep it beside the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. 31:26); he ordained that it be read publicly every seven years in the presence of the whole people (Deut. 31:12); parents were instructed to remind their children of the principal event, and [p. 143] for this purpose national festivals were also instituted; the members of the priestly

estate, who besides the divine service also provided the instruction of the people, which they drew from these books, and who lived scattered among all the tribes, were so many guardians of the integrity of these national documents. The most important events were clothed in popular songs, as Moses himself already did (Deut. 32:1); and in David's time almost the whole history existed in songs (2 Sam. ch. 2; Ps. ch. 18).[86] With such arrangements it was surely not possible to undertake an important alteration without its being discovered and prevented.

§. 134. Continuation

After Moses' death Joshua took care of this; thereafter, down to Samuel, there were from time to time judges among the Israelites, who saw to the maintenance of the constitution introduced by Moses with unshakable courage. From Samuel on, down to the division of the kingdom and to the Babylonian captivity, there were always prophets, who fought with extraordinary zeal for morality and the observance of the Mosaic laws.

After the division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel, each kingdom was a check upon the other, and neither could venture to change anything in these writings, as their common possession, without exposing itself to the reproaches of the other kingdom. Already in the captivity frequent copies of these writings were made, carried into other lands with the dispersion of the Jews, and read [p. 144] in the synagogues, and therefore a falsification was impossible. Later these documents were translated into several languages, such as Aramaic and Greek, and falsification was guarded against still further. In later times, around the sixth century of the Christian era, a society of Jewish scholars called the *Masoretes*, in order to prevent even the smallest falsification, even counted, with unspeakable labor, the letters of every book of these holy documents and left the counts in writing.

Nor can any person be conceived who could have undertaken an actual falsification. A non-Israelite in ancient times would surely, in undertaking a falsification, have struck out the glorious deeds of the Israelites, and above all altered the concepts of one only God, which stand in open contradiction to his own religion. On the part of an Israelite a falsification could be undertaken all the less, for in that case he would surely have changed above all those passages which were injurious to the national honor. But all this is present. The Prophets reproached the kings, the priests and the people with all their excesses with the greatest candor; they were zealous for the Law, but never did they reproach anyone with having changed anything in the holy books. After the period of the Prophets, the Israelites had such reverence for these documents that neither persecution nor death could turn them from them.

[86] Translator: "2 Sam. ch. 2" is probably a misprint for 2 Sam. 22, the song that parallels Ps. 18.

From all this we gather with certainty that the holy books, as we now possess them, are of divine origin and have come down to us genuine and unfalsified, [p. 145] and therefore we are also bound to comply with them in everything that is applicable to present times.

§. 135. On the Miracles Occurring in Holy Scripture

Among the proofs of a Revelation that has really taken place belong also miracles: that is, that with its promulgation such phenomena and facts are connected as we perceive can be effected by God alone.

Of miracles that take place before our eyes, their nature, marks and evaluation, what is necessary has already been said above, §. 100 ff. But when it is a question of a miracle that did not take place before our eyes, then the historical certainty of the fact must be completely settled. Only, for the attestation of a reported miracle, something more is required than for a mere natural event, namely:

1) The witnesses who communicate this miracle story to us must not draw their reports from mere popular legends, which are perhaps related only after a whole series of years: because among all the peoples of the earth much has been invented, now from self-interested, now from political motives, at the bottom of which there sometimes lie natural facts, which popular legend has magnified, distorted and raised to the level of miracle. Here, therefore, one must be able to point back to reliable eyewitnesses who really vouch for the facts as they are related to us.

[p. 146] 2) Miracles that are to be accepted as historically certain must not have taken place secretly, in hidden places, but freely and publicly, so that everyone could perceive and examine them; and the genuineness of their concurring testimony increases in proportion to the eyewitnesses present.

3) If a miraculous phenomenon is supposed to have been worked by a man of otherwise bad repute, or for the furtherance of immoral ends, or in a childish, ridiculous or even indecent manner, then the account is either wholly invented, or it has been raised to a miracle only by the addition of false circumstances, because a revelation of this kind is not consistent with the sublimity and dignity of the Deity.

§. 136. Continuation

All the marks given in the preceding section concerning the historical certainty of miracles that really took place we find perfectly confirmed in the miracles of Moses. For:

1) Not Moses alone relates his miracles to us; rather Joshua, his immediate successor, and the elders of the nation, who at the exodus from Egypt were not yet twenty years old and were eyewitnesses of what took place at the exodus from Egypt and during the forty years' journey through the wilderness, give us clear reports of it, in that they expressly appeal to the miracles performed through Moses (Josh. ch. 24).

2) The miracles which Moses produced in confirmation of his divine mission took place [p. 147] all of them not only publicly, in the presence of the whole people, but even in the presence of the so-called Egyptian magicians, who, initiated into all secret arts, were surely able to distinguish deception from truth; and yet they themselves had to admit that Moses worked by the power of God (Exod. 8:15).[87] Had these miracles not taken place in the presence of the whole people, and had the people not clearly convinced themselves of them, how could Moses have instituted so many, and in part burdensome, ceremonies in memory of these miracles: such as the Passover festival, the redemption of the firstborn, and the like? How could Moses command that the Israelites should unceasingly instruct their children in the meaning of these ceremonies? (Exod. 13).

3) All the miracles performed through Moses were worked in a sublime manner, worthy of the great end. The noble character of Moses, too, in both religious and moral respects, as a man, as leader of the people and as lawgiver, expresses itself too clearly through his history for us to place the slightest doubt in the reality of the miracles performed through him.

§. 137. On the Prophecies Occurring in Holy Scripture

If prophecies, that is, foretellings of events to occur in the distant or near future, are to count as proofs of a divine Revelation, it must at the same time be proved that they are such predictions as could not possibly be grasped by the natural faculty of prediction, but could only be inspired through a higher instruction.

[p. 148] The human faculty of prediction extends 1) to mere natural events; 2) to free actions of individual men; 3) to the fate of whole peoples. Yet this faculty of prediction has its limits, which it is by no means able to overstep without a power expressly imparted for this by God (§. 98 ff.). We will examine some foretellings in Holy Scripture in this order.

1) Foretellings concerning mere natural events. Noah announced the flooding of the earth a hundred and twenty years before it came to pass (Gen. 6:3)[88]. He who had so little insight into nature and its forces that he did not even know the intoxicating power of wine certainly did not possess so much knowledge of nature as to foresee so great a catastrophe so long a time in advance.

Even if one wished to explain the various plagues by which Moses compelled the Egyptians to let the Israelites go as mere natural events, absurd as that would be, it was nevertheless impossible for Moses, without God's inspiration, always to announce their beginning and their end in advance so exactly and definitely.

Even if the walls of Jericho collapsed through an earthquake, as some would claim, Joshua must still have known of this earthquake in advance, because otherwise, for the conquest of this city, as

[87] Translator: Exod. 8:15 in the Hebrew numbering (8:19 in English versions): "This is the finger of God."

[88] See Michaelis's note for the unlearned on this passage.

happened with other cities, he would have made other arrangements than a mere procession of the priests around the city. [p. 149] So too the curse that Joshua (6:26) laid upon whoever should rebuild Jericho, or rather the prophecy concerning it, was exactly fulfilled after a series of centuries (1 Kings 16:30).[89] It was the same with Elijah (1 Kings 17:1), who foretold a drought, and with Elisha (2 Kings 1:21), who foretold rain long beforehand, and more of the like.

§. 138. Biblical Prophecies Concerning the Free Actions of Men

Knowledge of men does indeed allow many a free action of men to be foreseen with probability; yet there are cases where mere knowledge of men without higher influence is not sufficient, because either no premises are at hand from which to draw a conclusion, or because these antecedent events do not point to the action to be determined (§. 102). There are many such predictions in Holy Scripture: for example, the definite prediction of the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 12:10, 13) regarding the punishments that would befall David on account of his transgressions with Bathsheba, which this prophet foretold exactly (2 Sam. 16:21).

A prophet from Judah announced to Jeroboam that a king of the house of David, named *Josiah*, would destroy the altars of the idols, slaughter their priests and burn the bones (1 Kings 13:2, 6). Only 350 years later was this prophecy fulfilled down to the smallest circumstances (2 Kings 23:15–20). Josiah was free to serve the true God or the idols, and yet this prophet knew [p. 150] 350 years in advance, with certainty, that the former would happen.

Elijah announced to Ahab, after the execution of Naboth, that in the place where Naboth's blood was shed the dogs would also lick up the blood of Ahab, and would devour the flesh of his wife Jezebel in the valley of Jezreel (1 Kings 21:1–23). All this came about quite literally (1 Kings 22:38; 2 Kings 9:35).

Tyre, one of the most famous cities, was at the time of Ezekiel in its greatest flourishing, and yet this prophet already at that time, when there was not the slightest sign of it, announced the complete destruction of this city, with the express addition that even its rubble would be thrown into the sea (Ezek. 26:4 and 12). Nebuchadnezzar conquered this city and destroyed it, yet its rubble was not then thrown into the sea; but this was carried out by Alexander of Macedon, about two hundred and fifty years after Ezekiel's prediction. For after the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, the returning citizens founded a city of the same name, not on the former site, however, but on islands lying opposite. When Alexander besieged this new Tyre and could not approach it with ships,[90] he

[89] Translator: The fulfillment is 1 Kings 16:34. In the next sentence, "2 Kings 1:21" does not exist; Elisha's prediction of water for the armies is at 2 Kings 3:16–20. The "note for the unlearned" in the preceding footnote refers to Johann David Michaelis's German translation of the Old Testament with notes "für Ungelehrte" (1769–85).

[90] Translator: The print reads "und mit Schiffen sich ihm nähern konnte" ("and could approach it with ships"); the sense requires "could not," and the translation follows the sense. The reference is to Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*, 4.2.18.

had the rubble of the old Tyre, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, thrown into the sea, in order thereby to fill up the stretches of sea separating the city from the land (Curtius, bk. 4, ch. 2, no. 18).

Of this very Alexander, his fortunes, conquests and the decline of his empire, the prophet Daniel (ch. 11) gives such clear predictions that [p. 151] they agree quite exactly with the history of this king that the profane historians relate to us. Daniel could not possibly have foreseen of himself, several centuries beforehand, that after the reign of three Persian kings a man would come to the throne of a Greek kingdom who would in a short time subjugate all Asia, yet would not pass this great conquered empire on to his descendants, but that it would fall apart into small kingdoms immediately after his death[91].

§. 139. Biblical Prophecies Concerning the Fates of Whole Peoples and Kingdoms

Knowledge of men, of peoples and of history, together with political insight, does indeed allow us to guess beforehand with probability something even about the fate of whole peoples. But if the event to be foreseen is removed from our age by a very great series of years; if this event comes about through manifold, very intricate preparations, through accidental circumstances and free actions of men; or if the people among whom this event is to occur does not yet even exist, then it is impossible for man, without divine assistance, to know and announce it beforehand (§. 112). And yet such prophecies occur in Holy Scripture, not only of the Israelite nation but of several other nations, in which not only the event but even the names of the notable persons and [p. 152] the determination of the time were foretold several centuries in advance.

There was as yet no sign that an Israelite people would ever exist, and already the progenitor of this people, Abraham, who was without hope of ever begetting children, was foretold by God that his descendants would grow into a very great people (Gen. 13:16); and so it came to pass: for within a span of four hundred years his descendants grew to two and a half million souls.

Unity of descent, of language, of Temple and divine worship, and countless other things that bind men closely together, seemed to make it impossible for the Israelite tribes ever to separate from one another and fall apart into two kingdoms. But God had the division of the people announced to Solomon, in whose time the Jewish nation was at its greatest flourishing and highest unity, as punishment for his transgressions (1 Kings 11). Solomon knew the man by whom this division was to be effected; he sought his life, but in vain. Rehoboam, in consequence of this prediction, ought to have been more cautious, but he himself gave occasion for the schism, and God's word was fulfilled (1 Kings 12:1–25).

After the division the kings in Israel applied all their strength to prevent the reunion of these kingdoms under the family of David. For this reason they introduced a separate worship for their subjects (12:26–33), often made war on one another, and there was no sign that the great kingdom

[91] On the fate of Babylon, see the periodical *Sulamith*, 4th year, 8th issue, p. 99 ff.

of Israel would one day again [join] the small kingdom [p. 153] attach itself to Judah and be united with it once more. But in God's counsel it was not so decreed. Several prophets proclaimed, while the separation still lasted, the union of these two kingdoms under one man of the family of David (Isa. 12:12, 13;[92] Hos. 1:11; Mic. 2:12), and so it came to pass. Both kingdoms were destroyed, and the remnants returned united from captivity under Zerubbabel, a prince of the tribe of Judah; Jerusalem, the residence of the family of David, became once again their common capital, and the descendants of Abraham thereafter received the name *Jews*.

§. 140. Continuation.

Moses had already foretold the carrying away of the Israelites into captivity as a punishment for their idolatry (Deut. 4:23–28; 28:36–52). This punishment, announced by Moses in general terms, was defined more closely and in greater detail by the later prophets with regard to the two kingdoms. For the kingdom of Israel, Ahijah had already foretold the captivity under the reign of Jeroboam, its first king (1 Kings 14:13). Hosea gives some particular circumstances (Hos. 3:4; 9:1–10; 10:5, 6). Amos (5:1–27) and Isaiah (7:8; 8:4, 7; 10:5, 6) likewise foretold the same fate. This punishment, so often threatened against the kingdom of Israel and so clearly foretold, was also exactly carried out (2 Kings 17:1–34).

With regard to the kingdom of Judah, too, the later prophets proclaimed specifically the fate that Moses had indicated summarily for the whole people. Micah foretold it to this kingdom in detail a century and a half [p. 154] before it came to pass (Mic. 3:12; 4:10). Ezekiel was already in captivity by the river Chebar, and at that distance he foretold the utter devastation of Jerusalem with so many small and incidental circumstances that he could not possibly have known them in advance of himself (Ezek. 4:5–10; 12:3–13). Although Jeremiah was very near to this event, and indeed lived through it, he nevertheless gave such features of it as he could not have known of himself, since they depended upon very incidental circumstances; for which reason neither the people nor the king with his counsellors would believe him (Jer. chs. 4; 6; 7; 14; 16; 21; 27). Most detailed of all in this respect was the prophet Isaiah (22:1–17; 30). Everything that these holy men foretold concerning the kingdom of Judah through the spirit of God came to pass exactly and precisely (2 Kings 25:1–24; 2 Chron. 36:20; Jer. 53:1–8).[93]

Just as the prophets foretold the captivity of this people, so too they foretold definitely its return to its fatherland (Deut. 30:1–6; Isa. 14:1; 44:24, 28; 45:1, 13; Jer. 29:10–14; 30:18; 33:6 ff.; Amos 9:14), and everything came to pass punctually (cf. Ezra in several places).

Indeed, even the beneficial effects which the captivity was to produce in this nation, namely to break it of the habit of idolatry and to confirm it in faith in the true God, were foretold to them by the prophets (Deut. 4:30; 30:6; Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:24–28). This important result [p. 155] the exile

[92] Translator: Isaiah 12 has only six verses; the passage meant is evidently Isa. 11:12–13.

[93] Translator: Jeremiah has only 52 chapters; the parallel account of the fall of Jerusalem is Jer. 52 (cf. also Jer. 39:1–8).

did indeed bring about: for from that time on the inclination to idolatry disappeared, and the nation remained unshakeably faithful to the true God, so that neither the cruellest tortures under the Greek kings, nor the persecutions after the destruction of the Second Temple and their dispersion among all the nations, idolatrous at that time, could lead them to apostasy.

But the prophets proclaimed their fates not only to the Israelite nation but also to the peoples neighbouring it, in order that the Israelites might see from this: 1) that God is not merely the God of Israel, as many among them may perhaps have imagined, but the God of *all* men, and that He governs them all as a kindly Father who, at the same time, punishes out of love; 2) that all their enemies are, in the divine plan, merely instruments to bring them to the point which God intended them to reach, namely to become disseminators of the true Religion among the nations. Thus the downfall of the Moabites was foretold (by Isa. 15 and 16; Jer. 48; Ezek. 25; Zeph. 2). Of the downfall of Egypt speak (Isa. 18, 19 and 20; Ezek. 29, 30, 31 and 32); of Tyre (Isa. 21 and 47; Jer. 50, 51 and 52);[94] of the Edomites (Isa. 24; Jer. 49; Ezek. 25 and 35; Obad. 1); of Babylon (Isa. 13:17–22; 14:22, 23; 20:9; Jer. 50:1–39; 51). History confirms the outcome.

[p. 156] Section IV. The Destiny of the Israelite People.

§. 141. The Function of the Prophets.

The word *prophet* is not always taken in the Holy Scriptures in its proper sense; it does not always mean a man who, by a higher power, performs supernatural deeds and foretells events unsearchable to men. For this expression often means merely an eloquent man (Exod. 7:1); often it means singers who composed sacred songs and sang them to the accompaniment of musical instruments (1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Chron. 25:1). Sometimes it also means those learned in the Law, scribes; and in this respect there were also schools of the prophets and disciples of the prophets (1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Kings 20:35) — not as though the working of miracles and prophesying could be learned like a guild craft, but young men were instructed in these schools in the sacred Law, and in poetry and music for religious use. In the proper sense the expression *prophet* (Nabi) is used only when it is meant to designate a man who, equipped by God with strength and courage, was appointed to make known God's will to the people, to set its faults before its eyes steadfastly, without shyness or fear, and, should no improvement follow, to proclaim the punishments decreed by God, and if need be also to confirm his divine mission by supernatural deeds and predictions. The prophets did not always express these prophecies in words, but [p. 157] often also through actions, in order to make an all the stronger impression on those around them (1 Kings 11:30; 22:11; Jer. 27, 28, 35; Ezek. 4, 24, and others more).

The language of the prophets is very rich in imagery, for Orientals in general love figurative expressions even now; they often represent what happens mediately through God as if it happened

[94] Translator: so printed; the prophecies against Tyre are Isa. 23 and Ezek. 26–28. Isa. 21 and 47 and Jer. 50–51 concern Babylon.

immediately; what God merely permits, as if it happened through His immediate agency (Exod. 4:21, and others more), because they sought thereby to make all the stronger an impression upon men's minds. In these cases one must carefully distinguish the image from the thing it figures, if one does not wish to fall, after the example of several older Bible commentators, into forced interpretations that do more harm than good to the good cause. Thus, for example, the prophets often made use of supernaturally magnifying turns of speech (hyperbole) (Exod. 10:21; Joel 2:4, and the like). Also expressions which seem low according to our Western taste (Amos 4:1). Indeed even images and turns of speech which run counter to propriety according to *our* customs. To explain this to oneself, one must be thoroughly acquainted with the way of thinking of that time in general and of the Orientals in particular, and then with their language, customs, and domestic as well as religious usages.

§. 142. Continuation.

If one wishes to form a correct judgment about the function of the prophets, one must first have a correct notion of the destiny of the people of Israel.

If an immediate Revelation was to be given to men for the sake of their morality, and [p. 158] this Revelation, because of the universal need for it, was to be spread to all men, it could only happen by stages. One truth is always the ground of another. The Revelation had to be given by stages to one people, and in the same way it had to pass by stages to the other peoples.

Among the most indispensable preparatory doctrines, without which men could be receptive to no Revelation, belongs the belief in one God as Creator and Preserver of the world, who is wise, good and just. For so long as one has not acknowledged such a Being, one can accept no instruction from Him, nor hold on His authority any proposition incomprehensible to us to be true.

For this purpose God chose a particular people, the Israelites. They were destined — as shines forth clearly from their entire history and from all their fortunes, when one takes them in their connection — to preserve the belief in one single God, loving indeed, but also just.[95] This belief, constantly to be preserved through the Israelites, was to pass from them little by little to the other peoples; these were gradually to learn to see that the God whom the Israelites worshipped was the true God, so that [p. 159] they too might be prepared for the acceptance of Revelation (Exod. 19:6, 7).

[95]The question why God chose precisely this nation for the purpose, why He did not make this Revelation known to all men at once, would be just as absurd as, say, the question why the all-good God caused one part of mankind to be born under a very favourable climate, and another under the equator in burning sandy deserts, or near the North Pole, where everything in nature is stunted by cold; or why He did not give men the strength of the lion and the swiftness of the eagle, the beasts human reason, the plants voluntary motion, though this would have been possible to His omnipotence. To this He was determined by His all-wisdom, which is incomprehensible to us (Isa. 55:9).

§. 143. Means of Preserving among Men the Belief in One Single God.

The natural and universal way to bring men to the knowledge of God and to keep them in it is, to be sure, reason, which leads to this knowledge through attentive contemplation of nature, through its own constitution, and through a number of inescapable needs. But since, on the one hand, the sensuality of most men is too preponderant for all of them to devote themselves to these contemplations, and, on the other, the human understanding is too finite to comprehend the Infinite entirely (§. 83), the human understanding degenerated, abandoned itself too much to the imagination, and transformed the concept of one single, holy and just God into a polytheism favourable to every excess.

God therefore raised up from time to time certain men who were to restore and preserve among men the original concepts. Such were, in the most ancient times, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, etc. (§. 94), who were instruments in the hand of Providence to spread some better concepts among men and to prepare them for higher instruction.

§. 144. Arrangements for Preserving the Belief in One Single God among the Israelites.

The means of preserving the knowledge of God through individual men, and through them instructing the whole human race in it, was not sufficient. God [p. 160] therefore made special arrangements for the furtherance of this important purpose; He chose a particular people among whom this belief was to be preserved in its purity and was also to spread to the other peoples.

Abraham was the man who was chosen by God to be the progenitor of a people destined for this purpose. He received the command to leave his idolatrous countrymen and to move to Canaan, where, removed from family ties, as a stranger, he was less in danger of being infected by the error of idolatry. He and his descendants were kept in the belief in one single God through frequent immediate and mediate divine instruction, through signal benefits, and through a special guidance.

As soon as his descendants had multiplied sufficiently to form a people of their own, it received an entirely different constitution, in religious as well as political respects. The belief in one single God was woven into the whole constitution; it was in fact the fundamental law. The nation received a worship of its own, in very many respects different from that of the other nations,[96] with distinct sacrifices and [p. 161] ceremonies — which was all the more necessary because otherwise the Israelites would have been tempted to go over to the all too sensual worship of idols, to which, under various modifications, all the near and distant nations of the world of that time were devoted. The ceremonies prescribed to the Israelites by God through Moses had, moreover, the particular

[96]Much, however, had to be retained on account of the notions which this people had, as it were, imbibed with their mother's milk in Egypt, although it did not belong to the essence of Religion proper, since not everything they had seen before them in Egypt and had grown accustomed to could be changed all at once — as, for example, the sacrifices. "To the end that the children of Israel," says Moses (Lev. 17:5, 7), "may bring their slaughter-beasts, which they have hitherto slaughtered in the open field, in honour of the Eternal, before the entrance of the tabernacle of meeting, unto the priest, etc., and that they may no more offer their slaughter-beasts unto the satyrs (idols in general, and especially the *Mendes* of the Egyptians, who was one with the *Pan* of the Greeks), after whom they go a-whoring." On this article see: *More Nebuchim* by Maimonides 3, 32 ff.

purpose of reminding the people of certain relations by which it was all the more strengthened in the belief in the one God. For this same reason they had only one single Temple, so that the unity of the place might remind them of the unity of the Creator and Ruler of the world.

The doctrine of the unity of God was the most essential thing in the whole Law; it was presented by Moses, their first lawgiver and historian, as the constant belief of their fathers reaching back to the origin of mankind; and since the people had to be kept in constant knowledge of it by the priests, and it was preserved through the performance of the ceremonies as a living representation of this doctrine, this belief, notwithstanding the overwhelming inclination of many to deviate, could never again be entirely lost.

The measures taken thus far were indeed suited to preserving among the Israelites the belief in the one God, so that they would not easily fall into idolatry of their own accord. But since they were surrounded by peoples who were slaves to idols, the danger of example and imitation was very great for them. Now in order to avert this danger from them as far as possible, all connections with idolatrous peoples were very strictly forbidden to them. They were [p. 162] assigned a land of their own, from which they drove out the idolatrous inhabitants and in part utterly destroyed them (Exod. 22:31;[97] Deut. 7:1–5).

§. 145. The Israelites Were Also to Come to Know God as the Moral Ruler of the World.

The mere knowledge of God's unity would not be sufficient for the furtherance of morality if God were not at the same time acknowledged as a holy and just Ruler of the world. Now in order to bring these attributes of God, too, to their knowledge, God directed their fortunes in such a way that these always stood in equal proportion to their conduct. They were fortunate or unfortunate according to the measure of their moral conduct. This guidance of God was often laid clearly upon their hearts (Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

But so that they should not hit upon the thought that their fortune or misfortune was mere chance, their punishments for their crimes were announced to them in advance quite definitely (2 Sam. 12:9, 13; 1 Kings 11:29–39; 14:6–17; Mic. 3:12). Now when these punishments threatened in advance actually came to pass, they could not fail to recognize clearly from this a holy and just Ruler of the world.

§. 146. Through the Israelites the Belief in One Single and Just God Was Also to Spread to the Other Peoples.

Not only the Israelites but also the other peoples God wished to instruct concerning His attributes, and thereby to make them happy on this side of the grave and beyond it. All ways to this end, to be sure, stood open to God's omnipotence, but His wisdom found it [p. 163] good to let this happen

[97] Translator: so printed; the passage on driving out the inhabitants is Exod. 23:31–33.

through the Israelites. For this reason it was necessary that they be raised to a great and famous people that would draw the attention of the other peoples to itself. This happened.

By a remarkable fate Joseph came to Egypt, a land whose inhabitants were the most famous and most knowledgeable people of the world of that time, and which through its commerce stood in connection with many other peoples. By his wisdom, exalted above that of all the Egyptian sages, he had drawn the attention of the whole nation to himself, won the full confidence of the court, and so, according to God's plan, brought about the reception of his family there, where it grew into a numerous people with a faith different from that of the original inhabitants, namely in one single invisible God.

Yet the Egyptians were to be led not only to the concept of one single invisible God, but were at the same time also to be instructed concerning the holiness and justice of this God. This too was very forcefully impressed upon them through the punishments that Moses so often threatened against that people on account of its oppression of the Israelites, and which actually came to pass. The report of these events soon spread to the neighbouring peoples. For even before the Israelites came to Canaan, the report of the omnipotence, holiness and justice of God went ahead of them to the inhabitants of that region (Num. 22:4 ff.; Josh. 2:10–12).

[p. 164] **§. 147. Continuation.**

What had been assured to the Israelites at the proclamation of the laws — namely that their fortunes should stand in equal proportion to their observance of these laws (Exod. 20:5, 6, and in several places), so that both they themselves and the neighbouring peoples might recognize the holiness and justice of God — this was exactly fulfilled. They were fortunate as long as they observed these laws, which even their greatest enemies perceived (1 Sam. 4:8); unfortunate, on the other hand, as soon as they departed from them, so that Balaam, in order to make it possible to do them harm, made the proposal of seducing them into idolatry through women (Num. 25:1 ff.; 31:16).

This rise and fall of their fortune according to the measure of their attachment to God contributed very much to the spread of the true Religion among foreign peoples. For through their good conduct under the reign of David and Solomon this people rose to such power and greatness that it was admired not only by its nearest neighbours but also by distant nations. Solomon's wisdom and greatness even drew foreign rulers to his residence. Commercial connections arose with foreign nations, through which these too became acquainted with the faith of the Israelites.

The unhappy fortunes of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah likewise contributed to the same purpose. They became entangled in wars with the greatest empires of the time, and were finally led away into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, as Moses (Deut. 28:36) and the prophets in several places had proclaimed to them. [p. 165] Scattered among the heathen, these received from them some correct concepts of God. The Babylonians were attentive to their religious songs (Ps.

136:3).[98] Cyrus had such respect for the God of the Israelites that he permitted the Israelites to return to their fatherland and commanded the Temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt (Ezra 1:2). Nebuchadnezzar, too, acknowledged that the God of the Israelites is the God of all gods and Lord of kings, and forbade on pain of death that He be blasphemed (Dan. 2:47; 3:96).[99] Darius the Mede even prescribed to his subjects that they honour the God of the Israelites, because He is the *only* God (Dan. 6:26).

The Israelites themselves, however, through these sad fortunes, came to know God in such a way, and were cured of their inclination to idolatry in so powerful a manner, that after their return from the Babylonian captivity they could not be led into idol-worship either by examples or by the harshest persecutions — wholly as Moses had foretold (Deut. 32:39).

Under the Maccabees the Israelite state rose again; alliances arose with Greeks and Romans, and many Israelites had scattered into near and distant lands. These were new means of acquainting foreign peoples with the true God. There were in fact many worshippers of Jehovah among foreign peoples, and the sacred books of the Israelites, which contain the doctrine of God, His attributes and His will, became known and were read among foreign nations as well. Soon after the Romans became acquainted with the Jews, their own religion became an object of mockery to the former, and unbelief in the heathen [p. 166] mythology became almost universal in the higher and lower classes. This revolution in the Roman religion hastened, among other causes, the downfall of this world empire just as surely as it procured entry for Judaism, and later for Christianity, among this people. It is true that this at the same time made some favoured courtiers[100] and statesmen[101] enemies of Judaism, for which mere partisanship and love of abuse were the real occasion; but notwithstanding this, the Jewish religion spread more and more among the Roman people. Very many accepted circumcision and bound themselves to sacrifice everything, even fatherland and parents, spouses and children, to the welfare of the newly adopted faith (Tacitus, *Histories* V. 5). Somewhat later Izates, king in Adiabene, together with his mother Helena and his brothers, went over to Judaism, and the greater part of their people followed their example (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20:2).

§. 148. Continuation.

Shortly before the complete destruction of the Jewish state by the Romans, which was brought about by the religious and political sectarian spirit of the Jews, the founder of the Christian religion appeared. He took the principles of the Mosaic Religion concerning God, His attributes and His will as the basis of his teaching, modified these fundamental principles according to time and

[98] Translator: Ps. 137:3 in the Hebrew numbering; Beer here follows the Vulgate numbering.

[99] Translator: Dan. 3:96 in the Vulgate/Greek numbering (= Dan. 3:29 in the Hebrew text).

[100] As Horace, Juvenal, Martial.

[101] Cicero.

circumstances, and in order to make this teaching applicable to all peoples, he and his followers separated that [p. 167] which had been commanded by God merely for the Israelites — as, for example, festivals in remembrance of the benefits shown to *them* alone, and the like — from that which is enjoined upon all men without exception; and this teaching gained a great following.

In the seventh century of the Christian era the founder of the Mohammedan religion appeared. He put his teaching together out of the teachings of Judaism and Christianity. He too, indeed, made the unity, holiness and justice of God the foundation of his teaching, but mixed it with very many fables calculated for the character of the Orient, and spread his teaching not by gentleness and love, but by fire and sword.[102]

Thus from of old the doctrine of God, His attributes and His will, which God made known immediately to the Israelites, has spread under God's guidance over the most cultivated part of mankind, and became for it the basis of its religion. This undeniable truth of history is the surest guarantee that the [p. 168] essence of the Mosaic Religion will never cease, but that one day even the rudest and most uncultivated nations, that all mankind, will one day pay homage to these concepts, and the true Religion will spread universally over the whole earth (Hab. 2:14; Zech. 14:9). How, in what manner and at what time this will be wholly fulfilled is known only to Him, the all-knowing God. We can only draw summary conclusions about the future from the past and the present; the means lie much too far beyond human knowledge and its concepts. We can and should hold fast to the pure teaching of Moses and the prophets, not subtilize, not seek to penetrate into God's mysteries by far-fetched interpretations, not wish to anticipate Him, but rather fulfil exactly our duties as men, as citizens in the kingdom of God and as members of civil society,[103] and leave the outcome to the almighty, all-knowing and all-good Ruler of the world. According to the saying of the most excellent of the prophets:

> "The secret things belong unto the Eternal our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this Law" (Deut. 29:29).

"Christianity," says Abarbanel in his commentary on the Pentateuch, Deut. ch. 4, "was the means by which the Jews preserved themselves in the dispersion, since through it the Holy Scriptures were spread universally and acknowledged by other peoples too as divine Revelations."

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[102]"All these events (concerning the Christian religion), as well as the later ones of Mohammed," says Maimonides in the book *Yad ha-Hazakah*, Treatise on Kings, ch. 11 (Venice edition), "serve to prepare the way for the Messiah and to spread the service of one single God in the whole world, as it is said in Scripture: 'Then will I turn to all the peoples, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah and serve Him with one consent' (Zeph. 3:9). For already the world is filled with [talk of] the Messiah, of the Holy Scripture and of the Law, and these things have spread to the distant isles and among barbarous and rude peoples, etc."

[103]From which the purely Mosaic teaching — leaving aside human additions — in no way keeps us, but rather most emphatically obliges us to it. The proofs of this follow in the 2nd volume.

[p. 169] ## Section V. Of Moral Improvement as the Condition of Higher Happiness.

§. 149. General Condition of Higher Happiness. Change of Mind.

All of God's arrangements for the moral good of man can become useful only on condition of their rational and conscientious application. To a free, self-active being the way or the order by which to attain his moral destiny could indeed be made known through nature and Revelation; but whether he would follow it, and how he would choose between good and evil, had to be left to him (§. 62 ff.; Deut. 30:15): for a compelled virtue and happiness ceases to be what it ought to be. Whoever, therefore, in whatever situation he finds himself at any time, makes use of the means for improving his knowledge and for practice in morally good actions, draws nearer without fail to his destiny, and this is the standard by which he is to be judged. Attention to God's revelation in nature and to the voice of conscience is therefore the condition for those to whom no other aids have been granted. To deny them the hope of salvation, as many have done and still do, contradicts reason just as much as Holy Scripture (Deut. 33:3).

Of those to whom the Holy Scriptures have become known, these demand first of all eagerness to learn, self-examination and willing acceptance of their precepts — which, however, is of the right kind only when, as a living, that [p. 170] is an effective, principle, it brings forth good dispositions and actions. But since inner and outer circumstances draw even that man who is clearly conscious of all his duties as well as of the motives for their fulfilment so powerfully to depart from the way that he too knows to be good (§. 55 ff.), there is, when he has actually departed but comes to himself again and perceives his fault, no other means than to turn back into the straight way, and to change not only his actions but above all his dispositions, and to abhor the evil that he formerly loved (Ps. 51:5; Jer. 31:9; Lam. 3:40). This is also called, though by an awkward name, *Buße* (penance), whose root meaning in the German language is properly "to suffer punishment"; hence also the opinion of some rigorists, quite contrary to the meaning of Holy Scripture (1 Kings 18:25; Isa. 58:5; Zech. 8:19), that the highest merit in penance is to torment, torture and mortify oneself. Far better does Holy Scripture render this expression in the original language by (*Teschubah*) desisting, turning back (Prov. 2:19; Jer. 18:11).

§. 150. Continuation.

The change of mind and improvement, or penance properly so called, shows itself solely in the transition from an incorrect or confused knowledge to a more correct one, chiefly in the following four most important matters.

1) With regard to incorrect concepts of the *highest good*. Commonly the man in need of improvement errs in his judgment about what is *good*: either because he has as yet never reflected [p. 171] on it at all and follows blind impulses in his actions; or because he confuses what is agreeable to the senses and immediately enjoyable with what accords with duty and is to be enjoyed only in the future. In both cases he has strayed from his destiny. If he is now to draw near

to it again, he must correct his judgment. He must learn to see that immediate enjoyment is not always true good, and that one is obliged to sacrifice it to a higher enjoyment. He must become *wise* in order to become virtuous.

2) He must correct his knowledge with regard to the *divine law*. In his error he regards its fulfilment either as impossible, because a) he contents himself with obscure notions of its content and imagines demands in it, or lets men persuade him of demands, that are not contained in it at all; or because he does not rightly value the powers of man and, feeling how weak they have become in himself through neglect, even despairs of his improvement. Or b) the fulfilment of the laws seems to him extremely burdensome; he does not see in them what they nevertheless are — beneficent directions for his true welfare — but mere restrictions of his desires that rob him of all joys. But once his insight is corrected, they appear in their true form as most wise instructions, most agreeable to human nature, for the tranquil and lasting enjoyment of the joys of his life (Ps. 19:9).

3) The change of mind consists in the correction of his judgment about himself. For man commonly considers himself more perfect than he really is: because, out of levity, distraction or incapacity, he reflects too little on himself; because his self-conceit deceives him, [p. 172] and he imagines himself, at least in comparison with others, still always more faultless than they; and because he really perceives in himself many a good thing, and even in his faults is not conscious of precisely the worst intention. Then too he believes his condition to be free of danger, and thereby becomes secure, because he sees no immediate evil following upon his actions; or because he lacks a living conviction that everything man does must, under the government of a wise and just God, have its inevitable requital. He who is to be improved must come back from all these errors. He must learn to know himself as he is; he must learn to see that he may not remain so if he does not wish to miss his true welfare (Ps. 51:8; 119:86; Isa. 48:18; Sir. 23:37).

§. 151. Continuation.

Finally, 4) the man who has hitherto missed his true destiny commonly errs also in judging the relation in which he stands to God. Either he seldom or never thinks of himself in relation to God, forgets that he owes God love, obedience and an account of the use of his powers; the remembrance of Him is darkened in his soul by a mania for doubt, self-conceit and predominant sensuality (Ps. 10:4; 11:13). Or the idea of God has nothing gladdening for him; God is to him only a stern lawgiver, more fearsome in His power than lovable in His goodness. Worship of Him appears to him superfluous, or only as a sacrifice with which one placates Him so that He may do no harm, not as the natural expression of an inner feeling of love, reverence and gratitude. In improvement [p. 173] these ideas are corrected to the point that God becomes recognizable to him in His whole perfection, holiness and goodness; that he recognizes in Him once more the Father whom he can never do without, and now perceives that one is the better, and consequently also the holier, the more one approaches Him through likeness of disposition; but that for this very reason sin remains

all the more inexcusable, the more one thereby misjudges the highest holiness and the highest goodness (Isa. 1:3, 4; Jer. 31:20; Mic. 6:3, 4).

§. 152. Remorse.

The more correctly one recognizes one's transgressions, the more sincerely will one repent of them, that is, feel pain and sorrow over faults committed which one could have avoided. Remorse is a natural consequence of true self-knowledge, and consequently an indispensable condition of improvement (Ps. 51:19; [Lam.] 3:39; Joel 2:13). But remorse often takes a false direction, when one feels it because one believes one has offended an almighty and inexorably *strict* Judge. Whoever regards his guilt from this point of view will certainly come upon the thought upon which men have fallen from of old and still fall, namely that penances and self-punishments are the natural expressions of remorse. One imagines that the more strongly one feels the weight of an all-powerful Being, the more fearsome one represents to oneself the consequences of sin as effects of *avenging* justice, the more the passions of the Judge are provoked by both, the greater and the more pleasing to God is the pain over the faults committed. This has produced among many ancient and modern peoples the most unnatural [p. 174] self-tortures (1 Kings 18:28). That all this is against the nature of the case, stands in contradiction to God's attributes, and even conflicts with the will of Holy Scripture, is proved, among many others, by the following passages too (Lev. 19:28; Isa. 58:3–8; Joel 2:13), and countless more.

The less, on the contrary, anxious, servile fear, or even secret doubts about God's infinite mercy, mingle in remorse, the more of the true spirit of Religion is found in the penitent. For Religion, through the universal and comfort-bringing idea of God, has confirmed that the one who errs is not to be made unhappy if he turns back by recognizing his faults and desisting from them (Deut. 30:31; Joel 2:13; Zech. 1:3);[104] rather, it has removed every fear of any other than a *fatherly* treatment. Even a wise father cannot consider that son improved who hopes to make good his guilt by trembling and quaking before him, or by the most mistrustful anxiety. The more trustfully he returns to him, and the more certainly he expects forgiveness from him, the more *childlike* spirit will still be left in him (Ps. 103:15; 116:5; Ezek. 23:4, and others more), and the more earnest, the more heartfelt will his resolution to improve also be.

§. 153. Trust.

Childlike trust in God's infinite goodness is therefore inseparable from improvement, from the increase of pure dispositions, and from return to the observance of divine precepts. On this trust, or on this conviction that, as soon as man has improved himself in the true sense, one may expect from God, even when one has erred in many ways, no other than a fatherly reception that excludes all fear of [p. 175] implacability and revenge — on this, in a Religion according to reason and divine

[104]Translator: so printed; Deut. 30 has only twenty verses (perhaps Deut. 30:1–3 or 4:31 is meant).

Revelation, far more must be made to depend than on any means of appeasing a vengeful God,[105] or even of reconciling Him; and to the latter all worth before God must be denied. External ceremonies, sacrifices, prayers, alms, confession of sins, are, with respect to reconciliation with God, displeasing to Him, the Searcher of hearts, without improvement of the dispositions and of the heart. Above all the confession of sins, on which many lay so much value, acquires value only when it leads us or others to improvement, and when it consists not in the mere recitation of a *general* catalogue of sins, forced into an alphabetical form,[106] but in real acknowledgment of the faults committed in deed or in disposition, in order to remind us of them vividly and to strengthen in us the resolution not to commit them again. Virtuous dispositions and actions are the only sure marks of a genuine improvement, because they are the inevitable consequences of a true devotion to God and of a purified heart (1 Sam. 16:22;[107] Ps. 40:7; Isa. 1:11–18).

§. 154. On Late Improvement.

As long as man is master of his powers of soul, and as a self-subsistent being can determine himself to dispositions and actions, it also remains possible for him to fulfil the conditions under which he can become virtuous and thereby receptive to higher happiness. To that extent a *later improvement* is also conceivable, even on the deathbed. But it is, on the one hand, given the uncertainty of life and of human powers, highly precarious; for who guarantees us that towards [p. 176] the end of our life we shall be in a state of clear consciousness? — and since improvement of the dispositions can by no means be a magical effect, but must be something moral, which necessarily demands activity of the soul; on the other hand, late improvement is bound up with an inevitable loss of all those advantages which only an early virtue, or a speedy return from the way of sin, is able to afford. The more strength and time a man has, the more fully can he attain his destiny according to the teaching of reason and of revealed Religion. The youth, consequently, can never become wise too early.

[105] Translator: the printed text reads "von allen Mitteln einer rachgierigen, Gott zu besänftigen" ("of all means of a vengeful [one], to appease God"), evidently a misprint for "einen rachgierigen Gott zu besänftigen", translated accordingly.

[106] Translator: an allusion to the alphabetical confessions of the Yom Kippur liturgy (*Ashamnu* and *Al Het*).

[107] Translator: evidently 1 Sam. 15:22 ("to obey is better than sacrifice").